PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 174

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1989-90

COMPRISING PERIOD
11 June—22 June 1990

328.42

REFERENCE LIBRARY

-7 JAN 19

ISBN 0 10 681174 6

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

CAMBRIDGE
REFERENCE LIBRARY

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, JANUARY 1990)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. John Major MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. David Hunt, MBE, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Alan Rodger, Esq, QC

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Tim Renton, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
The Rt. Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
The Lord Brabazon of Tara
The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Earl of Caithness
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—Peter Lilley, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. John Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Trade—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Trefgarne
Minister for Industry—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH—
Minister for Health—Mrs. Virginia Bottomley, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden

MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT—
Minister for Public Transport—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY—Minister for Social Security—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Scott, MBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities—Michael Portillo, Esq, MP
Minister for the Environment and Countryside—David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Minister for Housing and Planning—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. John Cope, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Baroness Trumpington
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT—Tim Eggar, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, WELSH OFFICE—Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Baroness Trumpington
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES—
David Maclean, Esq, MP
David Curry, Esq, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP

Civil Service, Office of the Minister for the—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Defence—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—Michael Neubert, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Earl of Arran

Education and Science—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Robert Jackson, Esq, MP
Alan Howarth, Esq, CBE, MP

Employment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Tim Eggar, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Patrick Nicholls, Esq, MP
The Lord Strathclyde

Energy—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Tony Baldry, Esq, MP

Environment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities—Michael Portillo, Esq, MP
Minister for the Environment and Countryside—David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Minister for Housing and Planning—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Christopher Chope, Esq, OBE, MP
The Hon. Colin Moynihan, MP (Minister for Sport)
The Lord Hesketh
David Heathcoat-Amory, Esq, MP

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
The Rt. Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
The Lord Brabazon of Tara
The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—The Hon. Tim Sainsbury, MP

Health—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—
Minister for Health—Mrs. Virginia Bottomley, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Baroness Hooper
Stephen Dorrell, Esq, MP

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. John Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Alan Rodger, Esq, QC

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Cope, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Richard Needham, Esq, MP
Peter Bottomley, Esq, MP
Dr. Brian Mawhinney, MP
The Lord Skelmersdale

Paymaster General—
The Earl of Caithness

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP
Michael Forsyth, Esq, MP

Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—
Minister for Social Security—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Scott, MBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Henley
Mrs. Gillian Shephard, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Trade—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Trefgarne
Minister for Industry—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, QC, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS—Eric Forth, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CORPORATE AFFAIRS—John Redwood, Esq, MP

Transport—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
MINISTER OF STATE
Minister for Public Transport—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Minister for Roads and Traffic—Robert Atkins, Esq, MP
Minister for Aviation and Shipping—Patrick McLoughlin, Esq, MP

Treasury—
PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. John Major, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Earl of Caithness
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—Peter Lilley, Esq, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Tim Renton, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
David Lightbown, Esq, MP
Kenneth Carlisle, Esq, MP
John Taylor, Esq, MP
The Hon. Tom Sackville, MP
Michael Fallon, Esq, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
Sydney Chapman, Esq, MP
Greg Knight, Esq, MP
Irvine Patnick, Esq, OBE, MP
Nicholas Baker, Esq, MP
Timothy Wood, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. David Hunt, MBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE -Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Ian Grist, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—
LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, KT, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Viscount Ridley, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
COMPTROLLER—Alastair Goodlad, Esq, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—Tony Durant, Esq, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—The Viscount Davidson
LORDS IN WAITING—The Viscount Long, The Viscount Ullswater, The Lord Reay, The Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne
BARONESS IN WAITING—The Baroness Blatch

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—The Rt. Hon. Michael Alison, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP

CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP

FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP

SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL—

Donald Coleman, Esq, MP, Patrick Cormack, Esq, MP, Stan Crowther, Esq, MP, Dame Janet Fookes, MP, James Hill, Esq, MP, Norman Hogg, Esq, MP, Geraint Howells, Esq, MP, Sir John Hunt, MP, David Knox, Esq, MP, James Lamond, Esq, MP, Michael Latham, Esq, MP, Ted Leadbitter, Esq, MP, Geoffrey Lofthouse, Esq, MP, John McWilliam, Esq, MP, Michael J. Martin, Esq, MP, Sir Anthony Meyer, MP, Michael Morris, Esq, MP, Robert Rhodes James, Esq, MP, Sir Giles Shaw, MP, Sir Michael Shaw, MP, Michael Shersby, Esq, MP, Sir John Stradling Thomas, MP, Nicholas Winterton, Esq, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—

Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Dr. John Cunningham, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Barney Hayhoe, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP

SECRETARY OF THE COMMISSION—W. A. Proctor

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—

Sir Clifford Boulton, KCB (Chairman), Sir Alan Urwick, KCVO, CMG, D. Menhennet, D. Phil., G. A. Roberts, I. D. Church, W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—B. A. Wilson

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—P. J. Kitcatt, CB

ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO THE SPEAKER—Miss S. Holt

TRAINBEARER—D. J. Lord

DEPUTY TRAINBEARER—P. L. Warwick

DIARY SECRETARY—Mrs. S. Norvell

SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon D. C. Gray, TD, PhD

SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—H. Knorpel, CB, QC, G. E. Gammie, CB, QC

ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—P. Harvey, CB

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—R. I. S. Phillips

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—Sir Clifford Boulton, KCB

CLERK ASSISTANT—J. F. Sweetman, TD

CLERK OF COMMITTEES—D. W. Limon

PRINCIPAL CLERKS—
H. M. Barclay (Public Bills)
W. R. McKay (Journal Office)
C. B. Winnifrith (Table Office)
R. B. Sands (Overseas Office)
G. Cubie (Select Committees)
A. J. Hastings (Select Committees)
R. J. Willoughby (Private Bills)
J. R. Rose (Standing Committees)
D. G. Millar (Financial Committees)

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS—S. A. L. Panton, M. R. Jack, PhD, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, R. J. Rogers, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig, A. Sandall, MLitt, D. L. Natzler, E. F. Silk, D. F. Harrison

SENIOR CLERKS—A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, S. J. Priestley, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans, R. I. S. Phillips, R. G. James, Mrs. E. J. Flood, Ms. P. A. Helme, D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton, J. B. Ingram (acting), I. G. Gilbert (acting), J. Darling (acting), J. M. Hope (acting)

CLERK OF SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEES—K. J. Brown

ASSISTANT CLERKS—J. S. Benger, Ms. E. C. Samson, N. P. Walker, M. D. Hamlyn, P. C. Seaward, DPhil, C. G. Lee, C. D. Stanton, A. Y. A. Azad

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—G. E. Clayton, Miss R. J. Challis, P. G. Moon

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—L. L. Kaye, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader, Mrs. S. M. Barrett, Miss F. L. Allingham, Mrs. L. M. Nugent, J. A. L. Dresner

SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—M. P. Hillyard, M. J. Cremin, Dr. L. M. Rosborough, Mrs. K. Lewis, E. Thompson, Mrs. J. Evans, I. G. Henderson, J. K. Wheatley

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright, MBE, DEPUTY—B. Tidball, ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis, J. Puricelli, K. B. Wood, P. D. Howlett, Mrs. L. R. Shade, P. A. Jack

EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—R. J. Willoughby, M. G. Pownall

REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—A. J. Hastings

TAXING OFFICER—R. J. Willoughby

SUPERVISOR OF BROADCASTING—J. F. Grist (temporary)

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—R. A. Broomfield

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—M. P. Oxborough, N. P. Wright, Mrs. B. Ward, Miss D. E. Symes, Ms. C. J. D. Quantrell, P. R. Coppack (acting)

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Sir Alan Urwick, KCVO, CMG

DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—P. N. W. Jennings

ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANTS AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright, J. F. Collins

CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss S. J. Scott Thomson

ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. J. Warren, A. J. Spencer

PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. T. Warboys

SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. H. Usher

SENIOR DOORKEEPERS—R. A. F. Chapman, J. D. Garnett, C. E. Gray, J. C. W. Cooper, D. L. Hurley, D. Shiels

HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE

SENIOR OFFICE KEEPERS—M. Bryant, K. R. Kemp, K. R. Dickason

NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil

DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH—

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Division)—G. F. Lock, Miss J. B. Tanfield

DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Section)—S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, FI InfSc, C. C. Pond, PhD, Mrs. C. B. Andrews, R. C. Clements, Mrs. J. M. Lourie

LIBRARY CLERKS, SENIOR—Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Miss M. Baber, Ms. A. Muir, Mrs. G. L. Allen (temporary). ASSISTANT—A. J. L. Crompton, E. J. Fishwick, MPhil, Mrs. K. Greener, Miss P. Strickland, Miss V. A. Miller, Ms. M. J. Quiney, Ms. N. R. Donlon, Ms. H. M. Jeffs, J. R. Lunn, PhD, R. S. Dewdney, Ms. L. E. Sloman, D.Phil, Mrs. P. Carling (temporary)

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—S. A. Wise

SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. S. M. Withers, ALA, Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss I. O. White, ALA (acting)

EDUCATION OFFICER—Mrs. C. Weeds ASSISTANT—Mrs. C. C. O'Connor

PROJECT MANAGER, NEW BUILDING—Miss J. Seaton FLA

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. P A. Bozdan, E. L. V. MacGregor

HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—J. A. Prince, MLS, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, Mrs. D. W. Clark, Miss M. H. Fletcher, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA, Ms. H. Armstrong, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA, G. Haig, Miss B. Mee, MIInfSc, Miss G. L. Cooper, Mrs. E. H. Riley, ALA, Mrs. F. M. Ward, Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, Ms. F. Whittle, R. Freebury (acting)

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson

EDITOR, WEEKLY BULLETIN—Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA

LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Miss S. Holland, A. D. Parker, ALA, Ms. J. B. Hall, ALA, T. C. Holmes, P. E. M. Ward, Mrs. J. M. Smith, ALA, C. M. Sear, Miss J. Lyall, Ms. Z. A. Smallwood, Miss C. Owens, Miss C. M. Blair, ALA, S. A. H. Jones

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss N. Harland, D. B. Inns, Mrs. A. J. H. Mara, D. A. Brown, J. P. Brevitt, M. Greenhill (Head Library Attendant), B. Smith, Miss A. J. Hatton, Ms. J. Fessey, A. J. Fuller, Miss J. M. Perkes, Mrs. H. Onyskiw

VOTE OFFICE—

DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell

DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster

ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—C. D. Lister

SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—Mrs. S. Fuzio, B. G. Underwood, A. J. Ashton (Sales Office)

VOTE OFFICE ASSISTANTS—T. S. Wilson, G. E. Howard, C. P. Williams, P. Hannett

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—G. A. Roberts

FEES OFFICE—

ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson

DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis

SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—A. R. Marskell

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—M. J. Barram, Miss M. M. McColl, M. Fletcher, R. Russell

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—K. E. Walton

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. N. Norman, Mrs. G. Crowther, Mrs. P. M. Lowther, Mrs. D. Hill, Miss P. Hurford, Mrs. J. S. Peach

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss D. E. Johnson, D. M. Allen, Miss L. J. F. Clay, Mrs. D. K. Euesden, D. J. D. Woods, Ms. M. R. Morris, Miss R. Harrison, G. L. Turner, Miss P. R. Mills, Mrs. J. D. Mead, P. F. Dawson, Miss S. E. Flavell, Miss S. A. Weaver, P. H. Olden, A. D. Rowlands, P. J. S. French, Miss T. D. Ruewell, C. J. Bumstead

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—

HEAD OF OFFICE—B. A. Wilson

DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. R. A. White, V. H. Stocker

PERSONNEL OFFICE MANAGER—N. P. Crawley

PERSONNEL OFFICERS—P. C. Kingsley, R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner, M. Page

COMPUTER OFFICE—

COMPUTER OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FIInfSc

ASSISTANT COMPUTER OFFICER—Mrs. S. C. White

EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Mrs. J. M. Cleveland

INTERNAL AUDITOR—A. A. Cameron

STAFF INSPECTOR—R. C. Collins

WELFARE OFFICER—Mrs. A. Mossop

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—I. D. Church

DEPUTY EDITOR—P. Walker

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley, J. Withers, W. G. Garland

ASSISTANT EDITORS—Vee Grainger, J. Ledgerwood, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland

COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—D. Crosswell, Mrs. A. Roberts, S. M. Hutchinson, Miss V. A. Widgery, C. Fogarty, Mrs. H. J. G. Natzler, Miss M. Babington, Mrs. A. Street, L. Gilmore, Ms. G. Hardgrave, P. Oglethorpe, P. Hadlow, Miss C. Hanly, M. Watson, Miss K. Stewart

REPORTERS—Mrs. E. J. Gregory, Miss J. A. Bradshaw, Miss E. Morris, J. Ransley, Miss J. Goodman, Ms. J. Dall, Mrs. P. Pickford, Miss K. Myers, Ms. J. Burden, J. Robinson

PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington, MBE

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBERS—Mrs. M. J. Harding, Miss J. L. Brown

PRINCIPAL HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington

SENIOR HANSARD ASSISTANT—J. Brake

ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—G. Carpenter

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR—Mrs. S. M. Nicholls, FHCIMA, MIPM

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn

BANQUETING MANAGER—C. J. Griffiths

CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA

ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER—B. C. Sewell

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent A. J. Coxon

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—A. Blake

POSTMASTER—J. Arnold

TRANSPORT MANAGER—R. H. Hyde

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 174**

THIRTEENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1989-90

House of Commons

Monday 11 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

TRANSPORT

Coastguard Service

1. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he will take to increase the efficiency of the administration of the coastguard service.

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping (Mr. Patrick McLoughlin): Her Majesty's Coastguard is generally recognised as one of the most modern and efficient marine rescue co-ordination services in Europe. All coastguard rescue centres are being progressively fitted with updated communications and a computerised data handling system. Coastguard training has recently been reviewed to meet current requirements, and improvements will be implemented later this year.

Mr. Speller: I thank my hon. Friend for his answer and for coming to north Devon to meet the coastguards who work along our coast. Does he accept that we consider the quality of the men, both full-time and auxiliary employees, to be unbeatable? Can he assure me and my hon. Friends with constituencies in the area that there will be no repetition of the two unfortunate deaths as a result of apparent faults in the chain of command and procedure and will he be prepared to answer an Adjournment debate, should one be sought?

Mr. McLoughlin: My recent visit to north Devon was most useful, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for having accompanied me on the visit. The two incidents to which he referred were very serious and those tragic deaths were to be regretted. It is worth emphasising as we come up to the period when people take their holidays on the coast that the coastline, although attractive, can also be very dangerous. Everyone should bear it in mind on all occasions that safety is paramount.

Mr. Fearn: Is the Minister aware that the closure of the Isle of Man Ramsey coastguard station leaves 4,000 sq m of water without protection? What protection is provided for the resorts on the north-west coast, covering 300 miles of coastline?

Mr. McLoughlin: I wholly reject the idea that any area of the coastline is unprotected and is not covered by the coastguard service. Our intention is to provide an effective and co-ordinated service, and that is exactly what the coastguard service does. Our objective is to ensure that every area is covered by the most effective means.

Mr. Holt: Will my hon. Friend examine the regulations governing small ships sailing near the coast? Recently we nearly had a tragedy in the north-east of England as a consequence of a boat drifting out to sea. It had no means of getting in touch with anyone. It was only through the good offices of the Royal Air Force that there was no loss of life. There are no rules and regulations requiring small ships to carry any means of communication. Will the Government consider introducing regulations to require small ships to carry radio equipment?

Mr. McLoughlin: My hon. Friend has asked an important question concerning people who go to sea without the necessary experience of and respect for it. On many occasions, that can lead to tragedy. I shall examine closely the incident to which my hon. Friend refers.

Leeds-Bradford Railway

2. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the electrification of the railway between Leeds and Bradford; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Roger Freeman): We have received more than 200 letters and representations from the passenger transport authority and five local hon. Members, including the hon. Gentleman, favouring electrification of the Leeds-Bradford railway. We are still considering the case.

Mr. Cryer: The new Forster square station in Bradford, paid for by the local authority, has opened today, and a new platform has been built at nearby Shipley to foster and develop inter-city services to Bradford. Does the Minister accept that the Labour majority and the Conservative minority on the council, the rail unions and the railway management, together with the chamber of commerce, support the electrification of the 10 miles from Leeds to Bradford? Electrification is important for operational standards and ease of operation to ensure that the premier city of Yorkshire, Bradford, has adequate and proper inter-city services. The £6·5 million is a good investment, provided that a decision is made in the near future.

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for reminding the House of the great value of electrification. I agree with him about the electrification of the east coast main line, which cost £450 million and which I was glad to inaugurate two weeks ago. I am mindful of the arguments deployed in favour of electrification. I plan to visit the West Yorkshire passenger transport executive shortly, and I hope to meet the hon. Gentleman on that occasion, together with other hon. Gentlemen from Yorkshire who have been supporting the scheme.

Mr. Kirkhope: Does my hon. Friend agree that the east coast electrification is the biggest-ever electrification scheme in the United Kingdom? It means that people like me can travel from Leeds to London in under two hours in great comfort? Does he agree that at the end of the day it is for British Rail management, based on business decisions, to decide whether other lines should be electrified or should retain diesel traction?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's observations on the value of electrification on the east coast mainline. Of course he is right; two hours to Leeds, three hours to Newcastle and four hours to Edinburgh are impressive speeds over that line. I agree that it is for British Rail to decide which further lines should be electrified, and the Government await proposals from British Rail with interest and with underlying support.

Channel Tunnel

3. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to provide Government financial support to ensure that any channel tunnel terminal at Stratford is linked to King's Cross.

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Cecil Parkinson): I share the hon. Gentleman's concern that all the regions should be properly served by freight and passenger services to and from the channel tunnel.

Mr. Allen: Is the Secretary of State aware that his and the Government's bungling and mismanagement threaten the high-speed link and the channel tunnel? Will he give the House an assurance that the Ove Arup proposal for a high-speed link to London will be allowed to be negotiated with British Rail, and will he join the Opposition in repealing section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987, which prevents public money from going into such schemes, at the earliest possible opportunity so that my region can benefit from 1992 and the single market?

Mr. Parkinson: In 1993 when the tunnel opens British Rail will be putting into service 3 million seats a year from the regions; 70 per cent. of all the freight going through the tunnel will come from the regions, and proper arrangements are being made. The Government are in the process of modernising and improving the railway system that the Labour Government so shamefully ignored.

Sir David Mitchell: Is not it true that what really counts is not the time taken on a journey but that the journey is faster, more comfortable and more convenient than the competition?

Mr. Parkinson: I agree with my right hon. Friend. May I point out to Opposition Members, especially the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), who talks about 45 mph journeys from London to the tunnel, that trains will run at 100 mph? British freight trains run more quickly than continental freight trains, most of which are restricted to 60 mph. Will he stop giving the impression that the TGV is a freight train?

Mr. Spearing: Does the Secretary of State agree that any route from Stratford to King's Cross would be more economical if it were combined with the cross-rail which he is now considering? Does he recall that a few weeks ago he replied to a question from me asking why he would not apply the Victoria line cost-benefit analysis used by the late Mr. Ernest Marples to any part of the channel tunnel route? Will he apply the formula used by Mr. Marples for the Victoria line to any lines in London, and why does he refuse to use it for part of the channel tunnel link?

Mr. Parkinson: Because the House of Commons, in an Act passed with the full support of the Labour party, made it illegal for the Government to subsidise any fast tunnel link, on the ground that it would create unfair competition for ships, road freight and airlines. When we consider London Underground provision, we use precisely the same analysis as was used by the late Lord Marples. No underground line in London could be justified on economic grounds. The House of Commons decided that the channel tunnel link should not be subsidised, and I suspect that the hon. Gentleman voted for that clause.

Mr. Dunn: Is the Secretary of State aware that there is deep anxiety in north-west Kent and south London about the rumours that the channel tunnel rail link project might be shelved? Shelving the project will simply allow the confusion, rumour and blight to continue, with adverse effects on my constituents. Is he further aware that some people are demanding the use of taxpayers' money for a project capable of being financed by private capital? Will he continue to resist those demands?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes. My hon. Friend is saying that this is an extremely complex issue which needs careful

consideration, and that is precisely what the Government are giving it. When the Government reach their decision, the House of Commons will be the first to be informed.

Mr. Prescott: Is the Secretary of State aware that if section 42 had applied to any of the existing European high-speed links, they would not have been built because they all involved public money or public guarantee? Does he accept that since both sides of the House passed the provision in section 42, the fear of unfair competition has receded due to the doubling of the cost of channel tunnel, faster ferries and congestion at our airports? That fully justifies the repeal of section 42, for which I offer the Secretary of State the fullest support. It will be essential if Britain is to have a high-speed network so that our economy can prosper in Europe.

Mr. Parkinson: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that constructive and helpful intervention. I do not wish to blight his prospects, but I thank him for that constructive suggestion. But there were good, sound reasons for section 42. We shall debate the Commission's proposals tomorrow. It is no part of its proposals that Europe's rail lines should be subsidised. The thrust of the Commission is to make Europe's railways competitive and to get rid of subsidy, and that is precisely what the Germans and others are considering now.

Mr. Batiste: Does my right hon. Friend agree that if regions such as Yorkshire are to receive the full benefit of the massive investment that has already gone into rail electrification, trains that originate in our region must have rapid transit by whatever route through London and the south-east on to the continent and that decision must be made soon so that work can begin as quickly as possible?

Mr. Parkinson: I have good news for my hon. Friend. The work has already begun. Work is in hand, huge investment is already being made and orders have been placed for the modernisation of lines, for improved rolling stock and for new freight centres. From the day the tunnel opens my hon. Friend's region and others will be properly served and will have access to all aspects of the tunnel.

Radioactive Material

4. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the transport of radioactive material within the United Kingdom.

The Minister for Roads and Traffic (Mr. Robert Atkins): The transport of radioactive material in the United Kingdom is governed by the regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency. These regulations are kept under continuous review; major revisions take place every 10 years, and the most recent one was in 1985.

Mr. Hughes: Will the Minister confirm that at present it is permissible to carry nuclear waste on passenger ferries and that it is the Government's policy to permit high-level nuclear waste to be taken through the channel tunnel? Do not the Government consider it a grave dereliction of duty that routes for nuclear waste are entirely a matter for the carrier and have nothing to do with the Government? May we have an announcement of a review of both policies so that people can be assured that nuclear waste is carried on designated, publicly known routes on which it will produce the minimum risk to the safety of members of the public who also use those routes?

Mr. Atkins: I was under the impression that the question was about the transport of radioactive material within the United Kingdom, not outside it. I assure the hon. Gentleman, whose new-found interest in the matter I discovered recently—[Hon. Members: "Oh!"] I draw it to the attention of the House that the Radioactive Materials (Road Transport) Bill recently passed through the House in one-and-a-half minutes and that the Liberal party was completely unrepresented [*Interruption.*] The serious answer to the question is that the Government take, and for many years have taken, great interest in these matters. We abide by international regulations which are reviewed regularly and we are as satisfied as anyone can be that the regulations are effective, efficient and brought up to date at every opportunity.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: If the Government are determined to pursue the ludicrous policy of turning the United Kingdom into the nuclear dustbin of the world, does the Minister accept that he has a clear responsibility to ensure that the routes that will be used are reviewed, particularly against the background of the recent statements of the chief executive of British Nuclear Fuels plc that high-level nuclear waste may be disposed of at Sellafield and Dounreay? Will the Minister, therefore, undertake to put pressure on the authority to ensure that the routes are published and that details of the quality of the vehicles used are known to the public?

Mr. Atkins: I hesitate to give the hon. Lady lessons, but there is a difference, of which people should be aware, between nuclear waste and the reprocessing of used nuclear fuel. We have an efficient and effective industry, part of which is in the constituency adjacent to mine and others. Hon. Members should be aware of the regulations that apply when such material is shipped round the country. The safety of the regulations has been demonstrated on more than one occasion, not least in 1984 when a train travelling at 100 mph crashed, causing no damage whatever.

Bus Deregulation

5. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to revise his Department's policy towards bus deregulation.

Mr. Freeman: No. Deregulation has resulted in greater diversity of service for passengers and more bus mileage at lower costs.

Ms. Quin: Is the Minister aware that the figures clearly show that since bus deregulation traffic congestion on the bridges over the River Tyne has increased greatly and that deregulation has caused great difficulties for our previously excellent, integrated transport system? Will he cast dogma aside and make urgent proposals to exempt areas such as Tyne and Wear from this crazy policy?

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Lady may know that highway authorities already have the power to prevent bus operators from using certain streets or parts of their area if there is congestion. Obviously, congestion on the bridges over the Tyne begs the question whether there should be

further infrastructure investment in roads and bridges over the Tyne. That is not a matter for the passenger transport executive, but next time I visit Gateshead and Newcastle I shall look into congestion, specifically on the bridges.

Mr. Higgins: Does my hon. Friend agree that bus deregulation has greatly improved bus and coach services to the general benefit, but that it is important that competitive pressures should not lead to bus drivers being encouraged to break the speed limit? Will he look carefully at the present arrangements for examining tachograph records and provide for a general survey of them to ensure that the speed limit is not broken?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful for my right hon. Friend's comment that deregulation has brought many benefits to the travelling public. Naturally, there has been innovation. About 7,000 minibuses have been introduced in more than 600 places. I shall make inquiries about tachographs and I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his advice.

Ms. Ruddock: The Minister's answers on deregulation are not only complacent but misleading. Does he accept the Association of Metropolitan Authorities' report that since deregulation the number of bus trips has fallen by between 100 million and 200 million more than would otherwise have been expected? Does he accept that significant among the negative factors affecting the public is the much-reduced availability of common ticketing and abnormally high levels of passenger service changes, exemplified in Greater Manchester where 90 per cent. of the services were changed within 12 months? Finally, is he aware that, on present trends, the average vehicle life of a conventional bus will be 43 years, whereas before deregulation it was 16 years?

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Lady selects her statistics carefully. Bus deregulation has brought many benefits to the travelling public, including more bus miles run—some 18 per cent. up—more choice and innovation and a better service.

Mr. Forman: Although I recognise the benefits of bus deregulation in other parts of the country, will my hon. Friend be cautious about any increase in that policy in Greater London? Will he assure the House that any bus deregulation in Greater London will have an eye to the present problem of buses being one of the less-used parts of the public transport system? They need to be more fully and effectively used if we are to deal with the problem of congestion in Greater London.

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's cautionary note. No decisions have yet been reached about the timing of the deregulation or privatisation of London buses.

British Rail

6. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chair of British Rail to discuss improvements in rail services.

8. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chair of British Rail to discuss investment in rail services.

Mr. Parkinson: I have regular meetings with the chairman of British Rail.

Ms. Armstrong: In those discussions have the right hon. Gentleman and the chairman compared the expected travelling time between Calais and Lyon and between Dover and Darlington in five years' time? Can he assure our citizens that the services available to them will be comparable with those available to the citizens of France?

Mr. Parkinson: The hon. Lady makes the mistake of joining the gang who find every country attractive but their own. Outside France, Britain runs more trains travelling in excess of 100 mph than any other country in Europe. We have our own ways of dealing with our problems and we shall continue in that manner.

Ms. Mowlam: Will the Secretary of State now try to answer the question? Will the same quality of service and trains travelling at the same speed be available to us in the north-east in five years' time as in the rest of Europe? A straight answer would be much appreciated.

Mr. Parkinson: The hon. Lady should not need to ask that question. She knows that the answer is no, because we have not chosen to go down the TGV route. We are making our own arrangements by road, rail and air and through improved, deregulated ports to ensure that our goods and people have good access to worldwide destinations.

Sir Bernard Braine: As my right hon. Friend is already aware of the appalling state of the Fenchurch street to Southend commuter line, which carries a vast number of passengers daily, and which has caused London employers to doubt the wisdom of employing young people from my part of the world because of the unreliability of that service, at the next meeting he has with the chairman will he impress upon British Rail the necessity not merely for improvement, as that is promised in the years ahead, but the necessity for improvement forthwith?

Mr. Parkinson: Who could resist an instruction like that? I shall attempt to convey to the chairman of British Rail the ferocity with which my right hon. Friend expressed his view. His line is an important part of Network SouthEast, in which more than £1,200 million will be invested in the next three years. That will result in considerable improvements for all commuters, including his constituents.

Mrs. Currie: Does my right hon. Friend agree that there has been a welcome revival of local services all over the country, often using the Sprinter trains that are manufactured by my constituents at British Rail Engineering Ltd? In his discussions with the chairman of British Rail, will he raise the proposed new Ivanhoe line that will join Leicester, Loughborough, Burton upon Trent and Derby, thereby enabling us to bring passenger traffic into the Toyota plant without clogging up the roads?

Mr. Parkinson: I shall raise that matter with the chairman of British Rail when I next meet him.

Mr. Prescott: When the Secretary of State next meets the chairman of British Rail, will he discuss the possibility of the closure of a number of Speedlink freight services announced last week? Is he aware that that is due to the extra financial targets that the Secretary of State has placed on the freight industry, as against the £50 million section A subsidies, thus forcing more traffic to go from

rail to road, and adding to congestion and pollution? Is not it time that he acted as a Minister responsible for Transport instead of as a servant of the Treasury?

Mr. Parkinson: Only the hon. Gentleman, without knowing the facts—which he rarely does—would criticise the new chairman of British Rail, who has discovered that he owns a business with an income of £45 million and outgoings of £75 million, which is losing £30 million a year and which handles less than one tenth of 1 per cent. of our freight. The hon. Gentleman thinks that the chairman is not following a sensible pattern in examining whether those losses are necessary. Any sensible person would examine those losses, including the hon. Gentleman if he ever got into a position of power, which he will not.

Road Schemes (Dorset)

7. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road schemes are currently in preparation; and how many of those are in Dorset.

Mr. Atkins: A total of 472 trunk road schemes are currently in preparation, of which 11 are in Dorset.

Mr. Bruce: Will my hon. Friend find time in his busy calendar to come to Dorset to look at the appalling roads there? I understand that he did not find time in his busy programme to come down, but I hope that he can confirm that it was not the terrible tales that I have been telling him about how long it would take him to get there that put him off.

Mr. Atkins: My hon. Friend will know full well that it was through no fault of my own that the visit to Hardy country, which I was looking forward to, was delayed. He will know that both he and my hon. Friends the Members for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker) and for Dorset, West (Sir J. Spicer) place substantial pressure on me to ensure that the roads in Dorset are kept up to their present high standard—of course, they are always capable of improvement.

Mr Cohen: Why is it that when the Government consider roads in Dorset, they at least give some consideration to the environment, yet when they consider roads in urban areas such as Leyton, they do not give a toss about the environment, housing or people there?

Mr. Atkins: The hon. Gentleman has an unfortunate turn of phrase. I know that if he reflects on those matters he will realise just how much attention my Department gives to the environment and that, just because I am where I am, it does not mean that I have lost my interest in and concern for environmental matters, in whatever part of the country. The Landscape Advisory Committee takes a great deal of interest in where the roads will go and in their effects on the local—and urban—environment. I hope that the hon. Gentleman, on reflection, will withdraw his implied slur on my efficiency.

M25 (Congestion)

9. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about proposals to relieve congestion on the M25.

Mr. Atkins: We propose to widen the M25 to dual four lanes, and will announce our response to the consultants' report in the near future.

Mr. Marshall: Does my hon. Friend accept that merely to widen the M25 to four lanes is wholly inadequate and bears no relationship to future road flows? When can we look forward to an M25 relief road?

Mr. Atkins: My hon. Friend will realise the important difficulties relating to environmental matters, consequent to the previous question. There are enough of my hon. Friends sitting in the Chamber, not least the Secretary of State, whose constituents might have views on widening the M25 beyond four lanes. However, I appreciate the point about congestion, and we are treating congestion on the M25, as well as on many other motorways, as a matter of urgency.

Mr. Tony Banks: Has not the M25 become a standing joke—almost literally in traffic terms—and a sort of circular car lot? Would not it be better if the Government, instead of looking at ways of taking up more space by widening this monstrous road which is not working, put more money into the transport infrastructure of railways within the M25 area to relieve congestion on that road?

Mr. Atkins: How dare the hon. Gentleman suggest that the M25 is monstrous? There are plenty of people in this part of the south-east of England who thank God for it, in terms of —*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Atkins. [HON. MEMBERS: "Blasphemy."] Order.

Mr. Atkins: —in terms of the relief given to nearby villages and towns by removing congestion from them. Ironically the M25 is a victim of its own success, which is why we shall widen it to four lanes and why a great deal of attention is being given to it. The hon. Gentleman ought to reflect on the success that is the M25.

Airline Security

11. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met his opposite number in Germany to discuss airline security.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the German Transport Minister regularly at the EC Council of Ministers. Our officials also meet regularly to discuss aviation security, within the International Civil Aviation Organisation, within the European Civil Aviation Conference and elsewhere.

Mr. Holt: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer, but does he accept that despite all these frequent meetings, at Easter my wife and I flew from here to the middle east via Frankfurt, and when we boarded the plane, having gone through all the security checks, we found my wife's seat occupied by a stowaway who had gone on board without a pass and without going through security? Subsequently he was arrested and taken away. Has security at Frankfurt improved?

Mr. Parkinson: I am answerable in the House for all aspects of British transport but not for German transport arrangements. However, when I see Dr. Zimmermann I shall bring that to his attention and report our exchange to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Foulkes: Did the Secretary of State note that last week a Pan Am jet was diverted to Prestwick after a terrorist scare? Is he aware that two jets were diverted from Glasgow airport to Prestwick because of crosswinds at Glasgow? I am sure that he will know that all the NATO Foreign Ministers and his good friend the Prime Minister flew in and out of Prestwick airport for the Turnberry summit last week. All that underlines the importance of Prestwick airport, yet in Saturday's *Glasgow Herald* the British Airports Authority talks about mothballing Prestwick during the winter. Will the right hon. Gentleman talk with Sir Norman Payne and ensure that he lives up to the promises that he gave the Secretary of State that Prestwick will remain open?

Mr. Parkinson: I shall not refer that matter to the German Transport Minister when next I see him, but I shall tell the hon. Gentleman that when we changed the policy, we opened up all Scotland's airports for traffic. I believe that Prestwick is extremely well equipped to attract traffic; new airlines have been going there recently; there is a great deal of interest in expanding it as a freight terminal; and I deplore anything that appears in any way to downgrade the importance of Prestwick.

Bus Workers (Safety and Conditions)

12. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next expects to meet bus drivers and other workers from the east midlands regarding safety and conditions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Pay and conditions are matters for individual bus operators. The operator and vehicle licensing system provides for safety standards.

Mr. Skinner: If the Minister did meet the workers in the east midlands, he would learn from them that since the Mafia-type boss Mr. Souter of Stagecoach Holdings took over the East Midlands Motorbus Company, he has not only derecognised the union and sacked some of the workers, but made them scared stiff of raising the issue of bus safety—because they would lose their jobs if they did. It is time that there was an inquiry into Stagecoach Holdings, which now has a monopoly 100 miles wide, stretching from the east to the west coast of Britain, and high time that the Government, who believe in freedom of choice and in the right to belong to a trade union, did something about it.

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Gentleman is clearly wrong to link safety standards with private enterprise. There is no connection whatever. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman will know that bus operators must be licensed and that the abilities of bus and coach drivers are re-examined every five years. Buses and coaches are examined every year. Safety and private enterprise can and do go together.

Inner Cities

13. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what road and public transport measures his Department have to boost inner-city regeneration.

Mr. Atkins: We are providing support on a massive scale for new public transport infrastructure and roads to improve access to the inner cities. Examples include the Greater Manchester Metrolink and the Jubilee line extension to consolidate the regeneration of London's docklands.

Mr. Hughes: I thank my hon. Friend for that answer. Does he agree that the massive regeneration of the inner cities under the stewardship of this Government has been as a result of the imaginative combination of private money and private initiative, with the public grants that have been given, mainly by his Department?

Mr. Atkins: With his usual perspicacity, my hon. Friend has hit the nail absolutely on the head.

THE ARTS

Theatres (London)

79. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how many of London theatres benefit from public funds at the present time; how many theatres do not so benefit; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): Over 30 of the 100 main theatres in London are revenue-funded by the Arts Council or Greater London Arts. Local authorities fund several further theatres.

Mr. Greenway: Does my right hon. Friend agree that most London theatres are unsubsidised and must succeed without public funding? Therefore, is not it clear that theatres can succeed on their own two feet? It can cost, for example, £50 for a seat at Covent Garden—*[Interruption.]* Does my right hon. Friend agree that the theatres, which are standing on their own two feet—as the Crazy Gang always did, and the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) should know that—should be commended for doing so?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right that many of the commercial theatres in London—as I said, 30 out of 100 are revenue-funded—have been a remarkable story during the past decade. Audiences in those theatres had increased to 11 million in 1989, which is the highest since records began in 1981 and the box office for those theatres doubled in real terms during the same period. The story is therefore one of success and the theatres are to be congratulated.

Mr. Maclennan What steps will the Minister take to ensure that the Royal Shakespeare Company is not dark for months during the winter, to the shame of the Government and the embarrassment of the country?

Mr. Luce: The Royal Shakespeare Company, which received an 11 per cent. increase this year in taxpayers' funding, has a wide range of productions. As I have made plain in the House on previous occasions, it is clear that every single arts body that is subsidised by the taxpayer should ensure that it can live within its means. I have great admiration for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Its audiences are good and I believe that with its finances in good order, it will continue to do an excellent job.

Mr. Bowis: Does my right hon. Friend agree that many small theatres still need some support and that those theatres, such as the King's Head theatre club, which has recently got into some difficulties, would be in less

difficulty if the obstructions on their ability to run themselves were removed? I am thinking especially of the 48-hour membership rule.

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right. However, I understand that last week Greater London Arts decided to restore revenue funding to the King's Head theatre club on clear understandings about the management of that arts organisation. My hon. Friend is right that there are many art organisations throughout the country. Not only in London, but in the country as a whole, the Arts Council's number of revenue clients has increased by 120 to 140 in the past 10 years. That shows how widely the money is spread.

Heritage (Preservation)

80. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what recent measures have been taken to help preserve Britain's heritage.

85. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what role there is for the private sector in preserving Britain's heritage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: Recent measures, all entailing varying degrees of private support, include the introduction of gift aid, the creation of the museums and galleries improvement fund and taking into account the existence of private offers when deciding on export licence applications for items of national importance.

Mr. Stewart: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply because recently, with substantial grants from English Heritage, the 12th century Rufford abbey in my constituency was reopened to the public. Will he reassure me that private giving and charitable donations will enhance the Government's funding, not replace it?

Mr. Luce: I, too, praise English Heritage, and the national heritage memorial fund on all that they do to preserve and support our heritage. My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the value of gift aid, which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor introduced in the Budget and which will come into operation in October, because it gives a massive new opportunity for the arts world to raise more money from individuals and corporations. It will not be a substitute for public funding.

Mr. Thompson: I also congratulate the Government, through my right hon. Friend, on the introduction of the gift aid scheme in the Budget. Does my right hon. Friend accept that the private sector can and should do even more both to help preserve Britain's heritage and for the arts generally?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right. I look to the private sector to be the source of real growth, in addition to the basic commitment of taxpayer support, which has been demonstrated by the 24 per cent. increase for the next three years. In harness, the two should do a great deal to produce more resources for the arts.

Mr. Buchan: What consideration has the Minister given to the problems that we shall face in 1992 in relation to the export of works of art, given that we are moving into an open market?

Mr. Luce: The Cultural Ministers of Europe have been discussing those matters in their informal meetings. Article 36 of the treaty of Rome makes it clear that every member state can keep its own methods of protection for its own heritage. Nevertheless, against the background of free frontiers and a lack of controls, it is necessary to find a way to ensure that we can deal, for example, with stolen works of art. Discussions on that are going on.

Mr. Tony Banks: The Minister knows that large numbers of people come to this country because of the quality of heritage and arts that we offer, and long may that be the case. Will he consider discussing with the Chancellor of the Exchequer the possibility of introducing a hotel tax—a bedroom tax—to release resources that could be devoted to improving our arts and heritage?

Mr. Luce: As the hon. Gentleman has raised that matter, I shall mention it to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. However, as he knows, our general policy—this is not specifically to answer his question—is that we do not go in for more hypothecated taxation than is necessary. The arts, with both public and private sector funding, which is increasing, do a great deal to attract millions of tourists from all over the world.

Mr. Burns: Is my right hon. Friend aware that last week, an important example of our heritage, a low railway bridge in Shield row, near Stanley, was seriously damaged by a runaway bus that careered off the road and had its top ripped off? I understand that it was the Labour party's only promotional bus. I should be grateful if my right hon. Friend assured the House that the Labour party will pay to repair the damage to our heritage and to that fine

Mr. Luce: I am sure that the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) will take careful note of my hon. Friend's view about the role that the Labour party is taking in despoiling our heritage.

Mr. Fisher: Will the Minister give some thought to our scientific heritage, for which he also has responsibility? Does he understand the scale of the crisis in our national museums, particularly the natural history museum? There, the trustees of one of the world's great scientific collections are being forced to cut 100 jobs, many of them held by key scientists, in order to save approximately £2 million a year. They have made it clear that they regret that and that the cause of their doing it is the Government's underfunding and neglect of that great museum. Will the Minister meet the trustees to discuss the financial plight of the museum and to make sure that the international reputation of that great collection is preserved?

Mr. Luce: I do not underestimate the importance of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question, but, as he prefaced it by talking about a crisis and underfunding, I should make clear the position of the natural history museum. Over the past 10 years, the resources that the museum has received from the taxpayer, let alone from the private sector, whose funding has increased dramatically, have increased by 12·8 per cent. This year, over last year, I have increased its funding by 16·5 per cent. There has, therefore, been a real increase in the museum's resources.

It is against that background that the museum has produced a corporate strategy looking to the next five years. It has taken the view that is should focus its research on environment and health matters. I take seriously the concerns that have been expressed, and so, I should stress, does the management of the museum. It has taken the lead

in arranging a seminar next Friday, which scientists from throughout the country will join. The management will assess the wider implications of any decisions that may be taken and will take them seriously into account.

CIVIL SERVICE

Conditions of Service

94. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he next expects to meet the civil service trades unions leaders regarding conditions of service; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): I meet the civil service unions from time to time to discuss a range of matters.

Mr. Skinner: When will the Minister make proper payments to the civil service for fiddling Government figures? Civil servants have had to fiddle the dole figures on 23 occasions. They have had to reshape the poll tax 11 times. They are now being called upon to fiddle the cost-of-living figures. Surely it is high time that they were given a conscience payment, which should be paid according to the inverse proportion to the truth.

Mr. Luce: It is a gross disservice to 567,000 outstanding civil servants to suggest that civil servants are fiddling the figures. We have one of the finest civil services and it is about time that the hon. Gentleman acknowledged that.

Mr. Wilshire: When my right hon. Friend next meets the representatives of the civil service trade unions, will he take the opportunitity to explain to them that if managers in the agencies are to do a truly effective job, they must be given the right to negotiate pay and conditions for their staff?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right in suggesting that the key to success in the establishment of reforms in the Civil Service, which has led to the creation of the agencies, is that there should be as much delegation of responsibility as possible to the chief executives and managers who are in charge. That is the policy which is consistently being pursued. The House will be aware that 31 agencies have been established. Evidence is growing that more and more of the agencies have wide discretion and flexibility in the way in which they manage resources, including salaries.

Management Buy-outs

96. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Minister of the Civil Service whether he has any plans to change the rules regarding civil service management buy-outs of public services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I have no plans to change any of the conduct rules in the civil service pay and conditions of service code that may be relevant to civil service management buy-outs.

Mr. Cryer: Is not the Minister concerned that the Crown rules of 1988 were set to one side for the sell-off of the skill centres to Astra Training Services, consisting of three civil servants in charge of the skill centres? Is not the right hon. Gentleman alarmed that only they were privy to the fact that £11 million was to be given to the purchasers along with the skill centres? Is not he further alarmed that those civil servants, and the Minister, connived to deny that information to the 61 other bidders, who made various offers for the skill centres? Those bidders included organisations such as Wimpey and Preston borough council. They were never told about the secret sweetener that was being made available to insider dealers.

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman's last allegation is entirely untrue. The first consideration with management buy-outs is whether that option is the best way to get best value for money and to serve customers. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would recognise that as the first consideration. The Government understand the need to maintain proprieties in any civil service buy-out. Arrangements are made to ensure that officials participating in buy-outs do not have the opportunity to put their private interests above their public responsibilities. The interests of the vendor are secured by setting up a privatisation unit to handle the sale, which is separate from the management of the organisation that is being sold. Clear guidelines are drawn up.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the entirely unsatisfactory nature of that answer, I give notice of my intention to raise the matter again on the Adjournment.

Fast-stream Trainees

97. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what percentage of fast-stream trainees came from *(a)* Oxford and *(b)* Cambridge during the last 12 months; and what the figure was five years ago.

Mr. Luce: In 1989, 36 per cent. of candidates recommended for fast-stream trainee appointments held degrees from Oxford or Cambridge; in 1985, the percentage was 42.

Mr. Fisher: Does the Minister accept that, although Oxford and Cambridge are good universities, those figures are way out of proportion with the total supply of graduates? Does not he wish to put on record the fact that the quality of graduates from all polytechnics and universities in this country is of a high standard? What steps will he take to ensure that the civil service intake reflects the proportion of graduates throughout the United Kingdom, rather than just the proportion from Oxford and Cambridge?

Mr. Luce: Our primary concern in recruitment of such grades to the civil service is to obtain the best candidates, from whatever source, on the basis of equality of opportunity. Recruits come from a wide range of universities; some 40 universities provided recruits in 1989. Surely the hon. Gentleman must accept that obtaining the best candidates, on the basis of equality of opportunity, must be the right criterion.

Mr. Rowe: I do not know how much things have changed since I was an observer on the civil service selection board, as I was for many years. Is not it true, however, that assessors on the board make every effort to ensure that candidates from universities other than Oxford and Cambridge are, if anything, given priority over Oxford and Cambridge graduates? Might not the problem have something to do with the continuing inability of the

selection board to mount an effective recruitment campaign outside Oxford and Cambridge and a limited range of other education institutions?

Mr. Luce: The Civil Service Commission undertakes a sustained campaign of liaison with schools, polytechnics and universities in the recruitment of civil servants: that is absolutely right and essential. In 1982, 71 per cent. of administration trainees—as opposed to all high-flyers who come into the civil service, including specialists—came from Oxbridge, whereas in 1989 the figure was 55 per cent: that demonstrates a change. However, I stick to the view, based on the principle of equality of opportunity, that we must go for the best people whom we can get.

Dr. Marek: Is the Minister saying that he tries to obtain the best people? Is he saying that, furthermore, he obtains the best people, and, therefore, stands by his figure that 36 per cent. of the best people come from Oxford and Cambridge? Not only the House but the country would like to hear an answer to that.

Mr. Luce: The statistics speak for themselves, although it is true that the number taken from Oxbridge—as a proportion of the total—happens to be coming down. It does not matter where they come from, but we are entitled to have the best people in the civil service. Selection must be based on equality of opportunity: that is why we have had a sustained campaign to recruit more women and members of the ethnic minorities.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Is not it true that many people who were not at Oxford or Cambridge see the civil service as a dull, dead-end job in an expensive part of the country? Those of us who work with the civil service know that that is not true, but what is the civil service doing to improve its image?

Mr. Luce: A great deal is happening to change the perception of work in the civil service. The most significant thing to change the public's perception of the civil service is the next steps reforms. I believe that young people entering the civil service want responsibility at an early age, and the reforms have succeeded in giving them that.

Civil Service Unions

99. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he last met representatives of the civil service unions; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave earlier to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

Mr. Barnes: Has low pay for support grades 1 and 2, such as drivers and messengers, been discussed? Why is their pay lower than the equivalent in most European countries, including Italy, Belgium and Spain? What will happen in 1992 with the single market? Will their pay rise to the level of that in Denmark or fall to the level of that in Greece?

Mr. Luce: Questions of pay in the civil service are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The pay of support grades has improved substantially during the past two years, especially for special groups. Indeed, for one group an offer has been made of a 22 per cent. increase. The overall position of support grades is now improving.

Natural History Museum

100. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what representations he has received from curatorial staff on the conditions of service in the natural history museum.

Mr. Luce: I have received some representations via hon. Members from curatorial staff in the natural history museum, to which I have replied.

Mr. Dalyell: I spent two hours this morning with scientists at the natural history museum. May I ask the right hon. Gentleman a question of which I have given his office notice? If the Prime Minister was serious, as I believe she was, in her speech on 22 March about the need for a databank, why has the distinguished entomologist Mr. Michael Day, who is doing important research on bees, been made redundant?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his courtesy in giving my office notice of that question. The position of staff is a matter for the management. As I said in reply to an earlier question, the management of the natural history museum has taken the lead in organising a seminar on Friday for scientists from Britain and abroad, during which it will be possible to consider the international and wider implications for research of some of the decisions that it has taken. The overall funding for the natural history museum has risen by 16·5 per cent. this year, against a positive background. It has decided to focus on two areas—health and environmental matters.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the courteous but unsatisfactory nature of that reply, I give notice that I hope to raise the matter on the Adjournment.

Explosion (Islington)

3.30 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As you will know, in my constituency on Saturday evening there was an explosion at the Honourable Artillery Company premises, and a large number of people who had been enjoying a birthday party were injured in that blast. I am sure that the House will feel a sense of outrage and shock at what happened. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

Could you tell us, Mr. Speaker, whether the Government have said why they will not come to the House to make a statement on that matter? Not only is there a great deal of concern about what happened on Saturday night, but there are wider issues about the security of similar buildings that have a connection with the armed services, but not necessarily any direct military use. There is a great deal of public concern and it is not good enough for the Ministry of Defence simply to say that everything is all right. Now is not the time for complacency. I hope that you can enlighten us on whether the Government have said anything to you about coming to the House to make a statement.

Mr. Speaker: I have not had such a request from the Government. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will have other opportunities to raise this sad matter, which has affected his constituency, perhaps during the defence estimates debate next week.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Employment Subsidies Act 1978 (Renewal) (Great Britain) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Sir Geoffrey Howe.]*

SCOTTISH GRAND COMMITTEE

Ordered,

That, in the course of its consideration of Scottish Estimates, the Scottish Grand Committee may meet in Edinburgh on Monday 18th June at half-past Ten o'clock.—*[Sir Geoffrey Howe.]*

European Community (Developments)

[Relevant documents: European Community Document No. SEC(90)1, the Programme of the European Commission for 1990; Second report from the Foreign Affairs Committee on the Single European Act (House of Commons Paper No. 82) and the observations by the Government on the report (Cm. 1077); Minutes of evidence taken by the Foreign Affairs Committee on 23 May 1990 (House of Commons Paper No. 437-i).]

3.33 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Douglas Hurd): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the White Paper on Developments in the European Community (July-December 1989) (Cm. 1023).

The diplomatic merry-go-round is gathering speed. Last week, NATO Foreign Ministers met in Scotland. Summit meetings have just taken place between American, British and Soviet leaders. In 14 days' time, the heads of Government of the European Community will meet in Dublin. Just before that meeting, Foreign Ministers of the allied powers and the two Germanies will meet in East Berlin. At the beginning of July, NATO heads of Government will meet in London. Less than a week later, the heads of Government of the major economic powers will meet in the United States. That is just June and July.

There is more to that than photographs and communiqués. Those meetings are not just part of the usual international round. We are trying to manage the enormous and welcome changes going on in the world. The old mould has broken, the new one not yet set. This debate is about the European Council, but we need to fit it into a wider view of Britain's interests.

Since Sir Winston Churchill's "iron curtain" speech, all our assumptions have had to be built on the fact of a divided Europe, with the free countries of the west facing countries in the east. Politically and economically, the eastern countries were under the control of the Soviet Union, and because of the nature of Soviet policy, they therefore represented a military and political threat to the free world.

The European Community has had a unique place in that post-war architecture. It achieved brilliantly its central purpose of making friends and allies out of former enemies. It was always a bridge from Europe to the wider world, including to the Communist bloc. It helped to achieve for its citizens a prosperity which set for the communist countries a comparison which they were found to fail—and did fail, in spectacular humiliation.

Much of our Community agenda was set in train long before the recent changes by which eastern Europe won its freedom, but we need now to take stock of what we are trying to achieve, see what adjustments we should make, and decide where the Community fits into the wider architecture of the new Europe. At the same time, in this debate we look back at the White Paper on Community developments under the French presidency. We have improved the format and hope to improve it yet again next time. We are also discussing the Commission's annual work programme, which the Scrutiny Select Committee recommended for debate today.

The background is that the European Community and NATO will continue to be the main pillars of our foreign

policy. NATO will increasingly be about peace building, not just peace keeping, but its essential security role will remain at its core.

It would be irresponsible to argue that we do not need defence. We do, and that defence must be collective, but NATO will be one of the means of reaching out to the Soviet Union and the countries of eastern Europe as the become democracies and adapt their military structures. NATO, with a united Germany in it, will remain the guarantee of Europe's safety and one of the main means of binding the United States and Canada into Europe—which is in our interests as well as theirs.

In parallel, we shall see the increasing development of the Helsinki process—the conference on security and co-operation in Europe—not as a security organisation replacing NATO but as a partnership building confidence among 35 countries, many of which have been adversaries for the past 40 years.

Against that background, the European Community will become, if anything, even more important than now in the new scheme of things.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): The EEC has been an unmitigated disaster.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman has not read his party's policy document.

Mr. Skinner: I have. I voted against it.

Mr. Hurd: That is why it won—now I understand.

The new democracies of eastern Europe are enormously attracted by what we in the Community have to offer—free democracies, offering our citizens increasing prosperity through liberal economic policies, and concerted action to tackle common problems and a common system, based on a treaty binding that enterprise together. In looking westwards, they are looking first and foremost to the European Community for economic and political support.

In response, we are already devising new forms of association agreements with the countries of eastern Europe. Those agreements will increase in content as political and economic reform in those countries gathers strength. They may well one day lead to full membership of the Community. I would counsel against the argument that a larger Community would necessarily mean a more loosely structured Community.

The new entrants might well argue in favour of wider competence to the Community and closer integration. The example of Spain is worth pondering in that respect. However that argument turns out, I do not see that the Europe of 12 could shut the door of membership for any length of time against fully qualified European democracies, which are anxious to join, whether they are now members of EFTA, or are in the centre or east of Europe. Half of Europe is not the same as Europe and we should never claim otherwise.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Given that economies in the east of Europe are less sophisticated and more backward than our own, it would be a mistake if the European Community became such a close-knit club, with such high standards of entry, that the new countries, which we want to welcome into the democratic fold, were discouraged from joining.

Mr. Hurd: Membership of the Community requires an applicant to be a fully fledged democracy in political and economic terms. A country which relies on a high level of state subsidy and state aid is simply not qualified to enter the Community. Therefore, it will be a number of years before the newly fledged democracies of central and eastern Europe will be eligible. However, I agree that there should be no attempt to raise barriers to make their entry more difficult. I foresee that, when they are qualified, they will wish to apply. I do not think that there are grounds for keeping the door shut for a long time.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Does my right hon. Friend accept that we are eager for countries such as Hungary and Poland to come into the Community? Will he ensure that their entry does not push Turkey down the queue, as it has had a long-standing association with the Community?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend raises an extremely relevant point, which shows that the problem of enlargement of the Community is not simple. I have stated our approach, which is not only sensible now but is what is likely to happen in the future.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): The hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) spoke about the potential accession of Turkey to the European Community. In their observations on the second report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, presented to the House last month, the Government said with regard to accession of states into the Community that the criterion was that, under article 237, such a state should meet "conditions of democracy and human rights." Therefore, will the Foreign Secretary state categorically that Turkey's standards of human rights, coupled with her continued illegal occupation of part of Cyprus, rule out her acceptance within the Community?

Mr. Hurd: In another statement, we have made our position clear. The whole Community has agreed that it should not consider any applications for full membership from countries outside until 1993. That covers the Austrian and Turkish applications, which are the two that the Community has had to date. After that, we shall need to consider, and we have told the Turkish Government that. Meanwhile, we are seeking to strengthen our Community relationship with Turkey by building up the content of the association agreement with that country.

We should take this opportunity to look at our Community—its strengths and weaknesses—as others see it. We are helped by the excellent and far-ranging report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs on the completion of the single market. There will always be some tension inside the Community between the Europe of phrases and the Europe of facts. We all belong to the political profession, so we cannot be entirely scornful of phrases and declarations, because they are the tools of our trade. Having said that, Conservative Members—and, I think, people in the country—have a strong preference for the Europe of facts. When the facts lag too far behind the phrases, the gap creates cynicism and the feeling of unreality, which of course gets worse if the facts begin not just to lag behind but to contradict the phrases used.

That is why, in our approach to the forthcoming summit at Dublin, we shall continue to stress what we believe are the two main elements today in this Europe of facts—by which I mean the need for Community decisions to complete the single market and the need for national legislation to carry into effect what the Community has

[Mr. Hurd]

decided. By concentrating on these tasks, we shall sweep away restrictions and give Europe an increased meaning in the life of the citizen.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): We all get carried away by these lovely Alice-in-Wonderland phrases about a greater Europe and a greater world, but does my right hon. Friend not agree that, if we are to get the Common Market right, whether in 1992 or at any other time, we ought to be talking not about who will be allowed to join but about who is to deal, as the Court of Auditors says, with the shambles of the fraud that is being perpetrated now? According to the Court of Auditors, European Community fraud amounts to £7 billion. Until we get rid of fraud, let us not use such grandiloquent phrases as "a greater Europe" and "a greater world". Let us at least ensure that it is honest.

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is not a bad phrase-maker himself, so he should not scorn those phrases. However, he has put his finger on one point of fact to which I shall turn later.

We must make stronger progress on the single market this year, given the need to implement the programme by our target date of 1 January 1993. Some progress has been made recently by the Irish presidency—for example, on public procurement—but we are looking to the Dublin Council to add impetus to negotiations on transport and financial services. Air, shipping, road and rail links and insurance and investment services are all areas in which agreement would bring great benefits to both consumers and business. Progress in those areas is central to the success of the single market. We must not let the pace slacken.

It is not much good, however, the Community taking decisions which then simply gather dust in the pending trays of national bureaucracies and parliaments. The Community will be able to achieve its objectives only if its laws are effectively implemented and enforced. The United Kingdom has an excellent record on this, matched by very few others. At the end of June 1989, Italy had given effect to barely half the single market measures due for implementation, although I am encouraged that new arrangements for clearing the Italian backlog are now in hand. Last month, I wrote to Mr. Delors, the President of the Commission, to propose some ways in which we could extend the procedures for achieving the full implementation of Community law. I hope that that will bear fruit.

However, to report the failings will not alone provide the remedy. There is a good case for strengthening the role of both the Commission and the European Court of Justice over enforcement and compliance. We should discuss how that could be done. Can the European Court of Justice procedures be speeded up? Should the court have powers, like national courts, to impose penalties on persistent offenders, even if they are member states? These are matters which we shall raise in the present review of Community institutions.

To turn to the internal work of the Community, under the headings of political union and economic and monetary union, I believe that the discussion about political union is now in much clearer perspective than it used to be. The European Community has played an important part in overcoming national rivalries, but they still exist. The Community is the best available means of channelling those rivalries into effective co-operation in the common interest. We saw that last week, in the dramatic row over bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Without common rules, and a means to apply them, we could rapidly have found ourselves not in an immediate flare-up but in a long-running and deeply damaging trade war.

There is nothing new about angry trade disputes between Britain and France; our history is peppered with them. What is new, though still far from perfect, is a system for settling disputes promptly and fairly. We see the same in the single market and in competition policy. It is the existence of common rules, and a means of enforcing them, that can achieve fair trading conditions for each individual country of the Community and a better competitive position for the Community as a whole.

It is in this area that the Europe of phrase and rhetoric and the Europe of facts are most often in competition. Both have a place. Without phrases and speeches, we might never get beyond narrow nationalism, but it would be fatal to the Community to try to turn rhetoric into common policy without public consent or the practical mechanisms to make that work.

That is the heart of our approach to political economic and monetary union. That is why the Prime Minister at Dublin last time set out what political union does not mean. She guided the debate there and put her finger on a point which is increasingly accepted—that there is no credible set of ideas or constitutional rules which can be drawn up, adopted and called political union.

Mr. Kaufman: "Guided the debate"?

Mr. Hurd: In response to the sedentary intervention by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), the questions that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister asked at Dublin are now questions that everyone has felt bound to answer in a way that has cleared up the debate and removed many of the anxieties in people's minds.

We will keep our separate Governments, our legal systems, our constitutions and our traditions. At the same time, we will hold more and more practical policies in common. That is not eroding sovereignty; it is using it. In 1985, in the debate on treaty change, the Community started with grandiose ideas but eventually agreed on limited change to achieve identifiable results. That is likely to happen again this time.

In some ways, the debate on economic and monetary union is similar. When those matters were debated in the House, there was a clear view on all sides that Parliament's control over the Administration was firmly based on its ability to control the Government's revenue-raising powers. There are many steps which we can take towards greater economic and monetary co-operation in Europe, but the House was clear in not accepting stage 3 of the Delors report on either political or practical grounds.

Hard practical work is now in hand in ECOFIN and in the Monetary Committee. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor is taking a full part in that and developing our ideas. Here, as in other fields, we have no intention of being bashful or negative. The House will again be debating EMU later this week in response to a private member's motion tabled by the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore).

It is not yet certain, but it seems likely, that the forthcoming summit in Dublin will decide to convene a second inter governmental conference, in addition to the one of EMU which has already been agreed, under the heading of political union. It is clear now, particularly as a result of the meeting of Foreign Ministers that I attended in Ireland three weeks ago, that the discussion on political union is about the balance between Community institutions and how their working can be improved.

Of course, any treaty changes can be agreed only by unanimity among the member states and after debate and ratification in the House. Throughout, we shall be seeking steps which will make the Community more effective and more relevant to the citizen. Before my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) shouts "fraud" again, I shall come to that in a moment.

We want a democratic accountability to be improved, political co-operation sanctioned and the principle of subsidiarity more rigorously applied.

Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): I have been following the Foreign Secretary's argument with great interest, and his emphasis on facts as opposed to phrases. Does he accept that, because of the emphasis which he and the Prime Minister are putting on facts, there is a danger that the United Kingdom's contribution to greater convergence may appear to be negative? Surely there is a Europe of process as well as a Europe of facts and a Europe of phrases.

Mr. Hurd: I agree with that. I believe that political union is a process by which the member states of the Community, without being forced, develop the habit of increasingly working together on subjects where common decisions are needed. I see political union as a process which leads in that direction. We intend to take, and are taking, a full part, week by week and meeting by meeting, in that process.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Hurd: I shall give way to the hon. Lady; then I wish to get on.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Surely consensus is not the same thing as accepting a move towards majority voting on matters of major importance? To do that would not be moving with the agreement of the peoples of Europe.

Mr. Hurd: That is why there is a carefully calculated mix between matters which need unanimity and those which can be settled by qualified majority voting.

Democratic control over the decision-making of the Council of Ministers is the proper preserve of national parliaments. That is increasingly accepted in the Community; the view that control should be strengthened is one of the interesting developments in the thinking of the Community in the past year or so. Last month, there was a conference in Cork attended by national scrutiny committee chairmen and the European Parliament to discuss exactly that issue. There will also be assizes of national parliaments in October to discuss the inter-governmental conference. That is a good move, and these are all welcome developments.

Here at Westminster, I hope that the House agrees that the Government have responded positively to the report of the Procedure Committee on scrutiny. We look forward to early implementation of many of its recommendations. Last year, there were 52 scrutiny debates—almost two a week while the House was sitting. In future, we shall try to ensure that such debates continue to take place early in the legislative process of the Community so that the Government can take full account of the views of the House in negotiation in Brussels.

The new Standing Committees that the Government have approved, which will take evidence from Ministers, will further strengthen that scrutiny. I hope that the effectiveness of Parliament's influence on Community legislation can also be increased by improving contacts between hon. Members of the House and Members of the European Parliament.

Here at Westminster, we are making a real and visible effort to improve parliamentary involvement in the Community's legislative process. I welcome that. I hope that other national parliaments will do likewise and that there will be more exchanges between national Parliaments on that shared aim.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): My right hon. Friend referred to the 52 debates that have taken place on European Community documents and directives. Can he mention a single one in which the Government changed their position as a result of the views expressed in the House?

Mr. Hurd: Having taken part in such debates, I am sure that the Minister's view is often shaped—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] No, I mean that. Ministers' views are shaped and shifted by many angles of aproach as a result of such debates. That is what Parliament is about. One does not expect Ministers to do 180 deg turns in public, but one expects them—and this is what happens—to be influenced and to tell their officials as they leave the Box, "I do not want to go through that again." *[Laughter.]* That is what parliamentary coming and going is all about. My hon. Friend has been here long enough to have poked a few pins into people and had exactly that impact.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney) *rose*——

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South) *rose*——

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow) *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I am creating more excitement than I intended. I intend to proceed. I shall finish the point about parliaments; then I shall give way to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore).

The European Parliament provides a second pillar of democratic accountability. Its role in the legislative process was significantly strengthened under the Single European Act. The new procedures are working well, and they provide the European Parliament with an important point of entry into Community legislation. We see no need for significant change again now.

Where we do see scope for progress is in improving the accountability of the Commission. National parliaments such as this House cannot keep watch over the Commission's day-to-day administration. I should like to see—this is where the emphasis which my hon. Friend the Member for Selly Oak placed on fraud comes in—repeated in Strasbourg the rigour of financial accountability that we have here. The Public Accounts Committee and National Audit Office here are excellent models. The Budgetary

[Mr. Hurd]

Control Committee of the European Parliament and the European Court of Auditors could do a comparable job, and we should give them the teeth to do so. The European Parliament should, for example, have the power to summon Commission officials. It should be given greater powers to check on fraud and value for money in Community spending.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr Hurd: The taxpayer expects that scrutiny, and the Community should provide it. The history of Parliaments suggests that the role of watching and checking Executive action is not less, but more, important than the role of carrying through legislation, on which so much attention is focused.

Mr. Shore: I am all for the European Parliament bringing the Commission to heel, as far as that is possible. The Foreign Secretary spoke about increasing the effective scrutiny of this House over European Community decisions. How can effective scrutiny be undertaken if qualified—or rather, majority—voting is extended in the Council of Ministers, as it was during the Single European Act? Will he at least guarantee that Britain will not consider any further extension of majority voting in the Council of Ministers? It affects the essence of how we control our Ministers in this country.

Mr. Hurd: As the right hon. Gentleman is an enthusiast for the free market, he will agree that it would have been difficult to make as much progress as we have on the single market without qualified majority voting. If the Single European Act had not introduced qualified majority voting in this range of matters, the protectionist members of the Community, often a minority, could have blocked the measures for which the Commission, Britain and the more liberal members of the Community have been pressing. He is not wise to press me for that commitment.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I heard the voice of my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen).

Mr. Budgen: My right hon. Friend referred to the problem of Euro-fraud. Does he agree that year after year the Court of Auditors points to the most extensive and blatant fraud? Unless we have some form of Euro-police, which would be a complete affront to every nation state, this will go on and on. There is a clear sign that at least some of the countries of Europe know that it is going on, yet turn a blind eye to it.

Mr. Hurd: That is precisely why there is a strong case for strengthening the core of the Community and the effectiveness of the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors and the Budgetary Control Committee, which together should be able to counter that tendency.

The debate about democratic accountability means, at root, satisfying the citizen. Several member states, including ourselves, have provided for recourse to an ombudsman. None of the national models may be found to make complete sense at Community level, because the procedural problems and constitutional arrangements are different, but it is worth looking to see whether the absence of any such arrangements at Community level may be worth remedying.

There is a case for examining with our partners whether some such institution or ombudsman might be set up as Community institutions are reformed. I do not know whether that would be feasible. I float the idea today. If a scheme could be worked out, it could be an important contribution towards making the Community more real for all our citizens.

At the same time, we need to look at the effectiveness of European political co-operation. As the House knows, this is the means by which the Twelve increasingly work together on foreign policy. We sometimes forget how impressive that co-operation can appear to people outside the Community. Recently, the Australian Foreign Minister told me that he saw it as one of the most important recent changes in international affairs.

Recently, in the middle east, I was struck by the stress which Arab leaders placed on the need for renewed action not by Britain or France, but by all the Twelve, in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The United States, as Mr. Baker has made clear, looks to European political co-operation to provide the means whereby the Americans can increasingly discuss problems, such as those in the middle east, with their main European allies. It is, indeed, happening at an increasing pace.

European political co-operation works by consensus, and should continue to do so. That does not, however, preclude national initiatives such as those recently taken by President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl on Lithuania. We should look at ways in which to strengthen the effectiveness of EPC by some reinforcement of its secretariat, by allowing EPC business to be discussed at regular foreign affairs councils and enhancing the way in which Community missions aboard can share tasks as well as services.

I do not see why there should not be experiments in producing reports among the Twelve on a particular event —for example, an election in a third country. I cannot see what would stand in the way of that type of co-operation. By such steady improvement in the habit of working together, we shall continue to increase the coherence and effectiveness of such European political co-operation.

The habit of working together is the core of the matter. There must be rules and institutions to embody it, but that habit, unforced and arrived at out of a shared sense of interest, is the vital heart of the Community. In the past 10 years, I have seen that habit grow and strengthen greatly.

Mr. Spearing: The co-operation and importance of national Parliaments, and the importance of co-operation within the Community, to which the right hon. Gentleman has just alluded, would receive universal approval. Earlier, he mentioned European political union, and said that the Government's approach to that lay in the balance of institutional power. Does he agree that the commitment to economic and monetary union, which the Government now hold, requires some form of central authority concerning economic and monetary policy? Of itself, that would constitute a political power, in the same way as the First Lord of the Treasury of this country inevitably became the Prime Minister.

Mr. Hurd: The House has debated that, and it will debate it again later this week. There is also a lively

discussion in the Community about it. We have published our ideas about this, and we believe that it is possible to move towards the objectives of economic and monetary union without putting ourselves under a series of centralised institutions.

Mrs. Dunwoody: How?

Mr. Hurd: If the hon. Lady took the Treasury paper of last November from the Library, she would see how that is sketched—I say sketched, because my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is now in the process of setting out the ideas in greater depth. The hon. Lady will be able to study them as they develop.

We do not accept it as necessary to have a centralised and a necessarily bureaucratic and unaccountable system to achieve the objectives that led to the Delors report.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford) *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I am about to conclude, but I shall give way to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Wells: My right hon. Friend's positive approach to the intergovernmental conference and the planned meetings on it are welcome to the House and to Britain. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the real problem for European co-operation is that the meetings of the Council of Europe and the Council of Ministers are not held in public, and therefore we have a problem to ensure democratic accountability to national Parliaments as well as to the European Parliament? We need the control that my right hon. Friend has suggested, and accountability in all we do. At the IGC, we should suggest a second house of the European Parliament consisting of representatives of national parliaments to oversee the Council of Europe and the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Hurd: I am not sure that I am persuaded by that. My hon. Friend's first point has some validity, but the trouble about the Council of Ministers is that a lot of time is spent in negotiation, and if all those negotiations were in public it is unlikely that the Council would be successful. I do not think that my hon. Friend's solution would address that problem.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Hurd: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman. I have never failed to do so, and I do not intend to start now.

Mr. Dalyell: Is the Foreign Secretary aware that I have in my hand a wad of letters from distinguished institutions in France, Germany and Denmark asking Britain to think again about what is happening in the natural history museum? We are talking about organising together on the basis of institutions. Will the Foreign Secretary ask someone from the Foreign Office to consider its interest in the matter, which is important for the third world countries because we are destroying what we in this country possibly do best? Will he get someone from the Foreign Office to give him a report on what is happening in south Kensington?

Mr. Hurd: I shall immediately comply with that. A natural sympathy with dinosaurs will impel me to do so, and I shall have no difficulty in meeting the hon. Gentleman's request. I shall let him know how I view the situation when I have been able to look into it.

I am sorry to have taken so long, and I shall now conclude my speech. If I am right in thinking that the habit of working together is the key to the Community's success, it means that we must exert ourselves against those who seek to measure progress by the number of centralised policies and centralised institutions, and the height of the barriers that separate the Community from the rest of the world.

Equally, we must show some self-confidence in these islands—which is not always true of commentators on the subject—in our concept of a Community working together with increasing effectiveness where common or co-ordinated policies are needed. That is a growing theme. However, we must also work with our like-minded friends and allies for a world in which the cause of economic and political democracy entrenches itself, develops and makes permanent its present success.

4.11 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): It is always a great pleasure to listen to the Foreign Secretary seeking—as he did this afternoon—to fit the Government's random and self-contradictory activities into the framework of what he claims to be a grand design. When one listens to the right hon. Gentleman doing that so persuasively, one must remember that he is a writer of fiction of high repute—what one might call the Jeffrey Archer of joined-up writing of the Conservative party.

As one listens to the right hon. Gentleman explaining how the Government are initiating this, starting that and collaborating with the other, it is difficult to reconcile that harmonious, well-composed picture with the extraordinary, self-contradictory activities in which the Government are often in a minority of one and over which the right hon. Gentleman has to preside. He wishes to carry into action what he says but is always hag-ridden by the Prime Minister, who will have been interested to hear his latest definition of the activities of the European Community and the United Kingdom's role in it—the habit of working together. She could start that in Cabinet before going on to deal with the NATO summit, Community summits, and so on.

The Foreign Secretary rightly spoke about changes in the international picture caused by the recent meetings of the Warsaw pact and NATO, and how, understandably, they fit into our relationship to the Community and other European countries in the conference on security and co-operation in Europe and other institutions. One would never have thought that this Government had fought a rearguard action in favour of the maintenance and modernisation of short-range nuclear weapons when every single member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has dropped out of contention on this issue and when, in the end, President Bush announced that the United States was not going ahead with Lance modernisation a matter of days after the Prime Minister returned from Bermuda saying that she still supported their modernisation.

The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right that NATO must reassess its role in the light of developments in eastern Europe. It must take into account what the Prime Minister herself called only the other day the ending of the threat from the Soviet Union, what President Bush has called the end of the cold war, what General Colin Powell, chairman of the United States joint chiefs of staff, Mr. Cheney, Mr. Baker and all sensible people have

[Mr. Gerald Kaufman]

analysed and described as a major change in the relationships of European countries. So it is proper to fit our relationship with the European Community into these changes.

The problem is that, just as the Government have no grand design for our relationship with our NATO allies or for trying to see a picture in which the spectrum of Europe stretches from Ireland through to Bucharest, so they seem to have no clear idea what they want to do in the Community.

Constructive progress has been made on some matters. One of them, to which the right hon. Gentleman may not —understandably—have had time to refer in a debate in which many right hon. and hon. Members want to speak, is aid from the Community to eastern Europe. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will agree that the Community is making good progress on aid, as are various countries, including the United Kingdom, bilaterally.

But I still think that it would be useful if the Community tried to work out a much more coherent and structured policy on aid for eastern European countries, taking into account the diversity of their problems and the fact that, unless we have such a structured policy, there is a real danger that the understandable enthusiasm for assisting development in eastern Europe as it becomes more democratic may remove attention from countries in the developing world in other continents. For them, aid is even more important than it is in eastern Europe, and there is great concern among non-governmental agencies that the concentration on eastern Europe may mean a diminution in aid for countries that are abjectly poverty-stricken.

I welcome the fact that the right hon. Gentleman referred to views, which the Community has held and developed over a number of years, on the middle east. I very much hope that the Community will take cognisance of the latest developments there, including what may be happening in Jerusalem today. Most right hon. and hon. Members looked forward to and welcomed the possibility of a peace Government formed in Israel by Mr. Peres and deeply regretted the fact that he was unable to obtain the majority that he needed and the mandate that he wanted to pursue talks under the Mubarak and Baker scheme.

If a Government are formed in Jerusalem today by Mr. Shamir, I hope that the Community will send out the message that we would view with great sadness and despondency a Government in Israel of the extreme right which would have as its major objective the planting of settlements in the occupied territories——

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East) *rose——*

Mr. Kaufman: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman when I have finished my sentence.

Although Opposition Members—like, I am sure, the whole House—strongly welcome the decision of the Soviet Government to allow Jews from the Soviet Union to leave to settle in Israel, where they are already receiving a great welcome, the Community would not find satisfaction in any deliberate policy of a new Israel Government to settle Soviet Jews in the occupied territories.

Mr. Dykes: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. Incidentally, if this does not embarrass him, I should like to congratulate him on his courageous role in advocating the argument for a peace settlement. Does he agree that, looking back on it as an objective document for a plan for peace in the middle east, which would have been both durable and successful, and relating it to the role of the Community, the Venice declaration still remains one of the best documents that has ever been writtten on the middle east peace plan, and shows once again that the Community and Europe as a whole—not just the United States—should have greater involvement in that process?

Mr. Kaufman: It was a useful contribution, but we have moved on from there, as has Israel. In Cairo only three weeks ago I had a discussion with Mr. Peres, the leader of the Israel Labour party, who, to my great sadness, is not the Prime Minister of that country today. He spoke about the need for dialogue and of the fact that Israel proper could contain all the Soviet immigrants who chose to go there without any need for them to be settled in the occupied territories.

Those are matters that it is proper for us to discuss in a debate on developments within the Community in the past six months. However, the Foreign Secretary placed what seemed to be the most positive, optimistic and almost joyful interpretation on the way in which we are approaching 1992. In a rare moment of unconscious candour, in their response last month to the second report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Government said clearly, plainly and blankly that, with regard to the single market,

"the Government's priorities are in financial services, including insurance, and transport."

That is how the Government see the single market—as a money-making concern for financial institutions that can cross frontiers, and almost as an adventure playground for the institutions. The Goverment have never seen 1992 in any more optimistic, forthcoming or enlightened way. That is one reason why, far from having established the habit of working together, which is what the Foreign Secretary claimed a few moments ago, as the Community moves towards 1992 the United Kingdom Government are isolated on issue after issue.

On the exchange rate mechanism, for example, we can all properly be extremely cautious about stages 2 and 3 of the Delors report. Opposition Members would certainly not accept a central bank without full political control of such an institution. However, the Government's approach to membership of the exchange rate mechanism changes from month to month. We all recall——

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): I know that the Opposition are now committed to entering the ERM should they become the Government, but will the right hon. Gentleman explain how a Labour Government would maintain the parity of the pound within the ERM at the same time as, on the one hand, cutting interest rates and, on the other hand, massively increasing public spending?

Mr. Kaufman: As the Foreign Secretary pointed out we shall debate that matter later in the week. The rate at which we enter the exchange rate mechanism is an extremely critical matter on which I shall certainly not expand this afternoon—*[Interruption.]* Certainly not.

What I will say is that while the Prime Minister, in that notorious interview with Mr. Walden, invented a new reason why we should not enter the exchange rate mechanism with each new reply that she gave him, she is

not changing her tune. At the conference that she addressed recently in Scotland, the right hon. Lady seemed to be saying that the Government were almost ready to enter the exchange rate mechanism because our cost of living, which is one of the criteria that she laid down as having to be satisfactory before we could enter, is now approaching Community levels. She doctored the cost of living index so as to do that.

I am beginning to wonder whether the Prime Minister wishes to doctor the cost of living index so as to enter the exchange rate mechanism or whether she wished to enter the exchange rate mechanism so as to doctor the cost of living index, so that she can present a new facet of the Government's failure to the electorate. The Government are clearly unable to make up their mind about that, and it has led to the disposal of one Foreign Secretary and one Chancellor of the Exchequer in the past 12 months.

There is also the issue of the social charter. The former Foreign Secretary, now the Leader of the House, said only a little while ago:

"No-one doubts that there is a legitimate social dimension to 1992".

The Prime Minister seems to doubt that. The way in which she and her acolytes block the social charter at meeting after meeting shows that, while they want the Community to be an adventure playground for financial services and financial manipulations across the frontiers of Europe, they do not want the protection for employed people that must be a parallel of any other development. Protection for employed people is vital in a Community without frontiers because otherwise, although financial services will do well, employed people in Britain, who already have some of the lowest standards in the Community, will be more and more seriously disadvantaged.

I am sure that, in his heart of hearts, the Foreign Secretary would like to adhere to the social charter.

Mr. Hurd *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Kaufman: Perhaps, like his predecessor, the right hon. Gentleman thinks that it is a Marxist document. If so, perhaps he will provide me with what I often asked the former Foreign Secretary for—the references in "Das Kapital" to workers being represented on boards. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that that was one of the most Marxist aspects of the social charter.

Mr. Spearing: Every Labour Member would endorse the need for greater protection of employed people in the circumstances of the single market. Are not these provisions similar to those in the treaty relating to the environment, which leave it open to national parliaments and Governments to introduce protections in their areas? Should not that also apply in respect of conditions of employment, so that any parliament or nation can make its own plans for the protection of its employed persons, as it can for any advantages that might accrue from the single market?

Mr. Kaufman: I would welcome any move by any parliament to enhance social protection of employed people in the way that my hon. Friend suggests. The problem is that for the past 11 years, Parliament has been eroding and destroying the conditions and protections of employed people. It would be useful if the Community could redress what has gone wrong under the Government's majority.

My hon. Friend anticipated another subject on to which I shall move immediately—the environment. The Foreign Secretary said that the Government established the habit of working together, but they have an unparalleled record in the Community of disobeying decisions made by the Community about the environment and of failing to obey Community directives. Again and again, Community standards for the environment are being flouted by the United Kingdom, which is being referred to repeatedly as the dirty man of Europe. Since my hon. Friend and I entered this place almost exactly 20 years ago——

Mr. Spearing: Next Monday.

Mr. Kaufman: Indeed. My hon. Friend and I will celebrate our 20th anniversary next Monday. Since he became a Member of this place, he has been especially active in protecting the environment generally, and water standards especially.

The Community has decided to apply to the European Court of Justice—the Foreign Secretary referred to this—on the standards of various beaches in Britain. The Commission has decided to apply to the court next month on matters such as the pollution of the Aire and Calder rivers and the failure to implement the directive on cadmium. The United Kingdom has filthy beaches and it is not meeting the Community's water standards. The Government have a literally filthy record on these vital matters.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Francis Maude): Does the right hon. Gentleman remember the announcement made by the Commissioner for environmental matters, Mr. Ripa de Meana, in Brussels in February, when he produced a league table of infractions on environmental matters? Far from Britain having an unparalleled bad record, we had one of the better records.

Mr. Kaufman: I shall come to the gentleman to whom the Minister referred in a moment. I have page upon page of statements, decisions and formal letters from the Commission all of which relate to the filthy state of our water and our beaches. The Minister cannot pretend that that is not so.

Only last week the United Kingdom blocked moves to deal with pollution, for which it was rebuked by Mr. Ripa de Meana, whom the Minister has quoted in aid. The Government went against what was being recommended by that gentleman and by the Prime Minister in one of her eloquent speeches in which she referred to global warming. The right hon. Lady has the habit of picking up an issue, playing with it for a few days, and then casting it aside like a toy of which she has grown weary. There was the litter that she scattered in St. James park, some of which she picked up. The House will remember her interest in football identity cards. She has now gone green.

The Foreign Secretary referred to his natural sympathy with dinosaurs, and at Bracknell the Prime Minister spoke with great enthusiasm about the fossils of serpents having been found in Britain and about the action needed to deal with the problem of global warming. From her scientific background she described graphically the way in which the earth is being endangered. Our climate is being endangered. Indeed, the entire ecology of the planet is endangered by global warming.

[Mr. Kaufman]

The Prime Minister said:

"we would be taking a great risk with future generations if, having received this early warning, we did nothing about it; or just took the attitude 'Well, it'll see me out.'"

It may see out the Prime Minister, but the problem remains of what she spoke specifically about on 25 May in Bracknell. She said:

"We must also take action on carbon dioxide emissions . . . Any target would have to be part of a wide international effort."

She wanted

"a realistic international programme of action and an equally realistic time-table. Discharges of carbon dioxide and CFCs, if unabated, will go on accumulating in the atmosphere and cannot easily be reversed. Even the most urgent measures now cannot fully repair the damage of the past."

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kaufman: No. I was about to refer to Mr. Ripa de Meana, whom the Minister mentioned some moments ago.

At the meeting in Paris on 8 June, Britain was one of the countries that blocked moves by the Community to set the year 20000 as a deadline for stabilising carbon dioxide emissions. Britain said that it could not improve its commitment to stabilise the emissions at 1990 levels, by the year 2000.

However, the Community's Environment Commissioner, Carlo Ripa de Meana, urged adoption of the year 200 target date, reportedly hoping that it would bring pressure on the United States to follow suit.

The Prime Minister manages—if only briefly—to summon up enthusiasm for subjects of great importance. However, when it involves action in the Community, the United Kingdom blocks actions that other Community countries want to take to deal with the serious issue of global warming.

There is another issue on which the Government block or defy action, or defy or invent policy—or give reasons for changing policy that other Community countries want to keep. It is curious that, although the Foreign Secretary has been very active—although not in the way that we would have liked—he has not spoken about Community action on sanctions for South Africa. The Community has made a series of decisions on that important matter, including one in December 1989. It said that, for sanctions to be lifted, there must be evidence of "profound and irreversible changes".

What that meant was defined in the directive of 27 October 1986, which demanded

"concrete measures leading to the abolition of apartheid".

Not one such concrete measure has been taken by the South African Government. We welcome the measures that have been taken: the partial lifting of the state of emergency, the release of Mr. Mandela—and some political prisoners—and the unbanning of certain organisations. However, none of those adds up to the conditions repeatedly laid down by the Community.

On 21 February, the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the right hon. Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave), said:

"For all practical purposes President de Klerk has taken the steps demanded by EC Foreign Ministers".—[*Official Report*, 21 February 1990; Vol. 167, c. 789.]

That is extraordinary, as the directive referred to

"concrete measures leading to the abolition of apartheid,"

and those measures have not been taken.

The Prime Minister's personal statement, made with the former Foreign Secretary in Kuala Lumpur, listed four conditions for the raising of sanctions. The first was

"release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners".

Mr. Mandela has been released, but not all political prisoners have been. The conditions also demanded the "unbanning of political organisations"—that has been done—and the "suspension of violence". However, violence by the South African Government continues in a way that we have repeatedly witnessed since Mr. Mandela's release. The conditions further demanded

"lifting the State of Emergency".

But the state of emergency has not been fully lifted. Therefore, on the Prime Minister's personal criteria, sanctions imposed by the Community should be kept.

Mr. Hurd: The Government are not suggesting that sanctions should be lifted fully. The argument is for a step-by-step approach, which is finding increasing sympathy in the Community. Anyone who listened to President de Klerk when he visited Europe recently was deeply impressed by his irreversible approach to the dismantling of apartheid and the steps that he has taken in that direction. It is an overwhelming case for not the total, but the partial, lifting of sanctions.

Mr. Kaufman: It is interesting that the right hon. Gentleman, in his usual moderate and sensible tones, should say that no one is suggesting that sanctions should be lifted fully. He spoke about the need for partial, not full, lifting of sanctions. However, on 22 May the Prime Minister said:

"I believe that there is now no place for sanctions and that they are almost irrelevant."—[*Official Report*, 22 May 1990; Vol. 173, c. 167.]

Once again, the Foreign Secretary has spoken in a relatively moderate way—although I do not agree fully with what he is advocating—but then in marches the Prime Minister, who contradicts the right hon. Gentleman and says that sanctions should be lifted immediately. The reveals the Government's hypocrisy of the issue.

The Government, far from establishing the habit of working together—which the right hon. Gentleman advocated—are doing the reverse. They are acting on their own and breaking the word of the Foreign Secretary, the previous Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister—but they are fulfilling the intentions and the wishes of the Prime Minister, which is a very different matter. When the Government are alone, isolated and failing to co-operate with their partners, how can they claim any vision of what the Community should be?

The right hon. Gentleman spoke about democratisation, but it is not clear what sort of democratisation he favours. He commended the report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, but he did not mention the Government response to the report of the Procedure Committee on European legislation, in which the Government agreed with the Committee's view not to recommend the establishment of a European Community Grand Committee. We continue to believe that there should be such a Grand Committee, and that policy was endorsed by the party conference last October. It said:

"some form of European Community Affairs Grand Committee, modelled on the Scottish Grand Committee"—

I hope that it meets a great deal more frequently—

"should be established. This should enable backbench and frontbench MPs to discuss all aspects of European Community policy—not simply those emanating from the Commission or the Council. Ministers should be questiond by this committee."

As the single market approaches, the House must have much greater opportunities to discuss the work of the Community if the Community is to be genuinely accountable to the House.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I counsel the right hon. Gentleman most seriously not to model anything on the Scottish Grand Committee.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): The hon. Gentleman is never there; he is always in Europe.

Mr. Kaufman: My hon. Friend has made a comment which I, as a non-Scotsman, would not dare make, but he always speaks the truth.

We believe in a more democratic Community, but not a Community that usurps the role of sovereign Parliaments. The policy document that we shall be submitting to our annual conference this autumn, as endorsed by the national executive committee last month, states:

"But the EC is not a unitary state and we do not believe that further progress towards European unity will, or should, lead to a European superstate. The European Parliament should therefore be given the powers it needs to complement —not to replace—national parliaments."

What we want is democratic accountability at every level, and we do not have that in this House.

As well as the deepening of the Community as we approach 1992, there is also the widening of the Community. Again, the Government appear to speak with a forked tongue. Not long ago the Prime Minister said that she could not envisage the speedy entry of East Germany into the European Community, on the ground that it would not be acceptable quickly to have as a partner a nation that had been ruled for half a century by communists and fascists. However, in their response to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Government take a very different view and welcome the idea of a united Germany becoming a member of the European Community. Although the Community will have to allow for that in its approach to the matter, it is undeniable that a united Germany must be a member of the Community.

I am somewhat disturbed that the right hon. Gentleman appears to put on a par the applications for membership from Turkey and from Austria. Turkey's record on human rights is a disgrace. It invaded a member of the Commonwealth and still has occupying forces there. Austria is a well-developed socialist democracy with established democratic roots. Although we would have to wait until the single market had been completed in 1992 before considering early acceptance of new members, I hope that the Community will respond positively to Austria's application.

I very much hope that other countries that are neutral, either by constitution, treaty or policy—such as Switzerland and Sweden—will find it possible to consider application to the Community so that it can become much more of a European Community. That includes considering positively, when appropriate and when the necessary conditions have been met, applications from countries of the former Soviet bloc such as Czechoslovakia, whose well-conducted elections are very welcome. The way in which that country conducted its elections is a great tribute to its inherent strength and democracy, which have survived 40 years of communist domination.

We must realise that if we are to accept, as we very much want to, application for membership from neutral countries, we must rule out any possibility of the European Community taking on a defence or military role. We hope that the Government will stand firm on that—certainly a Labour Government will—first, because NATO already fulfils that role; secondly, because we do not need a new centre of military concentration in Europe apart from NATO; and, thirdly, because a military or defence role for the Community would rule out the possibility of Austria, Switzerland and Sweden becoming members and would arouse great suspicion in the Soviet Union if some former communist countries were to wish to join.

We believe that it is time for this country to have a coherent vision of the future of the Community. It must be a vision of 12 countries or more—however many join—maintaining, asserting and expressing their historic self-identities. That can be done without nonsense from the Prime Minister, when she talks about the Queen's sovereignty being in danger. That is a total absurdity that none of the five other monarchies in the Community has trifled with for internal, party political reasons.

The Community must be a body of 12 or more countries, as others join, which express their history and which are proud of their history, their individual forms of government, and their historic identities. In a future Community we must work together to advance our national interests, the interests of Europe and those of a much wider Europe, embracing east and west.

4.50 pm

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): The Select Committee on Foreign Affairs will be grateful to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for his kind references to its recent report on the Single European Act. The report was not just about that Act, although the Committee concluded that it had a considerably greater institutional impact on the Community's development, and on Britain's place in it, than many prophesied or assured the House at the time.

The Committee also examined other major institutional pressures building up in the Community and the way in which they are now forcing themselves to the fore, demanding a complete reassessment of the Community both internally and externally in respect of its relations with the rest of the world—as well as a reappraisal of our national position within the European Community. It is the United Kingdom's responses to those enormous pressures and changes—which are fast building up, and have come to a head even since the report was published —that I want to address in three respects.

The first concerns German unification. The report is not about German unification but deals with its impact on the European Community—which we recognise will be considerable. It will also be very rapid. The view has been expressed that the German reunification process will proceed in an orderly way, perhaps fulfilled and completed next year, and synchronised with the question of the external security status of the greater united Germany in the new European architecture being resolved.

[Mr. David Howell]

I do not think that any of that will work out. On the contrary, the full economic and monetary union of the two Germanies will take place in a few weeks' time, on 2 July. That will require not only changes involving the currency and the full circulation of the deutschmark through Eastern and Western Germany and the setting up of Bundesbank branches in the East German Länder, but a total submerging of East Germany's legal, technical, taxation and social systems, as well as of its governmental systems, into those of the Federal Republic.

We shall see not only economic and monetary union but a very rapid move beyond that, to full political union —possibly before the end of this year. It is certainly my impression, and that of some of my right hon. and hon. Friends who visited Bonn since writing the report, that Chancellor Kohl and the Bonn coalition are determined to achieve, in addition to economic union on 2 July, full political union of the greater Germany by Christmas—certainly before the current German Parliament ends on 13 January next year.

Any illusions that we may have that German unification will wait for our considerations of how to change and reform the Community, or until we work out how to achieve a wider security system in Europe that will keep the Soviets happy, should be dispelled. Things will not fall into a neat pattern in that way.

The process of German unification will place enormous stress on the Community, both internally and externally. The external strains are not really the main subject of the debate, although they have been touched on by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). They raise the question of Mr. Gorbachev's position and that of Soviet troops in eastern Germany. There must be a connection between the Germans' desperate hurry to achieve full unification, and quickly, and the obvious inclination of the Moscow policy makers suddenly to discover all sorts of difficulties and reasons why they should delay withdrawing their troops from eastern Europe.

I do not want to spend too much time on that aspect, but my own view is that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and policy makers in the west should not spend too much time worrying about Mr. Gorbachev's position, and nor should they take too seriously his apparent attempt to bargain with his army of 320,000 people stranded in East Germany, together with about 180,000 Soviet dependents, in quite nice barracks there.

The question whether or not those forces should be withdrawn, and of whether or not that situation should be used by Mr. Gorbachev not merely for reforming NATO, as no doubt we want to do, but for changing NATO in ways that he wants, into an entirely different security structure, should not be taken at all seriously. Of course we want to reform NATO, but there is no hurry.

We should do that in our own way, in our own time, and not be fazed and compelled into a false timetable either by German impatience for unity—which is utterly understandable and will not stop or be resisted—or by Soviet propositions and fears that must be pacified and bought off by changes to NATO or even by huge bribes to finance the continuation of those unhappy troops in East Germany, or to finance their return to the Soviet Union if they are not to remain in East Germany.

Those are the external issues affecting the Community caused by the move to German reunification, and no doubt we shall debate them further in the months ahead. However, it would be sad if we found ourselves diluting NATO at the diktat of Soviet policy instead of reforming NATO in the way that we want, on the basis of its past success in protecting European peace.

The internal strains caused by East Germany joining fully the greater German republic and therefore automatically the treaty of Rome and the European Community will also be considerable. We can already see the first signs of those strains. They arise on the financial side, by virtue of the fact that East Germany is a bankrupt state and will require billions and billions of deutschmarks to get it up and running again. That will place an enormous strain on the German money supply, monetary system and budget. Some gargantuan figures have already been spelt out as to what the Federal Republic thinks it will have to find from extra borrowing and revenues to finance a reasonably smooth transition—although probably it will not be very smooth at all—from East Germany's rundown, centralised economy to it being a proper part of a free market economy.

The effect will be to place strain on the deutschmark, on the currencies of Europe, and on the European monetary system. Pressures may also come from the Bundesbank —I do not know whether they will be resisted—to raise German interest rates, without wanting all the other western countries to follow. There will also be pressures on German inflation generally.

After 2 July, we shall be heading for a period of considerable turbulence in the European monetary system. It is no surprise to me that the governor of the Bundesbank has been saying, in effect, "For heaven's sake, if we have this problem to handle in the next few months, we can do without the additional problem of sterling trying to join the exchange rate mechanism as well." He has said that more than once, and that worries me. I am one of those —not everyone is—who would like to see the pound have a context in the exchange rate mechanism and a proper policy for sterling that will give it some stability. There is a possibility that our opportunity to do that will slip by. We have taken no action so far.

Now I imagine that my right hon. Friend's plan is to get into the exchange rate mechanism. Then, when the delegates sit at the conference table at the proposed intergovernmental conference on monetary union in December, they will be able to say that we have reached stage 1 and are members of the ERM, and can therefore discuss further stages towards monetary union, why we do not agree with Delors stages 2 and 3 and some other ideas. I am concerned that their plan could be upset by the views that the governor of the Bundesbank is pressing, because he and the Germans will have different priorities during the next few months—to achieve German economic and monetary union in a stable and orderly fashion without creating too much inflationary pressure.

Mr. Budgen: If the Germans decided that they did not want us to join the exchange rate mechanism, would they have the right to refuse our application?

Mr. Howell: I do not think that the Germans have the right in law to refuse, but, as the governors and administrators of the largest currency in western Europe, they can organise matters to make it extremely difficult for sterling to join, and raise the risk of it doing so. However, it is right that no legal restraint can be applied to prevent us from joining.

We are debating European monetary union later and this is not the occasion for a technical analysis of developments within the ERM or monetary union. However, it is a fundamental political issue, so my hon. Friends and I on the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs felt that we should consider it. The central question that it raises is that, if we are to have anything like Delors stages 2 and 3 or some other organisation—the current proposal is a federal reserve institution or Eurofed—there will be a fundamental dilemma: independence or accountability. We point out that dilemma in paragraph 48 of the Select Committee report.

The idea that policy makers in Bonn, Paris, Rome or Madrid have a clear answer to that dilemma is thinly based. In discussions with policy makers in those capitals, we found that they were extremely vague about how the idea of independence, which was given so much prominence by the Bundesbank—which keeps emphasising the need for the new centralised institution to be independent of politicians—would be reconciled with the accountability of such a vastly powerful new institution, which would run the monetary policy of Europe, through the democratic forums of Europe.

No clear answer emerges. It is worth noting, as we survey the unfolding scene, that if Eurofed were to be structured in such a way that it was accountable to national Parliaments, the House would gain a vast amount of power. It is untrue to say that the House has ever had much say in monetary policy, the coin of the realm, or monetary issues down the centuries. There was no mention of it in the 1688 settlement. Parliament has little say in how central banks work, how much the Government borrow and how they issue money.

If the monetary authority of Europe is to be accountable by various means through national parliaments, it would be a major shift of power from the Executive to Parliament in this country. That huge constitutional issue has not yet been thoroughly debated. I do not think that some hon. Members have spotted it. Perhaps some of my right hon. Friends within the Executive have seen it coming, but it will come as a surprise to many people, and would not reduce the powers of Parliament but greatly increase them.

Mr. Wells: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the alternative, which is to leave the monetary union system entirely in the hands of the Bundesbank, as it is at present —unaccountable to anyone other than the German Parliament—would also be totally unacceptable?

Mr. Howell: It is a nice point that our monetary policy at present is not within the nation's control. We realised that when we fixed short-term interest rates. There are forces at work outside, one of which is the Bundesbank and the power of the deutschmark. Another force is international market pressure. Would monetary policy be more under our control if we were in a Eurofed of some sort? It is hard to say, but the proposition that we could stay as we are and allow the greater deutschmark zone to prevail is not attractive to me, and becomes less attractive if we consider the point that I was making earlier about the large size of the new greater Germany. It will be by far the greatest power within the European Community, and its currency will be even more powerful relative to that of other members than it is at present.

Change must come. I hope that my right hon. Friends will turn up at the intergovernmental conference scheduled for December with good ideas about how monetary union should be shaped. The whole House has accepted the point agreed with the Government that Delors stages two and three are not good enough. They are too like tram lines, they are unrealistic and do not reflect the needs and complexities of running monetary policy for a vast range of different economies throughout Europe. That is not on.

However, will the alternatives suggested by the Government so far—the paper on the evolution of economic and monetary policies, which contains the idea of competitive currencies—suffice? When the Committee tried out that idea on policy makers from Europe, we found polite interest but a general feeling that the idea was not good enough and that a more robust set of propositions were needed.

Mr. Dykes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, as Mr. Delors and his colleagues on the committee were asked to produce plans, blueprints and ideas for all the stages until completion of monetary union, they can hardly be criticised for having made suggestions for stages 2 and 3? We do not have to regard those suggestions as a rigid mould. Indeed, Mr. Delors subsequently reaffirmed that all such issues can be negotiated anyway.

Mr. Howell: It is correct that the original Delors stages 1, 2 and 3 have now been replaced by more flexible and interesting ideas. This is an opportunity for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and others to come forward with further propositions. It is valuable that we are now in a positive stance vis-a-vis monetary union. We must recall that it was not long ago that my right hon. Friends—some of them—were against monetary union on principle. They said that the whole idea, however it was defined, was bad. We have now moved to a different point, and are in favour of monetary union, but we want it achieved by sensible and practical means rather than by the instant creation of new institutions, which would not be able to do the job.

If such new structures for monetary union are to come into being, in addition to setting out, from our own considerable experience, how best they might work, in relation to national monetary and budgetary policy-making which will have to continue to a considerable extent, we need to define the legal status of the new bodies. There needs to be a more constitutional approach to the construction of the new institutions proposed by the Euro-planners in Brussels, and a greater readiness to accept that such institutions can work effectively only if their legal status is established and rooted in the basic structure of the nation states that make up the European Community.

That is all that I want to say now on the issue, but we shall hear more about it as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary prepares for the intergovernmental conference in December. I repeat that it will be important for Britain to put forward some new ideas. We shall no doubt have an opportunity to debate them later this week.

[Mr. Howell]

Our report touched on a third great issue. In the reply to our report, the Government itemised it as one of the six major issues with which the Community is now dealing. I refer to so-called political union. Here we are dealing with far vaguer terminology than when we were talking about monetary union. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was right to start the debate by asking what on earth people meant by political union. As soon as she asked that question it became clear that it meant different things to different people in the Community and that there were many opinions and no great agreement about how to bring about practical changes.

The Select Committee concluded that the near-obsession in some parts of the Community with the development, on a much deeper and quicker basis, towards full political union belonged to the Europe of phrases, not to the Europe of facts—to use the terminology of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. Our main concern, expressed in paragraph 51 of our report, is that if there are to be political developments, they should be detailed and practical—in that they should be addressed to the institutional weaknesses of the Community—and that they should not be governed by a sort of determination that says, "Don't bother us with details; we're heading towards a united states of Europe and we're not too concerned about the items in between." The Committee regards it as important to resist such determinism.

We should reject talk of a political union that implies that we are building a new, gigantic, pyramidical structure, with vast central institutions that will be in the senior category, with national parliaments and national institutions in the junior category, and that we are recreating, on the model of the United States of America —which may have been marvellous in the 18th and 19th centuries—a united states of Europe that is equally centralised, with both the weaknesses and the strengths, but particularly the weaknesses, of the USA system. Wise people, concerned with the 21st century, will try to resist such a political union of Europe. I hope that the Select Committee's report was able to suggest some reasons why they should resist it.

If we are to change the political institutions of Europe, we should think here, too, in constitutional, not bureaucratic terms. The accountability route—running from the European institutions back to the individual—is clear. As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and the right hon. Member for Gorton said, that is through national Parliaments working in partnership with the European Parliament. In that way the Community will be made more democratic and flexible and yet will maintain its openness and its ability in due course to embrace new countries, including Austria and the countries of eastern Europe as they bring their economies into the right shape and their price structures into a form that allows them to join a free market structure and the free market philosophy of the treaty of Rome.

Those are the three issues, out of many, to which I wanted to refer and that were raised in the Select Committee's report. Big moments of history are lying immediately ahead as we begin to cope with the new, gigantic, united Germany, right in the centre of Europe, and as we work out with it how it is to express its wish to support western values—as it constantly says it does—and to be part of the free market system by means of the European Community as well, I hope, to be part of the free world defence system, through the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance. That is what we want to see, and that is what we must work for.

My right hon. Friend has guided us through many shoals. He described with the greatest skill the many meetings that he has attended, and is about to attend. He will need all the support and good wishes of the House to see us through if we are to preserve our free institutions and make them adaptable to the totally new conditions of the larger Europe that lies ahead.

5.15 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): I agree in particular with the closing remarks of the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) and with what he said about the desirability of further enlargement of the Community and the importance of retaining, sustaining and reinforcing national parliamentry control.

In a debate of this kind, the temptation to cover almost every aspect is almost irresistible, but it is a temptation that I intend to resist. I shall concentrate on what I believe is the most important issue at present—economic and monetary union. I claim special attention for it because of its central position in current European Community discussions and for four additional reasons.

First, economic and monetary union marks a genuine new stage—a qualitative leap—in the European Community's development. Whereas it was just possible to consider European Community developments up to EMU as consistent with a Europe of independent sovereign states co-operating together—a Europe des patries, to use that old phrase—EMU clearly takes the process into the new realm of a supranational European union. As the report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs on 14 March 1990 said:

> "The thrust towards European union is active and potent and is a major factor in all the proposals for the future development of the Community."

The concluding paragraph of the report states:

> "It is clear to us that the Community now developing is very different from the Community that the UK joined in the 1970s."

That is the first reason why we should concentrate on the implications and the meaning of economic and monetary union.

My second reason is that EMU is, more than any other issue, splitting the United Kingdom from the rest of the European Community. It poses the most formidable problems for United Kingdom diplomacy and national policy, as I intend to develop later.

The third reason why we should concentrate on EMU is that the implementation of full economic and monetary union will bring about a further imbalance of power within the existing European Community, where present West German economic leadership will be followed by the economic dominance of a united Germany.

Fourthly, economic and monetary union will create a major new barrier between the European Community of the Twelve and European Free Trade Association and eastern European countries that could otherwise be brought into a wider European Community, which I believe is the wish of many hon. Members in all parts of the House. Both the House and the country should be clear about what is at stake in economic and monetary union.

First, the exchange rate for member states would be irrevocably fixed. National currencies would be replaced by a common European currency such as the ecu. It would no longer be possible to depreciate or devalue a currency, which is the only effective short-term remedy for restoring competitiveness with other stronger economies, for getting rid of an unacceptable trade balance and for maintaining employment.

Secondly, the Eurofed central bank would be set up to decide monetary polices, including interest rate and mortgage rate policies for the entire Community. The Bank of England would cease to be responsible to United Kingdom Ministers in the House; it would simply become the London branch of the Eurofed.

Thirdly, central control would be imposed upon the budget totals of member states; they would not be allowed to reflate or expand their economies by operating a budget deficit beyond the limits laid down by the Eurobankers and the Commission, nor would they be allowed to borrow through internal short-term financing or from other Community countries.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of these proposals. The power over exchange rates, interest rates and the budget balance between expenditure, taxation and borrowing, all of which would be totally lost or severely circumscribed under the Delors plans for EMU, would deliver Britain bound hand and foot to the Euro decision makers. It would be handing over to the European Community the key decisions affecting the economic destiny of Britain and at the same time we should be stripping the Westminster Parliament of effective powers. Of equal if not greater importance, we should be accepting what would be an economic disaster for the British people. I shall develop that point in a moment.

Sir Russell Johnston: The right hon. Gentleman is quite accurate, but if Britain is being bound hand and foot, so equally are France, Italy, Spain and Germany. Are we not entering a common enterprise?

Mr. Shore: The hon. Gentleman is making a serious mistake. There is no question of Germany being delivered bound hand and foot, because Germany would be the principal beneficiary of what is proposed.

The heart of the matter is that there are major differences in the economic performance of member states. Like Japan, Germany has persistently out-performed other nations in productivity and efficiency, leading to a markedly higher growth rate and a markedly lower rate of inflation.

To remain competitive with Germany, all states have had to depreciate or devalue their currencies against the deutschmark, to a greater or lesser extent, not only in recent years but throughout the post-war period. As recently as 1985, the pound would buy DM3·9. Today, five years later, the pound will buy DM2·79. Through that depreciation, British exports to Germany are more than 25 per cent. cheaper than they were five years ago, while German exports to Britain are correspondingly dearer. If that exchange rate adjustment had not or could not have been made, British goods would be even more seriously priced out of the German market than they are today. Our trade deficit would be larger and unemployment in the United Kingdom would grow.

No one should have any doubt about the destructive effect of an uncompetitive exchange rate. In 1980 and 1981, when North sea oil came on stream and the world considered the pound to be a petro-currency, the Government allowed—or could not prevent—the exchange rate to rise by some 40 per cent. That was the principal cause of the disaster that then overtook British industry—the elimination of more than 20 per cent. of our manufacturing capacity and the horrific rise of unemployment to well over 3 million.

Permanently fixed exchange rates in the EMU would deprive member states of that necessary adjustment mechanism. Germany will continue to be relatively more efficient. German productivity, irrespective of relative wage claims in Britain and Germany, will continue to outstrip that of the United Kingdom for many years ahead. That is the fruit of the vast industrial investment, managerial skills and training that German industry has accumulated over many decades.

Other countries, if locked into the permanently fixed exchange rate mechanism, will be progressively weakened. Unemployment will grow as industries are forced to close, and we shall witness an ever-growing migration of unemployed people seeking work in Germany in the years ahead.

In our most recent debate on economic and monetary union on 2 November 1989, the Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House:

"Our position on stage 1 is clear and constructive, and we are committed to it, but we part company with the Delors recipe on the next steps."

He went on specifically to reject the proposals for binding rules on national budgetary policy, quoting with approval the report of the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service which stated:

"The power of the House of Commons over the centuries has depended fundamentally on the control of money, both taxation and expenditure. This would be jeopardised by the form of monetary union proposed by the Delors report which would involve central undemocratic direction from within Europe of domestic budgetary policies."

The Chancellor went on to state this further objection:

"The Delors report's proposals on monetary union are unacceptable, for monetary policy is at the very heart of macroeconomic policy and the proposals in the report make no provision for accountability for monetary policy to national Governments or national Parliaments. Yet the electorate would still hold Governments and national authorities responsible for their economic well-being and rightly so."—[*Official Report*, 2 November 1989; Vol. 159, c. 490.]

On 1 May, in her statement to the House following the one-day Dublin summit, the Prime Minister said:

"There will be fierce debate about economic and monetary union. Those debates will be fierce because from what we have seen of Delors stages 2 and 3, which have been rather general, we do not like or accept the idea of going to a single currency or locked currencies or the idea of a central bank, which would take powers away from this House, as was described in the Delors report."—[*Official Report*, 1 May 1990; Vol. 171, c. 914.]

When the right hon. Member for Guildford said, as he was perfectly entitled to, that he believed that the Government were committed in principle to economic and monetary union, I found that difficult to reconcile with the words that I have just read. I believe that the Government are, rightly, committed to stage 1 of the Delors report and that they are trying desperately to find some way of appearing to be in favour of closer economic and monetary co-operation. Incidentally, the word "co-operation" was used in the Queen's Speech only a few months ago. They cannot and will not go ahead with the

[Mr. Shore]

proposals for economic and monetary union which are at the heart of the Delors report and at the heart of any proposals for genuine monetary union. We cannot have monetary union without a fixed exchange rate. The Prime Minister has rejected it, and we all have to confront that, however difficult the confrontation may be.

Since last December's Strasbourg European Council meeting, there have been further meetings of Finance Ministers to discuss two Commission papers on economic and monetary union. Discussions there have centred on the degree of central control over member states' budget deficits and on the independence of the proposed Eurofed central bank. Those issues have yet to be decided, and on them the United Kingdom is not completely isolated. However, on the basic issues of permanently fixed exchange rates and the creation of the Eurofed central bank, the United Kingdom is entirely on its own.

There must be no weakening of the United Kingdom's stand on those issues. The House would like to hear from the Minister of State when he replies to the debate a further unequivocal reassurance that the Prime Minister's words, uttered as recently as 1 May, on permanently fixed exchange rates and a European central bank remain at the centre of Government policy. I hope that there will be no ambiguity or evasion, but a clear statement later today on those basic issues.

It would be of some help if an equal assurance were given by the Opposition Front-Bench team. I am aware of the reservations expressed by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), the shadow Chancellor, in the debate on 2 November. He said that he was not prepared to accept binding rules of budgetary or fiscal policy and that he was opposed to

"any system of central banks which would be independent of political control."*[Official Report*, 2 November 1989; Vol. 159, c. 502.]

But, no doubt because of pressure of time, he did not spell out his position on permanently fixed exchange rates or a Eurofed central bank under political control. I hope that those omissions can be put right before the end of the debate. I look forward to the reply from the Opposition Front Bench spokesman tonight.

Assuming that we are given clear assurances from both Front-Bench teams on these vital matters, which I have fairly raised and put to them both this afternoon, I ask them to consider the implication on their resolve to join the exchange rate mechanism. We should be joining not only a fixed and adjustable exchange rate system, like the old International Monetary Fund, but a system that differs from the IMF in at least two crucial respects.

First, exchange rate depreciation would no longer be a national and unilateral decision but one that would be taken only with the agreement and approval of the other member states. That is a profound difference. Secondly, and most importantly, the ERM is universally regarded throughout the European Community as only the first step towards economic and monetary union. Therefore, those who advocate membership of the ERM should be prepared to place their total and public reserve on further commitments towards economic and monetary union.

Of course, it is true that the intergovernmental conference which is due to begin in December to implement the treaty changes necessary for the implementation of economic and monetary union, will need British agreement. But, as the Select Committee report rightly observed:

"The possibility has to be faced that the other 11 might establish procedures outside the EEC Treaties, albeit with considerable difficulties and some regret, which would enable them to go ahead with Stages II and III."

They might establish procedures to enable them to go ahead without the participation of the United Kingdom. That prospect, however unwelcome, must be squarely faced. It is an issue on which we cannot afford to compromise.

I was encouraged and interested to read the speech on 5 June of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. He said, after a thoughtful survey in particular of the possibility that the European Community would be enlarged by the entry of east European countries:

"How far individual Member States wish to travel along the road of economic and monetary union would be for them to decide. Could there not be regional groupings within the overall Union, as we already have with Benelux or Schengen Group.

France and Germany could form a closer alliance still if they wished. There could be currency agreements, either of the ERM type or full currency union as envisaged in current plans for economic and monetary union. Those who wish could form joint central banks and manage their currencies. But there should be no compulsion on others to join such arrangements".

That was the major message that the Secretary of State conveyed.

We should continue to seek to persuade our colleagues in the European Communities—the Eleven—to abandon this ill advised and thoroughly dangerous project of economic and monetary union.

Mr. Dykes: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Shore: No, I am coming to the end of my speech.

What the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said offers us a common sense and worthwhile alternative which I recommend not only to the Government but to the Opposition Front-Bench team.

5.34 pm

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): With respect to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), the picture that he painted of economic and monetary union and co-operation is both unnecessarily and unjustifiably pessimistic. First, it is unclear exactly what will be the result of the deliberations on European monetary union. The right hon. Gentleman set up what we might call Jacques Delors mark 1 and used it as his target. However, the windmill at which he was tilting may not be there as the deliberations proceed.

Secondly, the right hon. Gentleman does an injustice to other member states of the Community. As the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston), suggested, other member states have a similar interest to ours in seeking the right balance in what is undoubtedly the extremely daunting economic power of Germany. I have no reason to believe that the French, Italian or Spanish Governments are in any danger of falling into the traps that the right hon. Gentleman envisaged, any more than we are.

Thirdly, there was an underlying suggestion in the right hon. Gentleman's speech that the way out for a weak economy—not that ours is weak, but it could be if certain

election results which the right hon. Gentleman desires were achieved—is constantly and forever devaluing its currency. The way out for an economy that is not competitive cannot be endless and constant devaluations, which seemed to be the underlying theme of the right hon. Gentleman's approach. Indeed, the experience of Germany shows that a strong economy makes a currency appreciate. That gives the lie to the right hon. Gentleman's proposition.

It is perfectly clear that this important debate takes place at a crucial time for Europe as a whole, as all hon. Members who have spoken so far have suggested. It could not be a more exciting and more challenging time. My contribution is to suggest to my right hon. Friends on the Front Bench that we must avoid some of the mistakes that we made in our dealings with Europe during the 18-month period which started with the speech of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister at Bruges in September 1988.

As I have said on more than one occasion in this Chamber, the five principles enunciated in the Bruges speech were right, unexceptionable and unchallengeable. However, damage was done, in that forces were rekindled within my party, throughout the country and overseas which created an entirely negative perception of what the Government have achieved and continually seek to achieve in their relations with the European Community. It is important that those mistakes in presentation and attitude are not repeated, because they fundamentally damaged British interests.

We all know the difficulty of negotiating in a group, be it a group of 12 nations or 12 people on a parish council. There must be give and take, and gains and losses occur. We saw that only last week in the negotiations about BSE. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said, those negotiations were an extremely good example of the benefits of the existence of the European Community to Britain. We must be constantly aware of our presentation and emphasise our positive assets. We must not lose the political ground which the Conservative party undoubtedly lost, for example, in the European election campaign. The results were there for all to see.

It has been galling for Tory Members who have consistently, although not universally, supported British membership of the European Community to find that some Labour Members now adopt the cloak and mantle of Europeanism. The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney, who always speaks with complete sincerity and consistency, in contrast to the leadership of his party, represents the fundamental centre of gravity of the Labour party on European issues, rather than the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman).

In the past six months, I have been delighted to observe that the Government have begun to recover from what I would describe as mistaken tactics rather than a mistaken fundamental strategy, and to be seen to make a much more positive contribution, yet again, to the development of this extraordinary adventure—it is, indeed, a unique adventure —of the European Community.

We are faced with the problems of Germany. I say problems, much as I delight, as I am sure all right hon. and hon. Members do, in East Germany moving towards a democratic regime and combining with the Federal Republic into a united and whole Germany. My right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) rightly examined the economic problems and pressures that that will create not only for the Federal Republic but for all in the European Community.

I am an optimist. Such is the challenge of the task and such the vitality and buoyancy of the Federal Republic's economy, whatever the figures, that it will cope in a way and at a speed which will surprise all of us, and perhaps even the Germans themselves. This massive state with huge economic power and great political potential challenges, creates problems for the other 11 member states, but we must and want to, live with it. I have no fears of a revival of Nazism or militarism or of challenges to the peace of Europe. Inevitably there is a challenge, but it provides us with a great opportunity.

I have had many opportunities to talk to French, Spanish and Italian colleagues regularly, and I have noted their recognition of the challenge and a change in attitude towards the United Kingdom. Without any concept of ganging up on the Germans, we should recognise that this kaleidoscope, having been shaken up, gives Britain an important role. France, in particular, looks to the British Government to play an extremely positive and constructive role in the new balance and I hope that we shall do so. I urge the Government not to be swept away by the personification of some issues. We grew keen on sticking pins into the effigy of Mr. Jacques Delors. I know from speaking to many Frenchmen that they would cheerfully stick even more pins into him. It is important to keep such matters in balance.

We face great challenges of political union. Who knows what that will mean? My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was right to challenge that concept. I hope that she and the Government are encouraged that her challenge of the concept was picked up by our Community partners. They too are questioning and questing. There will be movement. Political co-operation has been developing for many years and is better recognised by those outside the Community than by those of us within it. We should rejoice in that. Further developments will flow from political co-operation. I do not know what they will be. I certainly would not look to a federalist solution; nor would any Frenchman, Spaniard or Italian. We are bound together increasingly, not only by economic forces but, more importantly, by communications and by social and cultural pressures. That is as most of us want it to be.

Mr. Dykes: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Italians are the exception? While I accept that no one has proposed federalism or a single Government entity in Brussels, the Italians, in their referendum last June which was connected to the European elections, voted overwhelmingly for European political union, leading to a united states of Europe.

Mr. Whitney: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that correction. Perhaps what was presented to the Italians in the referendum was questionable, and when they get down to the small print during negotiations at the intergovernmental conference, something else will emerge. Whatever happens, it will happen stage by stage and it must be accepted by all Parliaments and all peoples. The same goes for European monetary union, which I dealt with earlier.

The evolution of the European Community is part of the great sweep of history. It has been given a surprising and a much stronger impetus than any of us could have expected by what is happening in eastern Europe. Well

[Mr. Whitney]

disposed as we are to the development of democracy and the establishment of constitutional government in eastern Europe, that cannot be used as a pretext for delaying what we in western Europe have set in hand. We must move on, because that is the nature of things.

The world is now divided basically into three huge groups; Japan and the Pacific rim, which is the first and most challenging, the Americas and western Europe. That will be the shape of the world for the next decade and the first half of the next century. It has nothing to do with eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. If we are to be part of that world, we must play an active, positive part in the European Community.

The vast majority of the British people recognise that instinctively. They do not make calculations about European monetary union and the exchange rate mechanism. Instinctively, they know that our destiny lies in making a positive contribution to Europe. It is up to this House to ensure that mechanisms are created so that we can put the will of our people into practice and exercise political and democratic control as the European Community expands.

5.48 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I shall come to federalism in a wee minute. I wish that people would stop talking about the German problem. It depends on what sort of German—socialist, Christian Democrat or Liberal—we are talking about. They have different answers and attitudes to the questions of Europe. In the end, it is a political rather than a nationalist answer that will carry the day, and thank goodness for that.

I agree entirely with the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) about the potential for increasing democratic involvement, if a relationship develops between the proposed Eurofed and the European Parliament. That would create a beneficial, almost novel situation for the United Kingdom. The idea that the House of Commons has control over the monetary system and policy and control over the budget is illusory. The Chancellor's claim in March that the European Community strictures on national budgetary policy would be an unacceptable loss of our sovereignty is poppycock. Governments have a certain control but we are not used to Parliaments exercising such control.

I am a federalist—I say that unabashedly—and the Liberal Democrats are federalists. That is a phrase and a fact.

Mr. Spearing *rose*——

Sir Russell Johnston: I shall give way in a wee minute after I have said something about federalism and before the hon. Gentleman attacks what I say.

On Thursday and Friday the ELDR, the federal representative body of all Liberal parties in the European Community, met for its 13th congress in Shannon in the Republic of Ireland. It passed a long resolution on the consequences for the European Community of democratic development in central and eastern Europe. The sentiments expressed in that resolution are shared by the party of Hans Dietrich Genscher, by the party of Ellemann-Jensen of Denmark, the Italians and so on. Among other things, the resolution calls for

"a Political Union, that will enable the Community and its Institutions to respond efficiently to the demands of the new situation, and assuring unity and coherence in the Community's international actions"

It speaks of reinforcing the executive capacity of the European institutions and calls for

"the powers of the European Parliament to be increased . . . the deepening and acceleration of European and Monetary union . . . a truly proportional system of representative democracy".

Please note. It also speaks of a bill of rights and says:

"the development of a social market economy is part of political freedom . . . a unified Germany in a united Federal Europe offers the surest way towards the goal of democracy and security".

Those bits and pieces fit together, but that is not the approach of the Government as seen in the bland, blue document, "Developments in the European Community", which is so full of self-congratulation.

I shall not say too much about economic and monetary union, but it is important to refer to the Foreign Secretary's foreword to the White Paper, to which he referred again today, when he said:

"The government's opposition to Stages 2 and 3 of the Delors report was endorsed by all shades of opinion in the House of Commons."

That is not the case, although it may be founded on the fact that during the debate on economic and monetary union in the House my hon. Friend the Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) said:

"It does not follow from what I have said that I have to agree with every word written in the Delors report."

He said that absolute fiscal harmonisation would not be a necessary condition of EMU any more than it is in the United States. He also said that he favoured a European central banking system on the lines proposed by Delors. He concluded:

"Hon. Members who have expressed doubts and tried to introduce fresh conditions want to protect the right of the British Government to devalue our currency"—

that is what the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) wants——

"and print more money. We could usefully accept curtailment of those freedoms in order to achieve stable currency, defeat inflation and provide a framework in which Britain can prosper.""—[*Official Report*, 2 November 1989; Vol. 159, c. 542.]

To say that everyone agrees with the Government is not true. The Government have approached these matters in a negative way and they have no enthusiasm for a central bank, even if it was cited in London. They are also outright opposed to a common currency.

I am not an economist, but I do not understand why the United Kingdom alone of all the Twelve—not all of them are economically stronger than us—wants to oppose the central bank and a fixed exchange rate. I cannot accept that there is some intrinsic weakness in our country that makes it necessary for us to be different. I accept that the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney has held his views for a long time, but I believe that they stem much more from his views on national sovereignty than from his views on economic theory.

Mr. Spearing: Does the hon. Gentleman recall the Rooker-Wise amendments? Even if the House does not have the powers over Government finance that he or others want, does not he remember the introduction of those amendments? Can he tell the House whether he favours any Government of this country, or any party aspiring to government, voluntarily handing over powers that the Government still retain through unanimity of the

Council of Ministers by transferring to qualified majority voting? Is the hon. Gentleman's party in favour of expanding qualified majority voting, and if so, in what areas of national policy?

Sir Russell Johnston: I shall not try to tackle those questions in detail now. One swallow, rook or otherwise does not make a summer. Qualified majority voting will have to be extended slowly—there is no doubt about that.

On 24 May I attended a conference organised by the Federal Trust. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury also attended and gave a speech that I did not hear. However I read his speech and it was rather extraordinary. He gave his reasons for not wishing to proceed apace with a common currency. He said that we should keep our own currency because it was a symbol of our authority. He also said that it was necessary to retain our currency

"to have the ability to issue money in order to act as lender of last resort to the banking system which requires government regulation to maintain its stability".

British regulation must be better than any other regulation. He went on to say:

"For these reasons states have found the benefits of having their own currency exceed any possible disadvantages their citizens may face through not being able to do business in the same currency when they trade or travel abroad."

The Financial Secretary advanced an extraordinary set of arguments. I should have thought that the common citizen who must change his money endlessly from pounds to deutschmarks, Belgian francs and guilders would take a different view.

We have delayed on ERM. Sir Leon Brittan was also present at the conference and I read the good speech that he made. I could quote much of it, as it is good stuff. Of France he said:

"Since joining the EMS . . . French inflation has fallen to an average of 2·9 per cent. over the last five years compared with 10·5 per cent. in the five years up to 1980 . . . This was not done by magic but by a combination of the correct domestic policies combined with the credibility of adherence to the narrow bands of the EMS . . . Ireland is a further interesting example because until the start of the EMS in 1979 . . . Irish inflation was always exactly the same as that in the United Kingdom. It is now 3 per cent. Irish growth this year will be 4·6 per cent."

One should remember that Sir Leon speaks with the authority of a Commissioner in charge of such matters and his good reputation on economic and financial matters in the House. He said of Ireland:

"These results were achieved through acceptance of the disciplines of the EMS . . . When should the United Kingdom join the EMS exchange rate mechanism? Many of us would answer that question by saying: 'Some time ago!'"

Sir Leon's view is different from that adopted by the Government. Their negative attitude covers this matter and imbues their approach to anything supranational. I wish that the Government could articulate their views more frankly as it would then be easier to get a grip of them. Sadly, their views are often cocooned in humbug. Let me give an example of that. Page 31 of our report states:

"The United Kingdom has been in the lead in encouraging better cooperation on cross-frontier issues among member states,"

One may think what one likes about the Schengen agreement, but one cannot say that if those countries are introducing such an agreement that allows free passage, we, who are not allowing free passage, are

"in the lead in encouraging better cooperation on cross-frontier issues".

That is a contradiction. Who are the ones opposing the idea of a pensioner card to allow older people the same access to the same facilities throughout the Community? Britain is the one holding back such ideas.

Page 33 of the report mentions

"a directive concerning the labelling of tobacco products . . . standardized health warnings . . . a common position . . . tar yield".

It does not say, "Of course, by the way, don't forget that Britain alone opposed all that." In answer to a question that I tabled, the Prime Minister said that it was a ridiculous idea. However, in the report it is all compounded, and there are many other large and small examples. The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) spoke about the environmental issues.

The Government are not addressing the essential argument—or perhaps they are doing so, but are wriggling and not quite sure what to do. It is no use the Foreign Secretary going on about phrases and facts. What are the aims and objectives? That is a much better way of putting it. My objective could not be put better than by a quotation that I read in *The Independent* last Thursday, which stated:

"I have always been a convinced European federalist and I believe that over the passage of time we will arrive at a federalist solution to our problems."

That was stated in 1969 by a certain Nicholas Ridley. I apologise because we are not allowed to use names, and I should have said that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made that statement. That was a prescient statement, and how right he was.

Monet knew from the start that there had to be supranational agencies in the Community, or it would not work—any more than the League of Nations or the Council of Europe is capable of resolving bitter disputes between countries. There are people who cling with an almost religious intensity to the idea of national sovereignty—no matter that the competitive aggression of the nation state is still seen as an inheritance that must be defended at whatever cost.

The preservation of British national sovereignty is no more than a cover-up for the defence of short-term governmental advantage. In Britain, sovereignty is defined in terms of the ideology of the Government of the day. The Government are absolute and unrepresentative in their majority.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury also spoke about federalism. He made a wide-ranging speech. He said that there were two competing visions: first, what some call federalism, but what might more accurately be called Euro-nationalism. That was the speech of a senior Minister. He said that federalism involved transferring more and more powers to a European super state. The project appeals to those who wish to regain the power to control the economy.

What has been going on in Britain in these past few years? Have we seen more and more power handed out? In 1969—we are talking about when the present Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, then a Back Bencher, made the statement I quoted—the Maud commission on local government made a report, as did the Wheatley commission, on which I served. All the talk was of more power being handed from the centre to local government. Quite the opposite has happened. The Government cannot have it both ways. They cannot simultaneously say, "If we

[Sir Russell Johnston]

go into the European Community, we are losing democratic influence," and at the same time fight any reduction of central power in the United Kingdom.

A federal Europe means a division of powers and acceptance of the subsidiarity rule. There is a great fallacy in the position of the Government and those who support the idea that anything British is always better. That is no more true than it is of the French of Germans. In this small continent, which has such a destructive history, we are trying to produce a unified, representative political and economic structure in which we can pool our resources andof talents and provide some stability in the world system, where before we were so disruptive. We shall not do that if we follow the Government's approach.

The Foreign Secretary began by talking about the challenge of the changes in the east. There is no doubt that the more united the Community is, the more effectively it will be able to respond to, and deal with, the huge economic problems and nationalist strains that have been released as a consequence of the withdrawal of the Soviets. That will also mean giving aid not only to central Europe but to the Soviet Union, which is something that I have argued for in the Chamber and other places, since the beginning of the communist collapse. I am glad to see from today's press that those ideas are now taking concrete shape, and changing from phrases and hopes to facts.

6.5 pm

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): I shall refer to the Select Committee's report and add my thanks and congratulations to its chairman, my right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) and his colleagues for their excellent and thorough investigation. I agreed with the points he made in his speech about the various factors beginning to emerge.

I agree—it is only a guess, because, by definition, the future of these complicated developments is unascertainable—with my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney). We have a feeling—I am sure that we shall be the first to apologise if our prognosis turns out to be incorrect—that the strength of the German Federal Republic's economy is, and will be, so great that the difficulties that it will face in absorbing the East German economy will be considerably less than might be expected if one merely does the literal calculations. I agreed with my hon. Friend when he sounded pessimistic about that and pointed to the dangers of turbulence in the currency markets.

One factor that emerges from the one-deutschmark-to-one-ostmark unit exchange rate formula for a great number of the transactions that will take place and the general investment basis, is that there will automatically be a statistical upgrading of the East German economy. That means that it will be a less qualified applicant for all sorts of assistance than it would otherwise be, including assistance from the European Community budget—most of which, in net terms, emanates from the West German economy.

This is the hallmark of the concentration that we need. As the Foreign Secretary said, I hope that we shall show more self-confidence about such matters in this new era of unification and Community development. I hope that that strength can carry through to the weaker parts of the existing Community, let alone the new small, artificial addition of East Germany.

There were nervous expectations at the time about the Italian lira and, to a lesser extent, the French franc. Successive French Governments have always been nervous about the ability of the French franc to withstand the buffeting of external forces. They wanted to keep it, in the old days, as a small currency, albeit operating in the old French union territories. I remember a newspaper article stating that the Italian lira would be unable to stand entering the ERM of the EMS. However, the contrary has happened—not by accident although there is always an element of good fortune in such matters.

That policy has been run deliberately, despite the fact that the Italians have had a large, internal budget deficit, are always expressing their wish to try to do something about it, and are now beginning to do so, although in their coalition Government system it is difficult to get general agreement for action. The Italian lira has become at least a semi-strong currency; the French franc, contrary to pessimistic expectations, has become a strong currency; and the deutschmark has become a super-strong currency. There will be similar developments in respect of the Spanish peseta, which was also largely written down by the financial commentators when the initial negotiations for the transitional period of Spanish membership were taking place. The system will continue to be highly successful, so it is tragic, unexplained, strange and mystical that the United Kingdom is still not a member.

I say tragic, because we are ideally suited for membership, not because of the fears of our being, as an international currency, a counterweight or negative factor, but precisely because we are used to trading, manipulating and managing our currency in relation to international obligations. So not only technically but in terms of our traditional expertise in the form of the Bank of England, we would be a successful member of the system. Our membership is long overdue; the sooner it happens the better, so that we can begin to see its benefits.

The Italian rate of inflation has fallen from 20 to 6 per cent. in the same period as the decline in the French rate, which was mentioned earlier. That, too, was not an accident.

My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) intervened to ask the Foreign Secretary about fraud in the Community, and although our right hon. Friend said that he would allude to it later, he did not have time to do so. Unfortunately, I have outside engagements later in the debate, but if I could have been here I would have been fascinated to ask the Minister of State his view of his father's letter in *The Daily Telegraph* of some weeks ago, in which he gave us the outstanding geopolitical advice that the best way to be a successful member of the Community was to tell all foreigners to get stuffed——

Mr. Maude *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Dykes: At any rate, he told some or most foreigners to get stuffed. I appreciate that my hon. Friend does not have direct responsibility for that letter, or indeed for *The Daily Telegraph*—mercifully, from his point of view—but it would have been interesting to hear his answer. Perhaps I could invite one of my hon. Friends to ask him this question latter in the debate.

I am glad that my hon. Friend the Minister, by a nod of the head, has agreed to deal with fraud later in the debate. It is an ideal subject about which to register our legitimate concern that, as soon as possible, through national authorities and their relevant agencies, the police, the Commission agencies and the Court of Auditors, work will be done in concert, powerfully and successfully, to overcome the problem. This is another perfect example of how otiose and old-fashioned is the mystical House of Commons tendency—as shown, for example, by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), although not on this subject—to think that there is something sinister about what other countries are doing, and that we have a monopoly on virtue. The report by the Court of Auditors is crystal clear: all member states are equally at fault in being unable to deal with fraud. We remember the lovely old story of the Italian olive trees; we do not have such trees here, and I gather that the problem of that abuse has decreased, if not been overcome.

Now there are other aspects of fraud. For instance, there is the continuing disgrace of inadequate controls over cold storage contents. I have the greatest sympathy for the small number of hapless, underpaid officials who have to deal with these nightmare matters. They are confronted by sophisticated operators in all member states. The Court of Auditor's report emphasised that the court found difficulty in obtaining the relevant information, and if such control is to be successful, it is crucial that information from member states be forthcoming. The report said that it was not forthcoming from three states, and one of them, terrible to say, was the United Kingdom.

My hon. Friend the Minister must, as a Foreign Office Minister, cover every aspect of these matters; I shall read his comments in *Hansard* with care, because I should like to know whether the Court of Auditors and the Commission are still having difficulty in obtaining the necessary facts and figures from the Reading intervention agency and other elements of the control and audit system in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): Is my hon. Friend saying that he believes that, by increasing the number of inspectors, auditors and accountants, it will be possible to eliminate fraud, especially in respect of goods held in cold storage? Or will he concede that it is possible that the system is at fault and that it is a triumph of hope over experience to believe that fraud will be eliminated?

Mr. Dykes: I agree; "eliminate" is too strong a word, and it is true that aspects of the support system produce the problem of fraud. It is a matter of increasing the number of officials and the quality of the scientific control and auditing systems, and of increasing the penalties which, quite rightly, are national penalties, for criminal offences. The agricultural support system must also gradually be reduced to modest proportions. We must remember that there has already been considerable improvement, because surpluses of most of the products on the official list of supported items are now much fewer and there is no significant overall problem, save in respect of one or two items.

Mr. Knapman: The news is just coming through on the machine that spending by the EEC will rise by 13 per cent. to £53 billion next year and that a substantial extra amount for farmers is included in that figure.

Mr. Dykes: It is up to our right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to give us more details about that. I welcome the overall increase in the EC budget, as there are many areas of genuine new development that can be best taken care of in the more centralised EC budgetary system—which, despite this increase, still represents a modest proportion of total GNP and public spending in the Community.

Contrary to the rumours, I believe that, by and large, the ecu spent on desirable infrastructure and long-term development projects have been better spent under the Community budget than by most of the member states, in which money has probably been wasted on a greater scale.

I have cited fraud, with justification, as a classic example of a misunderstanding: my hon. Friend the Member for Selly Oak said that we cannot get the Community right until we deal with fraud. I hope that it does not seem condescending to point out that, with a modern and sophisticated view of the Community, that sounds the same as saying that the nation states should be abolished because we have not yet dealt with fraud in them —which is equally absurd. We must give the Commission, the Court of Auditors and all the other bodies the necessary powers to handle these matters on a European scale, if they involve European budgetary resources. National money is a matter of national fraud.

Political union has been mentioned again and again. I believe that that is closely linked with economic and monetary union, which in itself is a political matter and which I welcome strongly. We should consider the question of political union positively and enthusiastically, on the logical and understandable basis that we want to see what would come out of such a system—because no one yet knows. There is no harm or weakness in that position.

When the post-war Marshall plan and all the other schemes for post-war European recovery and co-operation were being devised, I do not remember anybody saying, "Every jot and tittle has not been worked out, so we cannot agree to it." Those plans proceeded very much along the lines of a grand design, beginning with the framework of an idea, with all the gaps and details being filled in later as the plan proceeded, usually successfully. I believe that the same thing will happen with political union.

The enthusiastic Italian federalists may well eventually want a single Government entity in Brussels. I do not pretend that that is the objective of most of the people with whom I have discussed these matters in most of the other member states, although there are exceptions. Enthusiastic Europhiles in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, this country, Holland and other member states will see political union as the implantation of additional powers for the European Parliament, plus that Parliament's ability to exercise the necessary accountability over the Commission, to which other hon. Members have referred. Understandably, although they must be defeated in this—I use the word "defeated" with some hesitation—other member Governments will regard the element that is necessary to complete that equation as the greater accountability and answerability of the Council of Ministers.

Although I entirely accept the Foreign Secretary's sensible recommendation that many of the negotiations covering various policies and legislative aspects must be private, if the member Governments in both the Council of Ministers and the European Council want to resist the idea of a greater federalist or quasi-federalist input, it is

[Mr. Dykes]

important that they should be positive about other aspects. I refer to the growing demands that have been made by the European Parliament, the national Parliaments and even the members of the Commission.

It is interesting to note that the Commission itself is now worried about its own powers being reduced if there is greater political union. It is therefore important for the member Governments to accede to the growing clamour and demands for the final stage of the legislative deliberations of the Council of Ministers. I am not talking about policy formation per se—especially in terms of the European Council, which cannot be legislative in that sense, although it is in danger of creeping into a quasi-legislative model—but of the final state of the acceptance, agreement and debate—whether the matter be decided by majority voting or unanimity, depending on the article—of the last legislative stage of a directive or regulation that is proposed by the Commission and sent to the Council of Ministers. That should happen in open public session.

The idea of a senate or second chamber has been promulgated in various places, including this country. If that were to develop into something not only elaborate, but open and understood by the electorate as well as by the politicians of the various national Parliaments, perhaps by gradual evolution it could become a second chamber or an upper house of a bicameral European Parliament. That would be a welcome development.

However, in this era of real political union, whatever the matrix in which that may be constructed—it is certainly a complex matter—any such intergovernmental conference would last a long time. If the member Governments believe that they can continue in the old way, at a time of growing demands from the European Parliament for a greater say in such matters, notwithstanding the weakness of the Single European Act, they must accede to the increasing demands for greater knowledge of what they decide in their complicated processes. I am not talking about the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives or its officials and decisions; I am talking about the politicians who represent the various Councils and about the Council of Ministers itself and the way in which they should make their legislative decisions in future.

If they have the courage to adopt such a policy as soon as may be after the intergovernmental conference, we shall see the old phoney danger of super-federalism replaced by a much more rational structure, in which all citizens of Europe can play an equal part.

6.23 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): I am always intrigued when I follow the hon. Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) and am always filled with admiration for his fluency and his depth of knowledge of this subject. I was amused earlier when the Foreign Secretary spoke about stage 2 of Delors and monetary union, because when the right hon. Gentleman said that it would not happen, under his breath his hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East said, "Not yet." That has been the story of the European Community over the years. There has been great opposition to a variety of projects, but they have all come about.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) touched on that point when he said that we have become a certain kind of Community that is developing and evolving, although it is not the kind of Community that we were hoping for some years ago. The hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) praised my right hon. Friend, and said that he was my party's centre of gravity on European Community matters. That provided much amusement for those of us who have long supported the European Community, notwithstanding the difficulties in our party and with the position that it has taken over the years.

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) made an interesting speech, in which he referred to the federalist approach to Europe.

The right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) spoke more than an element of the truth when he referred to the coming currency union in West Germany on 2 July between the deutschmark and the ostmark. It is clear from the White Paper that stage 1 of the so-called "monetary union", which comes into effect on 1 July, requires us all to be part of the exchange rate mechanism. An announcement may well be made on 1 July that will take the British people into the exchange rate mechanism in conjunction with the unification of the German currencies on the following day. I have no personal knowledge of that, but the right moment for bringing stage 1 into full effect may well be at the same time that the German currency is unified.

The hon. Member for Wycombe also said that he did not really believe that the Labour party had moved in the way in which it has, or that we now embrace the European concept more than we did. He was perfectly right to refer to the fact that, in 1983, we had a policy of pulling out of the European Community. However, we have moved from the stage when we said, "Stop the world, we want to get off," because we are now part of Europe and are determined to play our full part in the affairs of Europe. The policy document to which my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) referred is, as he said, the document that will go to the party conference in the autumn and be accepted.

One facet of our policy is that we believe that membership of the European Community must become both deeper and wider. Tonight, we have heard talk of Austria and Switzerland joining. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney used a Gaullist phrase, "Europe des patries", and I remind the House that de Gaulle talked about a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Perhaps that is what will happen gradually.

Earlier, when the Foreign Secretary referred to the extension of Europe, my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) said, "Why not Russia?" Indeed, why not the Russia of Boris Yeltsin? That idea shows the way in which we are seking to expand Europe on the grounds of a mixed economy. We do not want a state-directed or command economy Europe; nor do we want a fully capitalist or market economy Europe. We are looking towards a mixed economy Europe, in which people will have a say and be taken into account. We want a Europe that will build prosperity and remove the great disparities in wealth. The European Community must be a real community. It must be really European—and more than simply a single market.

I turn now to the social dimension. As has already been said, the White Paper lauds the present Government,

giving them a sense not only of participating in Europe, but of leading Europe. As we all know, only one Government out of 12 opposed the social dimension—the Conservative Government of the United Kingdom. They do not believe that there should be a social dimension, such as a charter for workers' rights, running alongside the mixed economy. My right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton made it clear that, in meeting after meeting, the Prime Minister blocks this concept of a social dimension because she believes that the European Community is an adventure playground for financial services.

Mr. Oppenheim: Will the hon. Gentleman accept that, for many people, the objection is not so much to the measures themselves as to such measures being implemented before the economy and the productivity of industry can afford them? We are not against benefits, but we must have benefits that our industry can sustain. Will he also accept that it is not either/or—freer markets or more social benefits? Freer markets should provide more social benefits because more effective and productive industry will improve living standards for everyone.

Mr. Bell: I was under the impression that the Prime Minister was against the social dimension, because, having thrown out socialism by the front door, she did not want it to return through the back door. Throughout the development of the capitalist system, every benefit that has been achieved by those who work, by hand or by brain, has been achieved only through the use, authority and power of trade unions. No free market has ever, of its own will, delivered the goods for those who work in it, for the simple reason that, if it did, it would not make the profits it wants. Therefore, without the social dimension, there would not be the sharing and participation that we want.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton said that the Government do not want protection for employed people. As the frontiers come down, the financial services sector will be untrammelled and unrestrained, while those who work by hand or brain will not have the framework to ensure them the fruits of their investment.

The European Community must be a real community for all Europeans and not just a single market. That gets back to the concept of the social dimension. It should be a European Community that strengthens its commitment to help the people in developing countries of the Third world. Therefore, I welcome the section of the report dealing with the fourth Lomé Convention and the financial package of 12 billion ecu over five years for those Lomé countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The Labour party believes that the European Community should develop into a community that sets high environmental standards. The report gives the impression that we are leading the way on the environment. I was amused by the exchange between my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton and the Minister of State, during which they traded quotes from the European Commission. As my right hon. Friend said, we are being treated as the dirty man of Europe. The White Paper has some positive aspects dealing with the environment, and we shall hold the Government to them.

Mr. Maude: Perhaps we can continue to trade quotations. I should be interested to know the hon. Gentleman's view of what the Commissioner said. He drew up a table of infractions against European Community directives and specifically criticised two countries—Italy and Belgium—for their appalling record on environmental matters. His figures showed clearly that the United Kingdom came out well in comparison.

Mr. Bell: I am sure that in certain areas we will come out well in comparison, but a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman said "in certain areas". This is an analysis of environmental measures across the whole board. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to contest the assessment made by the Commissioner, who has no vested interest in supporting the United Kingdom, he should do so, but he has no basis for contesting it.

Mr. Bell: I was referring to the exchange between the hon. Gentleman and my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton and was about to talk on the miscreant litany of neglect in environmental matters. I can give two examples —water and beaches, one of which is before the European Court of Justice now. My right hon. Friend said in response to the Minister, that, when it comes to action in the Community, the United Kingdom blocks policies to deal with global warming that other Governments wish to take.

The hon. Gentleman was a little quick on his feet, because I was about to refer to those parts of the White Paper describing the Government's policy and actions. We shall be watching with interest the Government's progress in the Community on such aspects as health and safety at work and a vigorous environmental policy, which is referred to in the White Paper. It says that 1990 should see the establishment of a European environmental agency to act as a co-ordinating point for environmental information, in association with countries and institutions outside the Community. We welcome those aspects of the report and we look forward to following, with interest, the development of those policies.

I do not wish to dwell unduly on monetary union, a subject on which many hon. Members have spoken with great care, and which no doubt other hon. Members will speak about later. However, I shall refer to the document that the Government circulated among members of the Community entitled "An evolutionary approach to economic and monetary union".

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): A load of rubbish.

Mr. Bell: One does not need to dust off the crystal ball to see the truth of what has just been said by my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice). Our colleagues in Europe are treating it as a load of rubbish as well. We have had no sight of this document since it was published.

The Labour party believes that there should be a programme, similar to the Marshall aid programme, for eastern European countries. I remember reading about Ernest Bevin listening to the radio one morning in 1940 and hearing Secretary of State Marshall setting out his ideas for Europe. Mr. Marshall simply had the idea, and Ernest Bevin converted that idea into a package that allowed Europe to develop economically and to become what it is today. The Labour party supports a new programme for eastern European countries so that their economies can be brought up from the ground and developed, and so that they also develop a democratic view which brings them closer to the western European concept.

[Mr. Bell]

We all know who Jean Monnet is, and that he is said to be the father of Europe. He once said that we are here not to coalesce states but to unite people. The new developments in Europe offer a prospect of uniting the peoples of Europe, bringing them all together in a system based on a mixed economy, democracy and the principle of accountability. We should develop towards such a Europe, whether it is federalist, united or "un Europe des patries"—however one wishes to describe it. Europe is developing itself. We shall see changes for the better and an extension of democracy and the mixed economy. All of us will be the better for it.

6.38 pm

Mr. Michael Knowles (Nottingham, East): To follow what the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) said, perhaps I should point out that Jean Monnet's remarks were practically quoted in the preamble to the treaty of Rome. He said that the object was to produce an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe.

I sometimes wonder, when we have these debates, whether those on the Government and Opposition Front Benches, and Back-Benchers as well, have even bothered to read the treaty of Rome or to study what went on at Messina, the objective that lay behind the treaty of Rome, and what has developed across the rest of western Europe, if not in this country. Hon. Members spoke of votes on development towards economic and monetary union ending up 11:1. All too often, it does end up that way, not because of this or any other Government but simply because of our history. The view in the House and our country is different because of what happened during the second world war, when everybody else lost. They were occupied by someone but we were not. At the end of the war, we fallaciously thought that we had won.

Unfortunately, the war had ruined the United Kingdom, but that was not realised. Over the years, politicians involved themselves in various dubious schemes to show that Britain was important. In effect, there were concentric rings. It was said that Europe was important because Britain was a member of it. The Commonwealth was important because Britain was in it. The British-American alliance was important because we were involved in it. It was said that all those involvements made the United Kingdom an extremely important country.

That was political babble talk, and time has shown it to be so. In the end power counts in politics, and power has flowed away from this country. Our power has been spent in a good cause in the defeat of Nazism during the second world war, and I do not regret the decision to fight that evil one jot or tittle. The reality has not been accepted thereafter, however, even though it has been dawning over the years. We did not want to participate in the talks on the European defence community, or those on the European Economic Community. We did everything that we could to thwart the EC by trying to found the free trade area. In the end, the Prime Minister of the day, my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), led the country into Europe.

In a sense, most of the United Kingdom was fairly reluctant to enter Europe. It did not understand the politics underpinning the idea of the Community. Many Members of this place and many outside it still fail to understand that underpinning. We still have not succeeded in getting the message across.

I cannot better the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) about the Court of Auditors. Its reports appear almost constantly and we debate them only once a year. It is part of the way in which we delude ourselves that hon. Members go through the reports and select for debate the fraud that has taken place in other countries. We talk about fraud in Italy and France, but there are just as many cases in the United Kingdom. Somehow instances of fraud in the United Kingdom are overlooked.

The Court of Auditors is getting more on top of the fraud problem, but it needs its own independent staff. It cannot depend on the staff in independent states to police their own people, and it is foolish to believe that such a system can operate effectively. We tend to think that fraud is what happens in other nation states whereas it is only bending the rules slightly in our own state to make sure that, patriotically or nationalistically, it gains an advantage. It seems that any fraud in one's own state is not viewed in the same light as that which is brought to bear on fraud in other states. The only way in which fraud can be policed properly throughout the Community is by the Court of Auditors having its own staff.

The terms used in these debates are always delicate. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary talked about political union being a process, and that is true. The implication, however, is that it will go on and on. If that happens, what about federalism? That is what it will inevitably mean in the end. If political union is a process, we are seeing the transfer of power from this place to somewhere else. I am not against that per se, but if the transfer is to take place, I want power to be where there is democratic control. I do not want it disappearing into a European Council which is accountable to no one. I do not want deals to take place behind closed doors. I want public scrutiny.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said that democratic control is the preserve of national Parliaments. When Ministers here and in other states talk about national parliamentary sovereignty, all too often they mean ministerial sovereignty. They are saying, in effect, "Now and again we might give the lads a glimpse of what is happening behind closed doors but basically measures will be pushed through with a suitably large parliamentary working majority. It is nobody's business but ours." That might be the unfair suspicion of a Back-Bench Member, but I think that it is shared by many in the 12 national Parliaments.

Mr. Maude: I have been listening carefully to my hon. Friend. I have some sympathy with what he says, but I think that he is being unfair. The House of Commons has developed a system of scrutiny that is much more advanced than the systems that prevail in most of the other states of the Community. I accept that the system is not as advanced as that in the Danish Parliament, but that system has certain difficulties associated with it. The House has submitted proposals, to which the Government have responded, for advancing the process of scrutiny. All Ministers who take part in these discussions regard our accountability to the House as extremely important and influential. Members of this place—my hon. Friend is foremost among them—have the ability to question

Ministers and to hold them to account. That applies to the decisions that Ministers make and the positions that they occupy in the Council of Europe. That is what matters, and it is extremely effective.

That scrutiny and accountability is being developed increasingly in other national Parliaments. It is true of the Greek and Spanish Parliaments, the Bundestag and the National Assembly in Paris.

Mr. Knowles: I take my hon. Friend's argument seriously. I am a member of the Select Committee on European Legislation, but I would be kidding the House —I see the Chairman of the Select Committee, the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), in his place —if I gave the House the impression that the Committee could operate a check and that through its reports the House really knew what the Government were doing in Brussels. The fact is that we respond to bits of paper.

My hon. Friend the Minister says that other Parliaments are copying us, but in some ways they are more advanced than us. For example, there are joint meetings of Members of the European Parliament and Members of the Bundestag. They consider specific reports on current action and discuss future strategy. They try to determine where Germany's interest lies one year or five years ahead. They discuss long-term possibilities. That does not happen during meetings of the Select Committee, nor does it happen on the Floor of the House. Perhaps responsibility rests with Ministers and civil servants, but we miss out badly.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): Did the hon. Gentleman notice that the Foreign Secretary spoke eloquently in favour of improving the relationship between Members of this place and Members of the European Parliament? He was coy, however, about particulars that would improve the relationship.

Mr. Knowles: I shall not be trapped into agreeing with an Opposition Front-Bench spokesman.

Mr. Maude: I welcome the opportunity to expand a little. I entirely share the view of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. It is not for the Government to propound what the exact relationship should be: it is for Parliament to form its relationship with the European Parliament. To the extent that the House wishes to do that, the Government will support it wholeheartedly.

Mr. Knowles *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I understand that the Minister will be seeking to catch the eye of the Chair to reply to the debate. Perhaps he will save one or two of his arguments for that occasion.

Mr. Knowles: Perhaps I am at fault, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for being too provocative and leading others on.

Again, I accept what my hon. Friend the Minister says. We all know the realities. We have danced a minuet in this place on the relationship with the European Parliament. If any Member of this place wants to telephone a Member of the European Parliament, or a member of the Commission, to talk about something that affects his constituency, he must pay for the call himself.

If, for example, the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) wishes to speak to someone in Edinburgh, which is about twice as far away as Brussels, the call will be paid for by the House, and rightly so. It is clear that we still do not have the right relationship. If a member of this place wishes to visit Edinburgh or Belfast, I would not say that no questions are asked but basically the visit is on. But try to visit Brussels or Strasbourg; that is very different. It is difficult to do so unless the Member is willing to pay the bill himself.

Sir Russell Johnston: Has the hon. Gentleman noticed that the reference in the report to the European Parliament consists of only three short paragraphs at the bottom of a page? It would appear that the only thing that it does is listen to Ministers.

Mr. Knowles: That is right.

The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) said that European monetary union could lay the foundation of a superstate. Basically, he is right. He saw the great drawback to that, which is that politicians would not have their hands on the printing presses to promote inflation. The people of Britain and France, who have the two most politically controlled central banks, might look with envy at developments affecting the Bundesbank and the Federal Reserve bank in the United States. They might see an advantage in wrenching our hands off the printing presses. We must not think that, because we want a bit of power, the people of this country will necessarily see it as in their interests. If we explained the arguments for trying to emulate the Bundesbank and Federal Reserve bank developments on a European scale, there would be positive arguments in favour of doing so and, I believe, strong support outside the House.

The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney said that he suspected that the Government would accept stage 1 but would try to find ways to derail stages 2 and 3. He was in favour of that as a policy. His suspicions are, however, shared abroad, where people are expecting "the old British tactic". The old Gaullist suspicion of Britain is still there—the fear that we will go in with no real sympathy, and that at very opportunity we will try to slow things up, and derail and sidetrack proposals. Such views are not without reason, as, over the years, successive Governments—Conservative and Labour—have done that.

Enlargement is inevitable. I was interested in the comment by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), that Turkey's application for entry to the Community was probably still not eligible. I think that Turkey's entry will be 10 or 15 years ahead; it is, however, the one state with a promise of eventual entry written into its agreement with the Community. That is a good thing, as we need Turkey to reinforce the Community in the long term.

Mr. Anderson: If the hon. Gentleman recalls, my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) said that the Foreign Secretary had put the claims of Turkey and Austria to membership on a par. The Foreign Secretary failed to appreciate that, given Austria's trading pattern and the fact that it is already being prepared for the time when the doors are open again after 1993, it is in a different position.

Mr. Knowles: The hon. Gentleman is right. Obviously, Austria is much more advanced industrially, as well as in its political and human rights. Whereas Turkey's

[Mr. Knowles]

membership would not be appropriate for another 10 years, there are perhaps other countries in western Europe that could enter almost immediately.

Mr. Oppenheim: Is not the real reason for the campaign to prevent Turkey from entering the EC the fact that industrial interests, lobbies, trade unions and Opposition Members are terrified of cheap exports from Turkey, especially of textiles?

Mr. Knowles: That is true. An even greater fear is that of cheap labour across the Community. If my hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) wants to argue that case on principle, he can also argue for dismantling all immigration controls. Good luck to him if he wants to take that on board; I would not care to do so!

Inevitably, enlargement will mean changes in the structure of the Community. Already the Commission is too large, but every nation state now wants at least its own commissioner. That is nonsense. What we need is a smaller working structure that will appoint the best commissioners. I do not care whether the commissioner is British, German, French or Dutch; whoever is the best man or woman for the job should be appointed. The idea that we must all have a national representative and that national Governments must appoint a commissioner—who will be independent of national Governments anyway—is nonsense. We must shrink the existing structure.

The idea that European Council meetings must be in secret should come to an end: it is indefensible. As far as I know, it is the only legislative body in the western world that meets in secret. The powers of the European Parliament should be enhanced.

There is a great deal of fear about the term "federalism", but we should not be frightened of it. The French make a case for it: they say that if we do not put some bounds round the rights of the European structures, in the end they will encroach on national Parliaments and Governments. They believe that federalism would defend national rights, and do not see it as an encroachment. That is surely a positive way to view the matter.

There was an ambulance strike in this country some months ago; it was debated by the European Parliament. The United States Congress could not possibly have debated an ambulance strike in Massachussets or Texas, because, as a federal structure, it has nothing to do with such matters. However, under the present European structure, there is no limit to how far the powers of the European institutions can be stretched. Before the end of the decade, we may adopt something like amendment 10 to the American constitution. That will reserve all further powers that are not handed over to the European structures for the states and for the people.

People will have to accustom themselves to a powerful Germany. Within four or five years, eastern Germany will have been modernised and integrated with western Germany. We shall then face the problem that has faced Europe for more than 100 years—that of the biggest, most powerful and most dynamic state in central Europe. Part of the argument about European integration has concerned the need to put some chains on the nation state. Although we think in terms of the German nation state, others might think in terms of the British nation state. We must face the fact that, eventually, Germany will be the biggest and most powerful state in the Community. There is no point in shilly-shallying about it.

In the Conservative party, the Bruges group has different policies towards the European Community, including the policy that dare not speak its name—withdrawal. I do not think that withdrawal is realistic, and I doubt whether anyone else involved in politics does either. We must face the truth—even if we British do not like it—that the Community was founded to curtail the power of the European nation state; that is its object. For the past 70 or 80 years, we have managed to reduce the continent that was the producer of most of the arts and science of the modern world to a slaughterhouse—an abattoir. The people of Europe do not want that again. The Community will widen and deepen to do the job for which it was founded, and I for one support it.

6.58 pm

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): I hope that I will not embarrass the hon. Member for Nottingham, East (Mr. Knowles) by saying how much I admired his speech. He put his case extremely well, and I agreed with most of what he said. I found his attitude towards accountability particularly interesting, and I shall refer to it again later.

The Foreign Secretary's foreword to the White Paper, his speech, and the excellent Foreign Affairs Select Committee report—on which I congratulate the Chairman—all rightly emphasise how radically the context in which we consider European Community affairs has been altered by the dramatic developments in eastern and central Europe in the past year. I make no apology for concentrating on those developments in the first part of my speech, before I then discuss how they affect the role of the EC.

All democrats rejoice at the democratic revolution in central and eastern Europe, of which the impeccably conducted Czechoslovakian elections are but the most recent manifestation. As I stood in Wenceslas square three weeks ago and saw the hoardings, lamp posts and shop windows festooned with the election posters of the 22 parties contesting the first free elections for more than 40 years, I understood something of Wordsworth's passionate response to the French revolution:

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive."

Certainly, President Havel—*[Interruption.]* I did not continue that quotation because, unfortunately, the second line is no longer relevant. President Havel was right to say that yesterday's election result was a victory not only for Civic Forum but for all Czechoslovaks.

Whatever our delight with what is happening in central and eastern Europe, most of us feel some apprehension about the extent of the conceptual and strategic challenge that the changes present. After 40 years in which the shape and division of Europe have been more or less taken as given, all is now in flux. The sudden collapse of Soviet power and influence, triggered by Mr. Gorbachev's far-sighted and courageous refusal to use Russian troops to bolster Communist regimes in central and eastern Europe, has had radical consequences.

First, it has led to the emergence of an independent central and eastern Europe for the first time since the inter-war period. Secondly, it is leading to the unification of Germany—an objective for which western European leaders originally called, but which they never expected to happen. Last, but by no means least, it is undermining the

old cold war assumptions and alliances. Last week saw the formal winding-up of the Warsaw pact as a working military alliance and the declaration by the NATO Foreign Ministers that the cold war is over and that NATO needs to develop a political dimension—all of which have implications for the EC.

The task facing European leaders is to fashion what amounts to nothing less than a new European settlement that will not only guarantee frontiers, but will create a framework that will provide stability, security and prosperity into the next century. In this difficult and delicate period, a special responsibility rests on European leaders. They must discard old habits and old assumptions and eschew short-term, partisan responses. Perhaps Mr. Kohl might have thought about that over the Oder-Neisse line. Indeed, when the Prime Minister was in the Soviet Union last week, perhaps she should not have said so publicly that she wanted to put new nuclear weapons in western Germany. It was not the most appropriate and tactful remark. Politicians must think imaginatively and, above all, they must think about the institutional framework of the new Europe—or the new European architecture, as the Foreign Secretary called it—and especially about the respective roles of NATO, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and, above all, the EC.

I want to say a few words about NATO and the CSCE, to which the Foreign Secretary also referred. There are those who believe that the EC should assume a security role. I do not share that view. It was once said of NATO that its original task was to keep the Russians out, to keep the Americans in and to keep the Germans down. In 1990, those objectives appear to be either out of date or in need of substantial modification.

First, the Russians are arguably no longer in a position to mount an offensive land attack in western Europe. Secondly, Germany is by far the most powerful nation in Europe, and it is becoming increasingly unenthusiastic about the permanent stationing of foreign troops—and especially nuclear weapons—on her soil. Thirdly, in the United States domestic and budgetary pressures are pushing the Congress and the President towards radical cuts in American forces stationed in Europe.

Does that mean that we should try to change NATO's role, or even to do away with it? It is pointless to dream up new tasks for NATO under the vague heading "political", whatever that may mean. It would be most unwise for NATO to become the policeman of eastern Europe, let alone the policeman of the remainder of the world, as the Prime Minister appeared to be implying last week. However, there remains a case for NATO to continue to exist, although at a much reduced level, if only to keep a minimum level of deterrence against unfavourable changes in the Soviet Union, and to ensure that any European settlement is underwritten by the United States. That is very important.

Pan-European security, especially the future security of eastern and central Europe, needs to be considered within the framework of the CSCE. What is needed is a new treaty, as the leaders of Europe have suggested, backed by existing CSCE countries, especially the United States and the Soviet Union, to endorse existing frontiers. We need mediating and conciliating machinery to deal with frontier or other disputes, especially those arising from minorities. We need a permanent secretariat, although not a European security force, be it provided by NATO or anyone else. That would not be either possible or acceptable. In any case, in the longer term—as has happened with EC countries—the best guarantee of peace and stability in eastern and central Europe is likely to be the development of lasting economic and cultural ties.

The role of the EC will be vital to the new European settlement. As I have already implied, I do not believe that the EC should become a super-state—certainly not in my political lifetime, or even in the lifetime of my children. Nor should it have a security function. A European defence community would not only exclude the United States: as my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) pointed out, it would rule out Austria, Sweden and Switzerland from eventual membership of the EC. However, the European Community is, to a considerable extent, the motor of the new Europe.

If any hon. Member doubts that, he must think about the enormous economic power of the EEC; reflect on its renewed growth, especially during the past three years; remember that the EC was given the primary role in helping eastern Europe; go to Vienna, where the Austrian Government are applying for membership; or go to Prague, Budapest or Warsaw, where the new democratic Governments are turning to the EC first for association and, secondly, for eventual membership. My judgment is that, if the new European settlement is to be lasting, above all it needs to be underwritten by the economic and political dynamism of the European Community.

I strongly support the widening of the EC, as do many hon. Members. It must be prepared to reach out to eastern and central Europe, first in association agreements and secondly, in the course of time, in full membership where that is appropriate. In doing so, it must not exclude those EFTA countries such as Austria, Norway and others, all of which have long-standing democracies and developed economies. Many of them will wish to join before the end of the century. The new European settlement will need an open EC, but I do not believe that widening should be at the expense of deepening.

If the EC is to act as the economic and political motor of Europe, further integration will be required. The meshing of the European economies, which will be further stimulated by 1992, has already resulted in considerable economic and monetary co-ordination. Any right hon. and hon. Members doubting that should remember what happened when the Bundesbank raised interest rates last year. Other countries, including the United Kingdom, immediately followed—which showed just how strong is the economic and monetary co-ordination. We are already in a Bundesbank regime—a deutschmark currency area. The project for economic and monetary union, which will be discussed at the intergovernmental conference at the end of this year, is formal recognition of what has already occurred.

The case for greater co-ordination is strengthened, not weakened, by the challenge of eastern Europe. If we are to help eastern and central Europe, we must ensure that the Community is both dynamic and cohesive. Greater economic and monetary union is likely to strengthen rather than weaken the Community. On that, I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore). Later, I shall say more about Britain and economic and monetary union.

I agree with the hon. Member for Nottingham, East that a Community strengthened by greater economic and

[Mr. Giles Radice]

monetary co-ordination will need a more powerful political dimension—hence the case for more majority voting on issues such as the environment and social matters, and for a strengthened European Parliament, both of which are proposed in Labour's policy document.

There is a further argument for the deepening of the Community, and one which perhaps dare not speak its name. If there is fear of a unified Germany—although it is not one that I personally share—then the more Germany is bound by economic and political ties to its neighbours the better it will be for the rest of Europe.

I turn to the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is a medium-sized European power. It still has a significant role to play, but that influence is best exercised in co-operation with its partners inside the European Community. It is essential that the United Kingdom plays a positive rather than negative role in the Community's development. It must put forward creative ideas, seek allies for them, and play a constructive part in the subsequent debate. That has seldom been the case under the present British Government. Consequently, British influence over European affairs has been diminished rather than increased over the past decade. I hope that Britain will be more effective in the debate on economic and political monetary union than it has been in the past.

I do not share all the fears of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney on economic and monetary union. I believe that he was in a sense tilting slightly at windmills, because he was putting up Delors mark 1, not Delors as defined by subsequent debates. As to devaluation, I do not believe that it is an end in itself. It may have some short-term uses, but we have seen the dangers of countries relying too much on devaluation. The problem is that it feeds through to inflation. There is a strong case for a more stable currency regime of a kind from which we would have benefited if it had been in force over the past 10 years.

The French experience shows that it is possible to be a member of the exchange rate mechanism, enjoy a low rate of inflation, and compete relatively successfully with the more powerful German economy. I notice that the French balance of payments deficit has fallen quite markedly over the past year. The French have been enjoying a decent rate of growth over the past three years. The blot on the horizon is their unemployment levels, although these are beginning to improve, whereas our own are beginning to increase. So we should not make as much of devaluation as does my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney.

There is no reason why we should not enjoy freedom of budgetary manoeuvre within European monetary and economic union. There is no reason either why we should not have a European regional policy, which would partly have the effect of devaluation and would protect parts of the country against the kind of shock that one needs to inflict with devaluation in other circumstances. Again, my right hon. Friend did not make enough of that.

Also, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney assumed that Britain will enter into a fixed exchange rate regime for ever more straight away. We do not yet know the date for our entry into EMU, and there may be a much longer period of adjustment than that which my right hon. Friend assumed. Finally I do not find my right hon. Friend's alternative of a two-speed Europe very attractive. I do not want Britain to be left outside. We were left outside before, when we were excluded from the Community. We have been left outside the exchange rate mechanism, and that has not been a good thing.

It is essential that the Government play a constructive part in Europe, which will give us far more influence. Fortunately, there is every prospect that the next British Government will be a Labour Government, which will take a more positive and constructive line. That will be for the benefit not only of the United Kingdom but of the European Community as a whole.

7.16 pm

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): I agree with the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) that the speech that must be answered in this debate is that of the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore). However, both the hon. Member for Durham, North and his right hon. Friend have one characteristic in common. In loyalty, they gather around the Labour party's present commitment to enter the exchange rate mechanism. I am bound to say that I thought that the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney damned it with the faintest of faint praise. The way in which he said that he would tolerate that development showed that he would just about vote for it if three of the four of the largest Labour Whips sat on him, pummelled him, swore at him, and reminded him of the many occasions on which Labour party members voted for things of which he was in favour but which they hated.

It would be ungracious of me not to express a few words of thanks to my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). It is not often, when I intend to make a speech, that he goes to the trouble of trailing it the week before. I am most grateful to him for doing that. He recommended that a junior economist should have a word or two with me over the weekend. That did not happen.

My views—they may be mere prejudices—have mainly been arrived at from observing the way in which the economy works. My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup has been among my most important tutors. Between 1972 and 1974, I observed his economic policies—it was a period that exerted an enormous influence on the rest of the 1970s. My hatred of inflation for its social evil and the political disturbance that it causes is based mainly on my observations of my right hon. Friend's economic policies between 1972 and 1974. I hope that he will forgive me if I have not had the interview with the junior economist that he suggested.

As regards the proposals, that seem to be abroad in my party, for going into the exchange rate mechanism—I address my remarks most of all to those hon. Members who believe that that would be a splendid wheeze, by which we might win the next general election—my prejudices are in favour of floating exchange rates, and attempting to reduce inflation by a progressive squeeze on the money supply, however it is defined. However, I accept that a measure that is designed to hold up the value of the pound may have some temporary advantage, in that while that certainly does not cure inflation, because it does not stop all prices rising, it prevents some prices from rising. It has much the same shocking and distorting effect as a prices and incomes policy when it is first introduced.

If the object of policy at any one time is to hold up the value of the pound, it is true—as we can observe from recent market sentiment—that if we announce that we are going into the exchange rate mechanism, it is probable that there will be an increase in the value of shares and that the pound will temporarily increase in value. That is a temporary advantage. We must ask ourselves whether a system by which we rig exchange rates is advantageous over all. Here I agree with much of what the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney said. We can observe the truth of that by comparing two situations.

In the period between 1979 and 1981, as the right hon. Gentleman said, there was a squeeze on the money supply at first. It was not an entirely consistent squeeze, and not as harsh a squeeze as was predicted by the Government at the time. None the less it was a squeeze, and it was accompanied by a sharp increase in the value of the pound against other currencies. As a result, much of our manufacturing industry was squeezed out. The consequence was that the squeeze on the money supply, which was the important factor, was harsher than intended. The pound was freely floating and there was no way in which its value could be brought down.

Compare that time with the period since the middle of 1988 when a steady squeeze has been applied to the money supply—not a harsh or dramatic squeeze, and with none of the discontinuity that occurred in 1976, but none the less a squeeze. The social and political cries against that squeeze have been nothing like as great as they were between 1979 and 1981. That is because we have had a relatively free-floating pound, which has gone down in the past year by 8 per cent. against the trade-weighted index of other currencies. Yes, there has been a rise in unemployment. Sadly, it is probable that if we are going to squeeze inflation out, there may be a further rise in unemployment, but at least while the squeeze on the money supply continues, British industry can expand by exporting. That is the advantage, on occasion, of allowing the exchange rate to depreciate.

I am smiling to emphasise the way in which the Treasury keeps saying, in a macho way, "We won't allow devaluation." It is important to understand that there is a term of art involved here. A depreciation is something that is allowed by markets. However, devaluation is carried out by Government. Therefore, when the Chancellor says that there will be no devaluation, those who wrongly believe that the words "devaluation" and "depreciation" mean the same thing, conclude that there will be a massive attack on speculators. There will be no such thing. That shows the advantage of employing a large number of classicists in the Treasury. That is an example of the way in which a floating rate may assist a squeeze on the money supply.

We ought also to consider the way in which entry into the exchange rate mechanism may turn out to be inconsistent with the requirements of domestic policy. There are two good examples of that. The first is the period between 1987 and 1988, when, as everyone knows, we were an informal member of the exchange rate mechanism. At that time, the pound was rising inconveniently against the deutschmark and the only way to get it down to what was regarded by the then Chancellor as a satisfactory level, was by lowering interest rates. There is no secret about that.

The lowering of interest rates, it has been said, was caused principally as a response to the fall on the stock market, but long before that fall, and long after it became obvious that that fall would not be prolonged, it was stated that the reason why interest rates were kept too low was that it was considered necessary to hold the pound down against the deutschmark, and we are still suffering from that now.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): In view of the comment that he has just made, will my hon. Friend suggest to the House what would have been the effect on inflation today if we had joined the exchange rate mechanism in 1985?

Mr. Budgen: That would have depended entirely upon our domestic policy on the control of money supply. There are times when the requirements of rigging the exchange rate and the requirements of strengthening or loosening control on money supply, may go in the same direction. There may be other times when those objectives diverge. However, between 1987 and the middle of 1988 we had divergent objectives. Lower interest rates were being used to pull the pound down, but domestic conditions in this country—for example, house prices rose by between 20 and 30 per cent.—meant that the rate of growth was at an all-time high of 5 per cent., which in my opinion is completely unsustainable in our economy, and that showed that we ought to have had higher interest rates.

I use those two examples because the Treasury tells us that all the indicators for the increase in money supply are no longer reliable. Even so, those two external indicators clearly show that the economy was overheating in that period. Interest rates, however, came down and we are now suffering the consequences.

The same thing is happening now. The peseta has risen recently by about 3 per cent. In order to keep the peseta within the exchange rate mechanism, the great and the good of Europe are leaning on the Spanish authorities and telling them that they ought to reduce their interest rates. However, the Spanish economy is in exactly the same position as the British economy in 1987: asset prices are booming, inflation is coming down, growth is going like mad, Spanish wage costs are increasing and the Spaniards are considering ways of controlling credit, apart from increasing interest rates, thinking of ways to apply a prices and incomes policy and doing all the things that my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup would consider to be a means not of halting inflation—he is not in favour of that—but of distorting inflation and presenting it in a more positive light.

Mr. David Howell: The Spanish economy is not in the same position as ours. The Spaniards have had a large budget deficit for years, whereas we have had a budget surplus in recent times and continue to have one. That is a fundamental and important difference.

Mr. Budgen: I respectfully disagree with my right hon. Friend. The question is not whether one had a budget deficit or a budget surplus. It is possible, as this country has demonstrated, to have a budget surplus and also to print money. I see the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney nodding in agreement. It is also possible theoretically, as was demonstrated by the previous Labour Government, to have a large deficit but to cover it without printing money, provided interest rates are high enough. The fact that there is either a surplus or a deficit is irrelevant.

There are signs that the Spanish economy is overheating. I am not one of those who keep saying that everybody wants to halt inflation. I accept immediately

[Mr. Budgen]

that in this country most people like inflation but, unlike most people, the politicians keep saying that they intend to halt inflation. I am unusual in believing that, on the whole, the cant is right; it is just that politicians do not like to follow general observations and take measures to reduce inflation.

If the Spanish people wish a slight reduction in the future rate of inflation to take place, I assert that it will be necessary for them not to lower but to raise interest rates. That is one of the contradictions. Let me consider, however, for a moment what is regarded as the smart option. Those who believe that they can win the next general election by going into the exchange rate mechanism consider the smart option to be that, about a week before the Labour party conference, the Government should announce that they intend to enter the exchange rate mechanism, thus stealing the Labour party's clothes. The pound will certainly rise in value, in the short term there will be a great boom on the stock exchange and everybody will say, "The Tories are going to win the next general election."

Let me, however, deal with what may happen in later months. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the public opinion polls suggest a triumph for the Tories similar to the triumph that we enjoyed in the recent local elections. Let us further suppose that some world speculators begin to grow a little uneasy with the pound. If the pound drops in value just before the next election and if we persist in arguing that control of inflation must be achieved by keeping up the value of the pound, let us consider what happens then.

If the next election, for the sake of argument, were to take place in the spring of 1991, we have to remember that there has been some squeeze on money supply since the middle of 1988. By the middle of 1991, therefore, there will have been a long squeeze and it may not be necessary then to raise interest rates. We may, however, find in the period coming up to the general election that a certain course has to be followed. We can be sure that, if we enter the exchange rate mechanism just before the Labour party conference, it will not be put forward as something that might have a peripheral effect; it will not be put forward modestly as the least bad solution, in the circumstances. This will be the new solution. It will be similar to prices and incomes policies and all the other measures that are supposed to cure inflation and make life easier and better for the British people, the country going onward and upward for ever more.

In those circumstances, it will be difficult in the spring of 1991 to say to the people of Europe, "We were only in the snake for a couple of months in 1972. We have come into the exchange rate mechanism for three or four months but we are rather uncomfortable in it; we are not at all sure that it is anything like what it was cracked up to be, so we shall come out again." But we shall be unable to do that. If the pound starts to fall, we shall have to raise interest rates. We shall be hoist with our own petard. We may find that, rather than winning us the next election, that smart little ruse causes us to lose it.

That brings me to my final point, which, I regret to say, is the inconsistency of the argument advanced by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney. If we enter the exchange rate mechanism and currency speculators believe that there is no downside risk with the pound, they will accept a lower interest rate for their investment, but that is because they will believe that we shall be cajoled, through swimming along the stream of Euro-babble, into something that approaches Delors stages 2 and 3. When we say that we want to discuss Delors stages 2 and 3, it is thought that we are saying, "Provided you change some of the punctuation so that we can describe it as a great change of principle, all will be well." That is not, however, what is being said either by the British people or by the Prime Minister.

There are some essentials of stages 2 and 3 that very few hon. Members will accept. If the speculator is to be assuaged, he must be satisfied that this country is moving towards locked exchange rates. If we are moving towards locked exchange rates, we must be moving towards a common currency. If we are to have a common currency we must, at the very least, have a common monetary policy.

I agree that there can be some fudging about the institution that imposes the common monetary policy. We could have, rather than a single central bank, a system of co-ordination between national central banks. But we must have a common monetary policy.

It must be clear to anyone who has considered the details that the British have no intention whatever of entering a common monetary policy, of having permanently locked exchange rates or of agreeing to a single European currency. If that is so, the speculators' belief that there is no downside risk in the pound will be shown to be wrong, in which case the scenario that I put forward, that we might join the exchange rate mechanism with a great deal of froth and euphoria and that the speculators might then say, "My goodness, these Brits really are serious about having no intention of being carried along into Delors stages 2 and 3; they do not want a common currency," suggests that there is a downside risk.

If we accept anything approaching stages 2 and 3 with a common currency and common monetary policy, it will be extremely difficult for the present Government to present the necessary legislation to the House of Commons. Of course all politicians have to be prepared and able to eat a large number of their own words, but the Prime Minister has spoken about stages 2 and 3 in language reminiscent of that used by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney. There is not much room for fudging over the issues of sovereignty, a common monetary policy or a single currency.

So there must be a real risk that those who buy pounds in October will become disenchanted with them by next spring, in which case I say to my hon. Friends who consider it to be a wheeze that, if they think that they will be able to persuade the Government and the Prime Minister to accept stages 2 and 3, although they have said that they will never do so, I agree that that has happened before and that we who have tried to resist the embraces of Europe have usually lost, but if we lose on this occasion, there are an awful lot of words that we can call upon and it will be a most uncomfortable business if the Government have to present us with legislation demonstrating that they are in substance accepting stages 2 and 3.

I suggest to my hon. Friends who think that we can win the next election by joining the exchange rate mechanism that, if they do not want stages 2 and 3, the honourable thing would be to say that now and to say it in Europe and

to let the people of Europe know. Unless we are prepared to concede ultimately by accepting stages 2 and 3, it would be not simply a con on the financial markets, but a serious con on the remaining 11 countries in Europe.

Mr. Spearing: I am sure that the entire House has been following closely the hon. Gentleman's most interesting speech. Debates at leisure allow such consideration to take place. However, does he agree that the matter is much more fundamental than an attractive or unattractive wheeze? The alternative to accepting stages 2 and 3 will be as my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) suggested: we shall be told by the rest of the EEC, "We will go it alone and you will be left out." In which case we shall be told by the City——

Mr. Radice: And by me.

Mr. Spearing: My hon. Friend says that we shall also be told by him. We shall be told that we cannot afford to do that for the sake of future prosperity, and that at some stage we shall have to join. Bearing in mind the fact that the intergovernmental conferences may continue into next year, is it not a possibility that if there is any eating of words, it will have to be after the next general election?

Mr. Budgen: Obviously, stages 2 and 3 require legislation, so I suppose that a cynic might say that, in two, three or four years' time, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister may not be leading the Conservative party and that a new, more European and progressive leader might wish to take us into something approximating stages 2 and 3. Obviously that is a possibility, but I should have thought that every prominent politician in the Tory party has so far adopted the language of opposition to stages 2 and 3. The language of opposition is all in terms of the Bruges speech: sovereignty and fundamental opposition to a single currency and a common monetary policy. Whoever leads the Tory party in the next five or 10 years will have a most indigestible time if he or she comes to the House with suggestions based on Delors stages 2 and 3.

7.45 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): We have heard a number of extremely interesting speeches from my right hon. and hon. Friends and from Conservative Members. The barbed and witty speech of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) was certainly one of them.

The House will forgive me if I concentrate on one narrow issue in an attempt to nudge the Foreign Office some of the way into coming to believe that the situation that has developed at the natural history museum in south Kensington concerns the Foreign Office and our European policy.

I take as a text page 28 of the White Paper, which states, under the heading, "Research and Development":

"On 15 December the Research Council reached unanimous agreement on a new Framework Programme for 1990-94. The total level of funding agreed was 5·7 billion ecu".

There follows a list of relevant figures. Among the matters on which there is to be concentration are the environment and life sciences and technology.

From the point of view of relevance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that page 30 of the document contains a reference to

"access of information to the environment held by public authorities".

Paragraph 7 of the explanatory memorandum on the European Community document states:

"Fifteen specific proposals foreseen in the research framework programme will be brought forward during the year. On the environment there will be further work to establish the European Environment Agency and a study of the possible harmonisation of environmental, economic and fiscal instruments."

I say that specifically to place myself firmly in order.

When the Foreign Secretary kindly gave way to me earlier, I said that I had a wad of letters from Europe on the issue. The first is signed by Docteur Francis Petter of the Musée Nationale d'Histoire Naturelle. He says:

"Monsieur,

J'ai été stupéfait d'apprendre que les responsables du Natural History Museum de Londres ont décidé la suppression de 60 postes et, parmi ceux-ci, de responsables des bases de données les plus prestigieuses au monde.

Pendant toute ma carrière, ce sont les riches collections du British Museum de Londres que j'ai consultées presque chaque année"—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. If I am not to rule the hon. Gentleman out of order on the points that he made earlier, I draw his attention to the rules of the House, which require speeches in the House to be made in English.

Mr. Dalyell: It seems that even in the European Community we require English speeches.

The French have all written in French so suffice it to say that such letters come not only from Dr. Petter but from the palaeontology museum in Paris to talk about the author's "inquietude" and "tristesse"—to translate that for the House, he spoke of his sadness.

Dr. G. de Beaumont, the curator of the museum in Geneva, wrote another letter. I shall not argue with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about whether I should quote the French, but it is all there and these letters will be given to the Foreign Office. From the geology museum, Dr. Marc Weidmann wrote in the most formidable terms.

One of the letters from France is in English, so I can quote it. Dr. Pascal Tassy said:

"What we read on the fate of the Natural History Museum is astonishing.

As a palaeomammalogist who visited the Museum several times for research purposes, I cannot imagine the demise of the fossil mammal Section. This section has in charge a unique collection of fossil mammals which is part of the world heritage."

That is a point that is repeatedly made in these letters. What we are talking about in South Kensington is the world heritage. The letter continues:

"My colleagues, A. Gentry, J. J. Hooker and A. Currant always helped me fruitfully, and, moreover this help was a scientific help. Collections can be properly curated only by competent scientists. Indeed, my colleagues in the palaeo-mammology section are highly rated at the international level. To stop research in the field of palaeomammology in the Natural History Museum will not only damage the cultural renown of the United Kingdom, but as a consequence, we, palaeontologists in the world will lack major scientific contributions . . . I understand that whole parts of the systematic research are planned to be cut down. This is unbelievable. To suppress natural history research in a Natural History Museum is nonsense."

You will be glad to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I shall not resort—even if you would let me—to German because the Germans have written in English. From the central museum there comes:

"Sehr Geehrter Herr Minister!

It is with great concern that I have learned of plans for the radical restructuring of the Natural History Museum."

[Mr. Dalyell]

From the geological museum in Copenhagen comes a powerful letter:

"Since the British"—

the House will be spared my best Danish—

"after the French, in the course of last century and the beginning of this on the basis of worldwide influence and contacts built up a bastion of knowledge, that is the British Museum, educated people in all countries have regarded it as one of the foci of Western culture."

That is the strength of feeling expressed by our European partners. Representations have also been made by Spain and Italy. I ask the Foreign Secretary to honour his promise—I am sure that he will, because in all my experience of him, if he says in the House that he will do something, he does it—to appoint some, I hope fairly senior, thoughtful Foreign Office official, because I am an admirer of Foreign Office officials, to find out what assessment has been made of the drastic reduction in the heteroptera section of the natural history museum and the implications for work sponsored with British money by the Foreign Office in Surinam on shield bugs.

Shield bugs are devastating coconut plantations. The research is into the whole question of the transmission of disease, and coccid research is also being carried out—*[Interruption.]* If I may explain to the hon. Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker), this is all about mealy bugs and their agricultural implications for Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Kenya, South Africa, Zaire, India, Guyana, Costa Rica—dare I mention the place tonight? [HON. MEMBERS: "What was the score?"] It was 1:0. Brazil and New Zealand may also be affected.

Through the Foreign Office, I wish to ask the Prime Minister whether, in the light of her speech of 22 March, primarily about global warming but also about the need for databases, what proposals the Government have to promote identification programmes for scientific and popular use, and the development and management of the European plants database, and the British plant database with reference to the work of Dr. Richard Pankhurst. Dr. Pankhurst is one of a number who will be declared redundant.

How can the Government talk about sensible contributions to the framework programme which is on the agenda for this debate when one of our major contributions is being dismantled? In particular, will the Foreign Office discuss with the Governments of France and Germany the taxonomic support for West German teams working in Malaysia and French teams working in Cameroon in the light of the drastic reductions at the natural history museum? That may be a question for the Foreign Office or for the Department of the Environment. One difficulty that the natural history museum has faced is that many Departments are involved. Where Departments can pass the buck, they are tempted to do so.

What assessment have the Government made for the policies on the environment of the drastic reduction of the aculeate hymenoptera section at the natural history museum? That section deals with wasps, bees and stinging ants. Again, it is a matter of considerable importance to the environment.

The next question may be for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food or for other Departments. What assessment have the Government made of the implications for agriculture of the drastic reductions in the homoptera section of the natural history museum and for fisheries in relation to their role as primary producers, on which ultimately all fisheries depend? That is the whole study of diatoms. Diatoms are absolutely crucial to the environment and to fisheries. Incidentally, they produce about one third of the oxygen in the world. Those who make speeches about green issues, global warming and environmental co-operation had better not be responsible for dismantling a unique facility such as that in south Kensington.

I ask Ministers—primarily Health Ministers—what assessment they have made of the effect of closing down the heteroptera subsection and, for instance, the redundancy of Mr. William Dolling of the natural history museum. That work relates to the discomfort and diseases caused by bed bugs and, indeed, other bugs which are vectors of disease with reference to—here the Foreign Office has a responsibility—British scientists' work. Most of the money for their work is Rockefeller-funded. What assessment has been made of the drastic reduction in the homoptera section of the natural history museum for agriculture and horticulture?

The whole scheme was worked out without consulting staff of the natural history museum below the rank of deputy keeper. It came out of the blue on 23 April 1990. I have it on the authority of Bill Brett and Mr. Finlay of the Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists that the professional associations and trade unions concerned were absolutely appalled that they were not consulted.

One of the hardest-hit sections of entomology is hymenoptera. All research on most of the aculeate forms will be stopped under the plan. The aculeate hymenoptera have stings and include ants, bees and stinging wasps. Research on ants would continue, but research on bees and stinging wasps would stop. Bees are the most important insect pollinators, and stinging wasps, which are the birds of prey of the insect world, are important predators. Therefore, both groups are of first-class environmental significance.

Three scientists in hymenoptera are at risk—Mick Day, Colin Vardy and George Else, the first two of whom are being told to leave the museum. At Question Time I raised the case of Michael Day, which is disgraceful. The way in which he heard the news of the axing of his job is ironic, considering that the plan is supposed to be conservation minded. He spent much of last year compiling an account of the situation of hymenoptera, in Europe, with particular reference to endangered species. He had just lectured on that work to a large audience at an international conference on conservation in Strasbourg in late April when he was told by telephone at his hotel that his job was to be axed. As a result of his efforts, EC money is being made available in several parts of Europe for study of the hymenoptera, but research on most of the aculeate hymenoptera at the natural history museum is to stop. It is a feature of the plan that the cuts do not relate to stated aims, even when the aims are the Prime Minister's.

Other hon. Members wish to speak, so I shall not abuse the time of the House. I hope that Foreign Office Ministers will keep their promise. There will be a cascade of questions, but at least a fortnight to answer them in. I am not asking for answers within 48 hours. I hope that the whole issue of the natural history museum will be properly discussed.

It is equally valid to say that the rain forest problems should be tackled on a European basis. I am pleased that the Select Committee on the Environment, under the leadership of the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) is to visit Brazil from 1 to 8 July. I am pleased that the distinguished Edinburgh scientist, Jim Ratta, has been appointed as its specialist adviser. I lay down the marker here and now that I hope that, between 8 and 20 July, or whenever the House rises for the summer, there will be an opportunity for the House to debate the Select Committee's report, because the matter is urgent. The rain forest too, should be dealt with on a European basis. I hope that I have made my point clearly.

8.3 pm

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): I hope that you will excuse me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I do not follow the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) down that particular road, as they say.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in the debate. I did not realise entirely how important it was until I listened to the BBC "Nine O'Clock News" only last week and the reporter breathlessly told us that he was speaking from Brussels, "the capital" of Europe. Obviously, the developments in the European Community between July and December 1989 were extremely dramatic.

I too listened to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) with considerable interest, particularly his remarks on the exchange rate mechanism. I am not an economist. Indeed, I cannot help my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) as I am not even a junior economist. I estimate that, of my 360 colleagues, probably 300 are, so no doubt he will receive ample help.

I can see that the exchange rate mechanism is good for exporters and the City. They want a stable exchange rate, in which case they should be able to have five-hour rather than three-hour luncheon breaks, because all they will then have to watch is interest rates. However, I wonder what the effect would be on those with small businesses such as garages and post office stores. They are not particularly interested in exporting, so they are not interested in the exchange rate, but they are extremely interested in interest rates.

If, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West suggested, interest rates were to rise over a sustained period, I wonder how that would affect them. If, after so many centuries, we have suddenly found a complicated structure, the ERM, which defies the laws of supply and demand and means that we can have a stable exchange rate, why was it not thought of before?

I listened with considerable interest to the speeches of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) and the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell). The Labour party's sudden interest in the environment is touching. However, the right hon. and hon. Gentlemen did not mention that not one prosecution was brought under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 while there was a Labour Government from 1974 to 1979. We can judge their deeds against their words this afternoon.

My few brief remarks will relate to the booklet "Developments in the European Community, July-December 1989." These booklets, which are produced every six months, remind me of end-of-term reports. If judgment were to be passed on us, it would be, "sound and steady work". The United Kingdom came first in one subject, or possibly first equal with Denmark, because we have listened to and applied more directives than any other country. That is good.

What is not being said in this end-of-term report is that some of our classmates, particularly Italy, do not seem to take the subject seriously. Even when the directives are being passed, it seems to have precious little intention of implementing them. I do not say that Italy shows bad judgment in that. I much prefer the approach of "When in Rome do as the Romans do" to the most recent directives, such as the one that suggests that, when pheasants are shot, they should be in a refrigerator before they hit the ground.

Over the past six months, our school activities have been disrupted by certain anti-social characters. Within a few weeks of the visit by Mr. Delors and other prominent socialists, no doubt at considerable public expense, to Dublin, with all their great designs and grand dreams, we have an about-turn and yet another awakening to their true position and their protectionist instincts, particularly those of the French about British beef. I imagine that most of my hon. Friends have no doubt that the French and West German Governments have contravened article 30 of the treaty of Rome. I hope that, in due course, we shall receive full compensation for our farmers, the meat trade and all who have an interest and who have made such horrendous financial losses in recent weeks, possibly of the order of £600,000 a week.

Although I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on the best possible deal that he could achieve in the circumstances, the problem arose because our partners were being unreasonable and were not acting in a communautaire fashion. A failure to reach agreement would have resulted in lengthy court action, and during that time there would have been no prospect of beef exports recommencing.

I was greatly reassured by the Bruges speech—the only sane voice on the European scene after some years. Equally, I was encouraged by the splendid speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry only last week to the Bruges group—a group of seven sovereign nation states co-operating for mutual benefit. That definition is more or less the same as the words used by Mr. Yeltsin only last week to describe Russia. He said that he hoped that Russia could be a sovereign nation state—I am not sure how he worked that out—within a federation.

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) preached the merits of federalism. There is an irony in the fact that, as Mr. Yeltsin is suggesting that he would like a sovereign nation state within a federation, we, who have just that—I hope we still do—are going the other way, into a federal system. It will be interesting to see who is proved right.

The fact that we are passing directives and being communautaire means that the Conservative party is the true party of Europe. Others have tried to purloin the title of "good European," but they mean that they favour a particular type of Europe. The Conservative party has a vision of a particular type of Europe. It may not be the kind favoured by our critics, but our vision of Europe is positive and forward-looking. I have a vision of a free Europe, free from restrictions on trade and restrictions on the individual imposed by the state. By Europe, I mean the continent of Europe rather than some small part of it.

[Mr. Roger Knapman]

Britain is at the forefront of pushing for freedom within the context of the European Community. The Government are committed to the principle of the European single market, not least because we have already passed so many of the provisions needed to implement it. Other member states give voice to the principle, but it strikes me that they are selective when it comes to practice.

Freedom should not be the exclusive preserve of some small club of European states; surely it should extend across the continent. We have always set our face against fortress Europe—the idea of freedom within insularity. The Conservative party has a clear guiding vision as to what should happen in Europe. That vision dictates a clear stance in relation to the developments now taking place in eastern Europe, which offer new opportunities.

For those who favour a bureaucratic, unified Europe of 12 states, the developments pose a particular dilemma. The developments in the Soviet Union and in eastern Europe are welcome, as they represent the collapse of Soviet hegemony and the fall of the iron curtain. Now that we see behind the curtain, we can also see the challenge ahead. For the countries of eastern Europe, the task of economic, political and social development is massive. The west must help, but in what form? Do we give charitable handouts or more substantive assistance to bring those countries within the economic framework of Europe? If the answer is to provide substantive assistance, how do we go about that?

For the little Europeans, those who want some integrated 124 member-state European Community, there is a problem. To exclude the east European states from membership of the Community encourages the perception as well as the actuality of a fortress Europe—a club of haves excluding the neighbouring have nots. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry referred to pulling the drawbridge up on the ark. I am not too sure whether arks have drawbridges, but the analogy is right.

Associate membership of the Community would create a two-tier Europe—one of those who have and those who have not so much. To bring the eastern European states into membership of the EC would create a different Community that would not be recognisable to its founding fathers. Achieving economic integration would be a mammoth task and achieving political union would be impossible. That is near-impossible in the context of the existing Community, even though it is the direction in which some want to push it. To widen the European Community to encompass eastern Europe would kill the notion stone dead.

Although there may have been an outbreak of democracy in eastern Europe, there has not been an outbreak of liberal democracy. Old prejudices and identities are coming to the fore. Some of the new regimes may prove as oppressive to certain minorities as their predecessors. They are different in type and national character from the nations of western Europe, and forcing them into some common Community will not overcome the national and ethnic tensions that will mark eastern Europe for some time.

The Community, even based on the Single European Act, cannot be extended to encompass the states of eastern Europe, but nor can it continue in its present form, because eastern Europe must be taken into account. What is the way forward? The European Commission must complete the single market and, once that is achieved, it must start to reach accommodations with its neighbours in the east, expanding the boundaries of the free market ever outward.

In short, we must co-operate with our neighbours, but not integrate. As we expand the boundaries of the free market, so the nature of the European Community will change. The case for a bureaucratic, unified Community will be increasingly undermined and eventually destroyed. A bureaucratic Community in the heart of a free-market Europe will make no sense.

The way forward is a pan-European network based on co-operation, rather than a sub-European Community based on integration. That is the positive, visionary and European way forward. Those who hanker after a bureaucratic, integrated Community of 12 states are insular and time-bound Europeans. They no longer offer a vision of the future that encompasses what is truly Europe.

8.16 pm

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): I am one of those Conservative Members who are delighted at the belated embrace of the European Community by Labour Members. We have heard few words against the EC during the debate. There is a danger, however, that late converts sometimes become fanatics. It is odd that the anti-European party of a few years ago now finds itself in the position of carping at the Government for not being European enough. If the Opposition are criticising the Government for not rushing headlong into monetary and political union, they should come clean with the electorate and say so. If they agree with the Government, however, they should stop carping and at least give the Government some support for their cautious policies.

Another area of confusion in the Opposition's policy on Europe relates to the social charter. Some Labour Members seem to suggest that we need the charter to compensate for the freer market after 1992. Surely the whole point of freer markets is that they enable an economy to work more efficiently and industry to be more productive. As a result, everyone benefits and living standards rise. Along with rising living standards, we can also, I hope, afford to pay for better standards at work.

In that respect, it is interesting that a recent report of the European Community suggests that the savings resulting from a totally free internal market—one that I suspect we shall never see—would be about £80 billion a year. That is a substantial gain. It is not just big business and financiers who stand to gain from the free market: it is everyone, because capital will work more efficiently, and productivity will rise, which will also allow wages to rise.

The Opposition are also confused about the ERM. What they have signally failed to spell out is exactly what the conditions of entry of ERM would be under a Labour Government. I repeat the question that I asked the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) earlier: how would a Labour Government, if one ever came to power, hope to maintain the parity of the pound in the ERM if that Government were cutting interest rates and at the same time massively increasing public spending? I do not see how that equation can work out.

I now move to Euro-fanatics in general. One of the problems with Euro-enthusiasts is that they tend to be too uncritical about what the EC, particularly the

Commission, does. They equate everything done in Brussels with goodness and light. They do not give Britain its due credit for all the good things that it has done in Europe. Not only are we way ahead in many of the 1992 directives, but many of the countries that often pose as great champions of European unity and greater co-operation and integration are the ones that are most protectionist when it comes to their own internal political interests.

The truck industry in Germany——

Mr. Gill: Is not the great political significance of last week's events, when our Agriculture Minister went to Brussels to fight our corner, that he brought Europe back from the brink of protectionism and defended the important principle of the free market?

Mr. Oppenheim: My hon. Friend unerringly goes to the nub of the issue. It would be nice to think that the Minister of Agriculture was defending the cause of the free market in Europe, and achieved a great victory. I think that it was one small but important victory towards securing a free market. However, as I develop my speech, it will be seen that the problem with Europe is that it is an extremely protectionist bloc of trading nations that not only protect their own national markets but are exclusive when it comes to the non-EC market. That is one of the biggest dangers with the EC at present.

Germany poses as the champion of the European cause and of greater co-operation and integration. However, when it came to liberalising the truck market in Germany to allow French, Belgian and British trucks to go freely into Germany, the Germans clammed up. Now, the Germans are effectively levying a £4,000-a-year road tax on foreign road hauliers that they do not levy on their own. The result is that lorries that are on average 30 per cent. empty criss-cross the borders of Europe, adding to congestion and pollution.

France is often hailed by the Opposition as one of the great leaders in the European movement. However, when a British airline—British Midland—wanted to fly reasonably freely with lower fares into Paris, the French put up their barriers and we had a great fight. I am pleased that the Government won that fight to allow British Midland to fly in.

Another example is telecommunications. Every other member of the European Community operates nationalistic procurement policies and major trade barriers in their internal telecommunications markets. At least we in Britain have some liberalisation and freedom in our telecommunications markets. However, it is almost impossible for British manufacturers to sell telecommunications equipment to France, Germany, Italy, Belgium or the Netherlands.

The Euro-enthusiasts sometimes talks as though entry into the ERM will be a panacea for our industry. It is worth reminding them that during the 1980s Britain out-performed almost every other European Community country. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s we lagged behind our European neighbours in manufacturing output and productivity, in the 1980s, when they were in the ERM and we were not, our manufacturing output expanded faster than that of France, Germany, Italy, Holland and Belgium, and our productivity in manufacturing expanded even faster.

My key criticism of Euro-enthusiasts is that they are not critical enough of the faults of the European Community—particularly the Commission. An advertisement in the *Financial Times* 14 February stated:

"Dear Customer,

We want to tell you that we care and to thank you for the way, year after year, you have responded with your trust and respect. WE will do anything for you. That is why we have made service our number one corporate priority. No task is too small. We want to dedicate it to you, as we have dedicated everything to you, because we love you, our customers."

That sweet Valentine message was placed in the *Financial Times* by a Franco-Italian state-owned company called SGS Thomson. It was particularly nice of it to send such a Valentine message to its customers because three years of lobbying had just won that company major trade barriers against lower-cost, better-quality Japanese semiconductors, which means that European semiconductor users such as computer or consumer durable manufacturers have less choice of semiconductors and have to go to companies such as SGS Thomson for many of their requirements. Unfortunately, that is typical of the sort of protectionist barriers that the EC is, at an accelerating rate, raising against competition, particularly from Japan and eastern Asia.

I view the danger of the European Community turning into a protectionist bloc as one of the greatest perils that we face at present. It is moving towards the break-up of the world into three partly hostile trading blocs based round east Asia, north America and Europe. That contains some unpleasant echoes of the breaking up of the international trading order in the 1930s. In Europe, there has been a massive web of voluntary restraint agreements, quotas and tariffs, covering virtually everything imaginable. There is almost no product made outside the EC—from shoes to steel and from cars to ships—that is not covered by a web, a complex labyrinth, of trade restrictions.

The latest EC wheeze is to put an EC-wide "import quota" on cars from Japan after 1992. The supposedly liberal Commissioner, Andriessen, went to Tokyo recently and said that it was even proposed that cars made in Britain by Toyota, Nissan or Honda with an 80 per cent. EC content but made by a Japanese company, should be counted as Japanese. We do not say that cars that are made by American companies such as Ford and General Motors in Belgium, Spain, Germany or Britain are American, so why on earth should we say that cars made by a Japanese company in Britain are Japanese?

It is madness, but what lies behind it is heavy lobbying by the heavily protected European car industry—particularly companies such as Fiat and Renault. The net result of those efforts is that we shall almost certainly end up with stringent barriers against Japanese cars after 1992 that will not only compound the inefficiency of the European manufacturers that are already protected by national quotas, but will massively push up prices for consumers in the European market.

In Europe, because we spend so much time complaining about trade barriers from other countries, the Commission has generally found it distasteful to erect overt trade barriers. The chosen instrument for its protectionist fortress Europe policy involves anti-dumping duties. Regulation 2423/88 covers European policy on anti-dumping. Dumping is the practice of selling into an export market at a price lower than that charged in the home domestic market.

[Mr. Oppenheim]

The problem with regulation 2423/88 is that it is so drawn up that it can find huge dumping margins even when foreign manufacturers are selling on their home markets at lower prices than they are in the export markets. Every objective observer who has looked into the regulation has agreed that it is grossly unfair. The most recent report on this was by the National Consumer Council.

There was also a report not long ago by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, written by Michael Davenport, a former senior economist at the EC Commission, so he should know. He said:

"Not only do the Community's rules overtly discriminate against foreign companies, but, in common with other import restraining measures, they ignore the damage inflicted by anti-dumping duties on the users of imported products. Instead of encouraging competition, as intended, anti-dumping action seems to be frustrating it."

I shall not go into all the intricate detail of how the regulations are grossly unfair, since other hon. Members are waiting to speak, but a lawyer called Chris Norrell has done a great deal of work in this area and conclusively proved that the Community regulations are protectionist and slanted towards finding dumping margins even when they do not exist.

As further proof of the unfairness of these regulations, I point to Hong Kong. In theory, if a company engages in predatory trading practices or dumping, the idea is that it has a large protected home market on which it can charge high prices to subsidise its export prices, with the idea of driving other manufacturers out of business so that eventually the predatory company can reap monopoly profits. But how can a Hong Kong company do that?

Hong Kong is a relatively small market and almost all Hong Kong manufacturers export 80 or 90 per cent. of their production, so how can they be found to be dumping? Yet on numerous occasions under these Community regulations, Hong Kong manufacturers have been found to be dumping everything from textiles to video cassette tapes, and large duties have been levied on them as a result. That is a clear sign of the unfairness of the regulations, yet between 1980 and 1988 the Commission undertook no fewer than 357 anti-dumping investigations and took action in almost all of them—duties have been levied or the foreign manufacturer has had to undertake to raise his prices in the European market.

More and more, these anti-dumping actions are being taken against Japan and east Asia economies, and more and more they are being applied to high technology products such as photocopiers, computer printers and so on.

Sir Russell Johnston: Is the burden of the hon. Gentleman's argument that he thinks that the British Government have been less than active in objecting, on their own behalf as well as that of other countries, to restrictive trading by the European Community? Does the hon. Gentleman think that the British market should be more open to the products of the Japanese?

Mr. Oppenheim: On the second point, the hon. Gentleman is asking me whether I believe in free trade. The answer is that I do. Just because another nation is more advanced and more competitive than we are, that is not necessarily a reason to exclude its products. I shall answer the hon. Gentleman's first question about the British Government shortly.

I want to deal briefly with the photocopier market. In 1985, the Commission instigated an anti-dumping investigation at the behest of a small group of European manufacturers which had damaged themselves in the previous decade by producing poor-quality, overpriced products. The Japanese, by contrast, must be said to have produced high-quality products which they marketed aggressively; they were reliable, low-cost products that people wanted to buy. Yet the European companies complained to the European Commission, and as a result of the anti-dumping investigation, large dumping duties were imposed on the Japanese photocopier manufacturers.

Then the EC went further and decided to impose what are called "screwdriver duties" on Japanese-owned factories in Europe, under which factories owned by Japanese, Korean or Taiwanese companies on which anti-dumping duties had already been imposed, but which subsequently manufactured in Europe, had screwdriver anti-dumping duties levied, which meant that a product with 80 per cent. EC content could still have anti-dumping duties levied on it.

This is both unworkable and unfair, particularly in complex industries such as electronics. How does one determine the country of origin of something like a printed circuit board which has 10 or 20 different components from all over the world—components which might have been fabricated in different stages of their production in different countries? The idiocy of some of these rules means that Japanese-owned plants in the Community cannot buy components from factories that their own company owns in Japan, but their European competitors can buy components from those same factories.

The drift of my argument is that, behind these trade barriers—they do not receive much coverage in the press because they do not excite much political passion, but they are being rapidly erected—is industrial lobbying by large European companies such as Siemens, Olivetti, Thomson and Philips. They have all lobbied hard for many years for ever more protection at the expense of European consumers and for more and more subsidies from national Governments and the EC—which they have got. The hypocrisy of their position is that the same companies lobbying against what they call cheap dumped imports from Asian countries make huge quantities of their products in Asian factories that they own.

For instance, when European television manufacturers asked the Commission to impose anti-dumping duties on Korean television makers and included, by way of justifying statistics, the fact that imports of televisions from Asia had increased dramatically in recent years, a large percentage of that increase came from factories in Asia that they owned themselves. Needless to say, the Commission swallowed their case, hook line and sinker. It imposed anti-dumping duties on South Korean televisions, with the result that the Koreans are hamstrung when selling products in Europe, but Philips and other companies happily run large factories in Asia and import their products to Europe with no anti-dumping duties.

The benefits of hamstrung competition and of higher prices for the European industrial lobbyists which have so successfully had anti-dumping duties imposed on their east Asian rivals are obvious but, as with any form of protection, such advantages are likely to be only

short-term. One of the dangers is that, if people are genuinely convinced that the Japanese and others have succeeded by unfairly dumping products on the European market, they may not realise that the real problem lies with European industry, so the motivation for industrial reform in Europe will become less urgent. So although the draftsmen, architects and masons of the Commission may genuinely believe that, by erecting what is sometimes called fortress Europe, they are helping European industry, in fact they are merely locking it into a high-cost, low-productivity, uncompetitive ghetto Europe.

The significance of the problem for Britain is that we pay a high price for these protectionist measures. I know that most hon. Members in this debate have gone for the broad, grandiose sweep of policy, but I do not apologise for homing in on one way in which the EC works. This is an area that the EC pretty well controls already—our trade policy. As a result, we are putting up more and more barriers, and British consumers are paying an ever heavier price. A recent National Consumer Council report said that the variety of anti-dumping duties on east Asian electronics products resulted in British consumers paying about 5 per cent. more for those products than they otherwise would have.

Unfortunately, because Brussels runs our trade policies, we have little control over them. Ministers are often unwilling to get involved in more fights with Brussels; quite often they are busy with a range of subjects, so even a liberal, free-market Government such as ours end up rubber-stamping most of these protectionist measures. But this example of how the EC operates should set alarm bells ringing in the Chamber. We already have little control over large areas run by the European Community—by a bureaucracy which is fairly unaccountable and which tends to be far more prone to follow lobbying by powerful pressure groups such as large European conglomerates like Siemens, Olivetti and Philips.

In the areas that the EC has taken over, such as trade, there is little power these days for Ministers, let alone for individual Members of Parliament. Is that what we really want? Surely there must come a point at which the advantages that we gain from co-operation within Europe, which I too want us to enjoy, are outweighed by the disadvantages of creating a large, unaccountable and bureaucratic structure where decisions are remote and individual Ministers and Members of Parliament—let alone our constituents—have virtually no influence, and where the people who really do have the influence are the powerful industrial lobbies which always seem to get their way in Brussels when they whinge about unfair competition, wanting more subsidies and yet more trade barriers. I believe that we are already close to the point at which the advantages of co-operation within the European Community are outweighed by the disadvantages.

8.40 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I shall be brief because other hon. Members wish to speak. I shall not follow the hon. Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) except to say that he seems to envisage a world in which free marketeering reigns supreme and the workers go to the wall. He can make that claim, as he has fairly comfortable personal circumstances. However, he should bear in mind the lack of trade union rights and of health and safety standards in countries such as Taiwan. The notion of a free market, with what is generally termed "a level playing field", is not always what it appears.

I remain an unremitting critic of the Common Market. The Labour party's shift from what was a reasonable and critical stance on this issue does not have my support. The EC has been a burden on our backs. Since 1979, this country has paid £10,000 million net of grants and rebates to the Common Market. I notice that, this year, the White Paper has abandoned the neat but informative table of net payments made to the Common Market. No doubt one of the Government's advisers, lavishly paid by the taxpayer, and seeking to improve the presentation, suggested that such information should be excluded because it is damaging.

At the moment, several local authorities are making supplications to the Common Market simply to get some of our money back. It would be more efficient if central Government paid that money direct to the local authorities rather than paying it to the Common Market so that it can make arbitrary decisions and so that local authorities can make expensive representations simply to get back a proportion of that money for much-needed transport infrastructure improvements and for the social needs of the regions.

The common agricultural policy is not at the forefront of discussions nowadays, but it still costs us nearly £20,000 million. It is still inefficient and it is still one of the major factors that has resulted in the pouring of huge quantities of nitrates on to our soil. It is still a potent source of pollution in Britain and in other countries. I am not saying that simply because concern about the environment is fashionable these days; I was saying it 10 years ago when the guaranteed intervention prices and the guaranteed purchasing of crops from farmers was leading to ever-more intensive farming, with ever-increasing quantities of fertilisers being poured on to our soil. The CAP is still costly and still damaging. It has not gone away. The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is still arguing about free butter distribution in the United Kingdom, because there is so much butter that it is spreading everywhere. The notion that the EEC has been magically reformed is not true.

Some members of the Labour movement regard the social charter as a great step forward. It is a collection of generalised platitudes which, for example, do not provide civil servants with trade union rights. The social charter will not restore the jobs of the workers who were thrown out of GCHQ. It is claimed that health and safety legislation is being improved as a result of our membership of the Common Market and as a result of the Commission's concern for health and safety standards. That is simply not true. In fact, the reverse is the truth. Health and safety standards from our legislation are being eroded by the platitudinous generalisations of the health and safety proposals in directives from the Common Market.

To get round the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974, which states that all regulations must aim at least to improve the existing standards, the Health and Safety Commission is now talking about a package of regulations that will repeal the absolute provisions of our existing legislation to ensure that we conform to the generalised "so far as reasonably practicable" terms that have been put forward in Common Market directives. As hon. Members will know, "so far as reasonably

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

practicable" is a term of art which means that the fact that something is too costly is a defence and that in any subsequent action that arises from an accident to an employee, the employer can say that it was too costly to provide adequate safety measures.

Therefore, the health and safety provisions of the social charter do not represent a great step forward. They are a clever device by Jacques Delors to show some social concern, and even those provisions have been minimised over the past 12 months.

These days some Conservative Members criticise the Common Market. One or two have referred to the Bruges speech as a landmark of criticism when the Prime Minister stood up against the federalism of the Common Market. The truth is that, since her election in 1979, the Prime Minister has enmeshed us more deeply in the Common Market. It was the Prime Minister, in conjunction with the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, now the Leader of the House, who removed our derogation on the freedom of movement of capital within the Common Market. Immediately after taking office, that Chancellor removed the Treasury's power over the movement of capital—limited though it was. Some free marketeers would say that is perfectly proper, but the treaty of Rome gave us a derogation that allowed the United Kingdom Government —of whatever political complexion—some intervention in the money market.

Conservative Members cannot have it both ways. They cannot say that the Prime Minister is standing up to the Common Market when, on taking office, she removed an important derogation that had been negotiated with the Common Market, especially when that derogation had not been removed up to that point by Governments of either party.

The Prime Minister organised the Single European Act of 1986, which went through the House on a three-line Whip. Paragraph 8 of one of the reports produced by the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs makes it clear that the effect of the Single European Act has been to diminish, and in some cases to remove, member states' right of veto. That is not standing up to the Common Market; it is co-operating with it. That has been the effect of the Single European Act.

It was also the Prime Minister who signed the channel tunnel agreement. Inside the Common Market, the channel tunnel was not hailed as a transport development; it was hailed as a knot that would tie us more closely to the Common Market. It will be a costly venture, which will suck investment in the railway and transport infrastructure away from the regions, down to London and the south-east. It is typical of British Rail that its only investment in an inland port is in London rather than in Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield or anywhere in the north. It is developing a terminal in Willesden and facilities in Kent and the channel ports.

The Tories are pressing ahead with the removal of barriers, as the Foreign Secretary said. However, problems remain and the solutions are never made clear. Ministers always say that policies made in the Trevi group of EC Justice Ministers will protect us against the growth of drug trafficking, but we are never clear how that will be done. The Government say that they will remove the barriers but at the same time protect us against arms trafficking, of which we have had a recent and most dramatic example. If we did not have supervision at customs points and at points of entry, how could we receive information about guns made in Sheffield and elsewhere for export to Iraq? We are also concerned about the potential spread of rabies if we do not have sovereign scrutiny at our borders.

We are an island and have a sea around us. Sometimes that is an advantage and sometimes it is not. In case the Minister makes some off-hand remark about little Englanders not appreciating the advantages in the growth of a European entity and federal organisation, let me remind him that I am a long-standing advocate of international agreements such as the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty. I went to the United Nations second special meeting on peace and disarmament in 1982. I want nations to work together, but to do so as independent sovereign states with a common policy in various sectors. The worst thing that can happen is for a centralised organisation to tell sovereign states what to do. That leads only to friction and antagonism, and we should not do it.

I emphasise what I have said before, and I hope that people outside take notice of this. There are stirrings. The Prime Minister is raising an issue, although she is doing it without any record of action. There is a strong and powerful move in the EEC for a federal union, in which places such as this will be demoted to the level of a town council.

Tory Members have called for a free market and even for all trade barriers to be removed to ensure that the treaty of Rome is properly and fully applied. The free market is a danger to workers. It implies a competition. The winners in such competitions are those who are successful and the losers are those who, for whatever reason, are unable to compete. The workers go to the wall. When Coloroll was taken over by a business man of the year, one of the new yuppie breed whom the Tories so admire, he made a number of fatal decisions, and now the company is in dire straits. Its workers, who have done nothing except increase productivity and maintain traditions of skill and ability, are wondering what will happen to them. That is the result of competition in a free market.

A Labour Government must be able to ensure that damage such as that, which is done not just to workers but to the economy, does not take place. A free market will not provide remedies to such problems and the Government have to be able to intervene either to support or, if necessary, regulate the flow of trade. It is only sensible for Governments to intervene in the marketplace to protect an industry and the jobs that go with it. Such a move would be difficult inside the Common Market, because the Commission would say that it was in breach of the treaty of Rome.

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman is attacking free competition. Does he agree that the countries of eastern Europe are not a recommendation for protected economies?

Mr. Cryer: That is a fashionable thing to say after the recent changes in eastern Europe, which are connected not only with the economy but with the lack of opportunity for the exchange of ideas and for discussion. There is no doubt that a wind of competition is blowing through some of those countries, and with it comes the creation of dole

queues. In a few years, there will be a marked difference, because people do not like being put on to dole queues. There will be a reversal of the coin, with protests, demonstrations and outrage about the extent of unemployment. A free market economy is not a satisfactory solution in the way suggested by the hon. Gentleman's glib intervention.

In my constituency is a carpet factory owned by Coloroll that has always produced a high standard of output. Several hundred workers in it are apprehensive about their future. I hope that, as a good viable unit, it will be retained, but there is no guarantee. That is the position for workers who have been facing the effects of this enterprise culture. A centralised, decision-making economy with a fortress around it is not the solution. We must have a bit of both, but we must have a reserve position so that the Government can intervene. In the Common Market under the treaty of Rome, if it is applied, it would be difficult for a Government to intervene. That would be a handicap for a Labour Government concerned about maintaining our manufacturing industry, as we must.

This somewhat vague document has a table. The Government used to provide actual deficits, but now they have decided to show deficits in manufactures in percentage terms, because that glosses over the facts. From 1973, the balance of trade in manufactures between Britain and the European Community has gone inexorably upwards from 0·4 to 13·6 per cent. The Government say that the larger the deficit the more successful we are, because we are exporting more as they are exporting more to us. That logic is absurd. The Minister can tell us how we can eradicate that deficit. Will we be able to sell as many goods to them as they to us, and will our manufacturing industry be buoyant and confident, as it is not at the moment?

There has been much talk about the exchange rate mechanism as a magic cure for the problems of our exchange rate. We shall have a debate about this later in the week. Where we have had a fixed exchange rate, it has always been accompanied by a large-scale spread in unemployment—for example, in 1925 when we went on the gold standard. That is a warning. The Labour party is not the party of unemployment. Indeed, the very reverse is the truth.

If we wanted at any time to alter our rate of exchange, to whom would we apply within the exchange rate mechanism? The other Common Market countries are dominated by West Germany, which has a massive balance of trade surplus with us. Is it likely that in those circumstances a group of countries with a massive balance of trade surplus with us would be likely to agree to any alteration of exchange rate that would place us in a more competitive position? I think not. Our membership of the Common Market has been a burden. It has been a millstone round our neck throughout our membership, and it remains so.

8.59 pm

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): In answer to a parliamentary question, my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office told me that the Government's objective

"is practical progress towards a robust and realistic form of economic and monetary union, with full regard to democratic accountability and the doctrine of subsidiarity."—[*Official Report*, 7 February 1990; Vol. 166, c. 688.]

I have read carefully the documents before us to find any evidence of the principle of subsidiarity being applied. I draw the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister to paragraph 3.14, which refers to food law:

"The principles are designed to ensure as far as possible that a foodstuff lawfully produced and marketed in one member state should not be subject to marketing or import restrictions in another."

That accords with the principle of subsidiarity.

Perhaps at this stage I should declare my interest in the meat trade. It is with regulations affecting minced beef, for example, or even the great British sausage, that we see the principle of subsidiarity being ignored. That worries me. If we are saying that we can accept so many tenets of the European Economic Community provided that the principle of subsidiarity is being maintained, why is the principle so often

"more honoured in the breach than the observance?"

We must ask ourselves where the evidence of subsidiarity working affectively exists. Where are the historical precedents?

Power and decision making are subsumed inevitably by the centre. That must be inevitable in any bureaucratic organisation, whether we are talking about Governments, Churches, nations or empires. I invite the House to speculate on who is to decide which matters should become subsidiary and which matters we should allow the lower orders to take control of. I suggest that the answer is——

Sir Russell Johnston *rose*——

Mr. Gill: I see that the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) wishes to intervene. I shall give way to him in a moment. I wish only to add to my previous remarks that it is always the central authority which calls the shots, and that in practice it has little regard for the principle of subsidiarity.

Sir Russell Johnston: I suggest that the hon. Gentleman conveys his sentiments to Mr. Brian Mulroney of the Canadian federation. They will be of great comfort to him.

Mr. Gill: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that advice.

I invite hon. Members to consider national examples of things that we and our constituents feel strongly—in some instances passionately—could be done by a parish council or a district council rather than by county councils or Government Departments. Each right hon. and hon. Member will have his own examples.

In my constituency, parish councils, town councils, district councils, county councils and myself are all in favour of a new bridge over the River Severn near to the historic bridge at Ironbridge. However, that is not to be. We must have a public inquiry into the matter. Imagine how that requirement would have affected the course of history if, in the 18th century, the great ironmasters could not have built their bridge without reference to a higher authority.

In saying these things, I am not alone. Boris Yeltsin is on record this week as saying, when asked what role he foresaw for the President of the Soviet Union:

"he should concern himself with defence, foreign policy and other nationwide programmes".

On the basis of his dramatic experience in eastern Europe, he feels that enough is enough, and wishes to see institutions restored to a lower level of democratic decision making.

[Mr. Gill]

If we fail to understand and to manage the principle of subsidiarity, inevitably the bureaucracies will continue to burgeon. As we all know, once they are created it is difficult to get rid of them. There will be an insatiable appetite for cash, with the concomitant waste and fraud.

Page 14 of the report mentions "doubling of the funds for regional aid" in Delors stage 1. My hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) mentioned in an earlier intervention that the Community budget is proposed to increase by 13 per cent. in the next year. We should beware the political damage that failing to manage subsidiarity would do the Conservative party. We run the risk of perpetuating many of the socialist principles to which we are opposed.

Structural funds may, by their very nature, contradict the principle of subsidiarity. It is clear from the papers before us that the decisions are made remotely and arbitrarily. Such funds may also be a negation of that most attractive and practical feature of the Community—the single, free market, with all the physical, technical and fiscal barriers removed. It is from that free market that Conservative Members believe that the benefits to all member nations of the Community will inevitably flow. I feel strongly that, with the United Kingdom's balance of payments deficit with the European Community at a record level, and given that we are a major contributor to the European Community budget, it is time for us to consider that charity begins at home.

I seldom agree with the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), but I agree that it might be a more economical, sensible and intelligible policy, instead of remitting money from this country to Brussels, to pay it from our national Exchequer to those who will be spending it in this country. There is much evidence of tax churning. I am fond of quoting the example of the roundabout on the A454 in my constituency, which proudly bears a placard reading

"Partly financed by the European Community".

That says it all in terms of funding, and it also says a good deal about subsidiarity: again, it negates the principle of subsidiarity. The decisions are not being made in this country, but are being delegated to the European Community, and in many cases we are having to accept arbitrary decisions.

Whether we like it or not, we must ask why we—through the medium of the European Community structural funds—subsidise our competitors. Why do we remit moneys to Brussels that might, for example, be used to build an autostrada from Calabria across France to Calais to speed the cabbages on their way to Coventry, at a time when the industrialists of the west midlands have not the facility of an equal road transport network to the ports at Felixstowe and Southampton?

I venture to suggest that we are now facing a similar dilemma in our attitude to the channel tunnel. On the continent, great efforts are being made to improve the rail network to the channel tunnel, while we continue to argue the toss. There is a good case that any moneys that we have would be better spent at home on such projects rather than in the countries of southern Europe.

The new buzz word "subsidiarity" has sometimes been used quite irresponsibly. It has been used to legitimise some of the worst features of the European Community and to disguise some of them from the British electorate. In many ways, it is a deception. My right hon. and hon. Friends must beware of selling the pass. Subsidiarity could be the Trojan horse for a centralist Europe.

9.11 pm

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): One of the most interesting and significant parts of the White Paper is that relating to the progress of the single European market. It is good to know that this country is leading the field in the table of measures adopted and that, behind Denmark, it is vying for second place with the Federal Republic of Germany and France as regards measures already implemented.

What angers me is the way in which our readiness to adopt, implement and comply with European directives is often overlooked by those who point the finger and accuse us of being bad Europeans, difficult partners and not having the European enterprise at heart. I was sorry to hear the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) line up with them and accuse the Government of being far too often isolated on Community issues. It is often right to take an independent line. It is often right to ask awkward questions. The questions being asked by the Government about democratic accountability need to be addressed, not only by this House and by the other national Parliaments, but by the Community as a whole. The structures for democratic control and accountability are badly wanting.

My hon. Friend the Minister intervened to praise the quality of scrutiny by this House, but I thought that he was over-egging the pudding by a good margin. He said that our scrutiny was good and much more advanced than in most countries. My hon. Friend is entitled to his view, but I believe that the scrutiny of European legislation by this House is woefully inadequate, as regards both the hour at which we usually consider it and the quaint way in which we are invited to take note of EEC directives, all too often well after they have been decided by the Council of Ministers. I hope that the recommendations of the Select Committee on Procedure on scrutiny will be implemented speedily. Even if they are, I fear that there will still be a substantial democratic deficit.

My hon. Friend spoke also about the ability of the House to question Ministers and to hold them to account. He overlooks the fact that increasingly the situation arises of Ministers at the Dispatch Box saying, in relation to, say, fishing quotas, Sunday trading laws, seat-belt regulations for coaches, BSE, or VAT on commercial and industrial construction, "We do not like it. The situation is unsatisfactory. There is force in your criticisms—but our hands are tied." That is not what I call proper accountability.

What of the role of the House in decisions taken by the Council of Ministers? My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said in his opening speech that one important role of a national Parliament is to exercise democratic control over the Council of Ministers. He overlooks the fact that the Council meets behind closed doors and that the bargaining and making of compromises that goes on behind them is not open to the scrutiny of national Parliaments. My right hon. Friend also overlooks the fact that an increasing number of the Council's decisions are taken by majority voting. In relation to majority decisions, the democratic control of our Parliament at Westminster is non-existent.

It does not end there. There are other major flaws in the Community's structure of democratic control and accountability. Too much power is in the hands of the Commission in relation to its monopoly on the intiation of legislation. That co-exists with wholly inadequate machinery for policing and enforcing that legislation. In the face of such weaknesses and shortcomings in the system of democratic control, scrutiny and accountability, would not it be better for the countries of the Community to concentrate on dealing with them before rushing on to the ambitious and grandiose schemes that so bedazzle the Commission and some European politicians?

It seems sometimes that we are confronted by a helter-skelter dash towards the horizon, with unrealistic demands for a rush forward to full economic and monetary union coupled with high-flown talk about political union. That high-flown talk has dangers for the Community. If such a helter-skelter dash towards unreal goals is pursued, the Community will hit trouble. If it assumes control over vast areas of our economic, political and social life without proper systems of democratic control and accountability, it will lose touch with the people. Somewhere along that line, the raw nerve of British nationalism—and of other nationalisms, too—will be touched. That could all too easily damage the Community and put its development into reverse.

One need only look east to the Soviet Union to see just how rapidly a centrally controlled, over-bureaucratic and undemocratic union of nations can unravel—which is why I believe that the cautious and pragmatic approach of the British Government to Community issues is, by and large, wise and sensible. Better to be isolated but right, better to ask the awkward questions, and better to adopt a pragmatic attitude than rush forward heedless of the need for democratic scrutiny and accountability.

Our parliamentary traditions fit Britain particularly well for that sceptical but profoundly necessary role. It is a role that we should not be ashamed to undertake.

9.19 pm

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): This has been an interesting and wide-ranging debate and it vindicates the decision that it should be an opportunity for looking forward, especially to the European Council meeting in a fortnight, as well as back to a period in the European Community's history which ended some six months ago. We have heard some remarkable speeches. My hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) took a constructive role, and although I did not agree with everything that my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) said—we spar here and in other Rooms in the House—he made a valuable contribution to a debate which is only partially completed.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) made a remarkable speech by any standards, which was fully within the rules of order, and was a test of the *Hansard* stenographers' skills which, if they passed, should be the subject of an award.

We look forward to the European Council meeting with interest and, no doubt, trepidation. Two items above all others will dominate that meeting. One is European monetary union and the other is the debate on political union, and the now virtual certainty that another intergovernmental conference on that subject will be set up. Hon. Members have mentioned that this evening.

The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) gave us his usual entertaining, if dissident, view on the matter, which I am sure will have been listened to with the same care as he is always listened to.

Hon. Members who come to such debates have an eternal sense of déjà vu. The right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell), the chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, made his speech. The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) has made his speech so often that they gave him a knighthood for it. The world moves on—the Berlin wall has come down, democracy has come to most countries in eastern Europe—but sadly, we still seem to be making the same speeches. However, we move on to the Dublin summit. What is our stance on the great issues which will be the subject of decisions there?

Stage 1 of the Delors report, whatever we say about stages 2 and 3, which I shall come to in a minute, implies full membership of the existing exchange rate mechanism. The Government committed themselves at the Madrid summit, under the skilful tutelage of the then new Foreign Secretary, to full compliance with stage 1, a condition which has still not been satisfied. Perceptive people who read the press with great care will notice that a variety of personalities within the Government are slowly beginning to change the rules so that humble pie can be consumed in larger and larger quantities—to use the analogy of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West.

Last week, the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the former Foreign Secretary—said that the yardstick for inflation would no longer be the retail price index, by which inflation has been measured for many years, but the underlying rate of inflation. We are beginning to realise that the measurement of inflation will be subjected to exactly the same test as the measurement of unemployment—during the 11 years of office of the present Government, its calculation has been changed 19 times. Of course, we shall not embark upon a process to prove that inflation is not 9·4 per cent., but is probably about 2 per cent., and should therefore be in the record books rather than the bank books. The tragedy is that it produces chaos in the City, which is in a permanent ferment as rumours about joining, not joining or being about to join the ERM, sweep in and out every second day, like garbage on the tide.

The Government display even more disarray over the question of political union or, as Mr. Jacques Delors redefined it, the political dimension of the Community. It is grandly known as European political union, but even that title appears to have disappeared at Foreign Ministers' meetings.

Last week, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry took a little time off from supervising the economic miracle that we are experiencing to speak to the Bruges group. That group is an important component of the Conservative party, but clearly it is having a night out since all its leading personalities seem to have abandoned the debate. It is about the only thing that distinguishes this debate from most of the other Community debates. Perhaps the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is addressing the Bruges group again tonight.

He said on that occasion that others should not be hustled at breakneck speed, let alone presented with a fait

[Mr. George Robertson]

accompli and a direction in which they may not want to go —a direction which could be inward-looking and closed. He also said that how far individual member states wished to travel along the road of monetary and political union would be for them to decide. He articulated a two-speed Europe. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was, suitably, in the second-speed group.

It is sad that my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney endorsed, even if it was only a limited endorsement, the views of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. On Friday night, the deputy Prime Minister and Lord President of the Council made a speech to an audience at the London School of Economics—one of the most appropriate audiences that one could find—and said, "We want to be inside, not outside." He also said that Britain did not want to be like Austria, in having frequently to respond to patterns set by the Twelve. A Sunday newspaper said, rightly, that that shows that there is a major split on a fundamental issue two weeks before the Dublin summit. It is a matter of acute importance inside the Cabinet. Is it the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who speaks for the Government, or is it the former Foreign Secretary, now the deputy Prime Minister? I am sure that the public would like to know.

According to the Government's response to the report of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, they have no difficulty in contemplating a further round of institutional reform, which would have an effect similar to that of the Single European Act. They implied that they would put forward constructive proposals. We await them with great interest. There have been only a few hints so far, including making the European Parliament into a glorified Public Accounts Committee, strengthening the European Court of Justice and beginning a massive crackdown on fraud, as well as a crackdown on the European Commission. The Foreign Secretary referred to a crackdown on the European Commission only this afternoon.

Mr. Jacques Delors's term of office—Mr. Delors is as popular within the Conservative party as the deputy Prime Minister—finishes at the end of this year. It is up for renewal. I hope that the Minister of State will consult his boss before he responds to the debate and will tell us whether the British Government intend to vote for an extension of Mr. Delors' term of office. Many people, including Mr. Delors, would like an answer to that question.

These are all commendable suggestions and we agree with most of them, but they tinker with the problem and are an insufficient response to the drift away from accountability, political and economic, which has occurred as the Community has taken on more and more competences.

I venture to suggest that the package will be seen for what it is—simply a smooth cosmetic cover designed by the Foreign Secretary for a book entitled "No Way" written by the Prime Minister in her own blunt Bruges words. In contrast, the Labour party has set out its agenda for a deeper, wider, more accountable and more relevant Community. We strongly support enlargement of the Community to Austria, Norway, Switzerland and other countries. We believe in extending the majority voting in the Council of Ministers to environmental and social issues.

Mr. Spearing: My hon. Friend is referring to the Labour party document, "Looking to the Future". Does he agree that certain procedures have to be gone through before that document is distinctly party policy? It may be agreed, but it is not yet de jure.

Mr. Robertson: Neither my hon. Friend nor I are Members of the national executive committee, an exalted group of people. I understand that no vote has taken place on the measures to which I am referring, and although they clearly have to be passed at the annual Labour party conference in October, the sizeable majority that was achieved in favour of the entire document allows me to assume in the interim that they represent the views of the party. Unlike the Tory party, the Labour party votes on party policy.

We believe that the European Parliament's co-operative procedures should be extended and that the European Parliament, subject always to the final decision by the Council of Ministers, should have powers to initiate legislation. We believe that the social charter is an essential practical part of concluding the single European market and that Europewide policies to protect the environment are urgent and necessary.

Mr. Budgen: Will the hon. Gentleman be good enough to tell the House whether the Labour party is excited by the progressive new proposals in the Delors report for a massive extension of the regional and social fund? There must be much for Labour in that.

Mr. Robertson: We believe that part of the development of the single European market must be a robust social and regional fund to provide a proper balance in the development of that market. It is no secret; it is in our document. All that the hon. Gentleman need do is purchase a copy and the answers will all be there.

We believe that real accountability in national Parliaments for EC decisions is a fundamental part of developing the Community and we must start here in the House. The feeble suggestions from the Government in response to the Procedure Committee go no way towards giving Parliament back the right to hold Ministers accountable. The hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) made a valuable point in drawing attention to the way in which power has been allowed to drift away from the House. I fear that the dilution of the Procedure Committee's own diluted recommendations will give precious little back to the House of Commons by way of holding Ministers of the Crown accountable for that huge area of policy.

Mr. Shore: It is not just a matter of the drifting away of power; it is the positive transfer of power and precisely what is centrally involved in the proposals for economic and monetary union. My hon. Friend has said a number of things that the Labour party apparently believes in, but will he make it plain that the Labour party does not accept or subscribe to any commitment to permanently fixed exchange rates between the pound and other currencies? Will he give me that reassurance?

Mr. Robertson: I refer my right hon. Friend to the document, "Looking to the Future", adopted by the Labour party national executive committee, which gives definitive answers to the points that he makes. It says:

"Given the effect of the Single Market, and Britain's likely participation in the ERM, closer co-operation on monetary

policy between the EC countries is both inevitable and desirable. But we would oppose the proposals for an all-powerful, but unaccountable European Central Bank, as outlined in the Delors plan for Economic and Monetary Union—just as we would not advocate an independent Bank of England. As the central banks of the EC countries gain experience of working more closely together, with Britain as a full member of the ERM, it may be that the need for a new institution will emerge. But any new European system of central banks must be politically accountable."

I can only say to my right hon. Friend——

Mr. Budgen: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman cannot intervene in the answer to an intervention.

Mr. Robertson: —that if he wants any expansion of that statement he should consult my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) who, I am sure, will be glad to give him whatever information he has.

The Government's policy, as outlined in the report to which I referred, contrasts with the positive programme put forward by the Labour party. The Government talk green but they sent the Secretary of State for the Environment to the Environment Council last week to weaken curbs on carbon dioxide. The Government preach that the single market, to quote the glossy documentation published by the Department of Employment, entitled "The United Kingdom in Europe: People, Jobs and Progress":

"is not a charter for business alone. It is for people, essential if their quality of life is to improve."

The Government also say in response to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs report:

"There should be fair competition and a level playing field across the Community (which requires proper enforcement)."

But at the same time they stubbornly and ideologically oppose the action programme and the social charter.

The Government's document also says:

"Training for skills and jobs is vital . . . we cannot afford our workforce to be undertrained and undereducated compared to our competitors."

In that respect, I draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, a speech by the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) which should be read by every Conservative Member of Parliament. I have chosen three quotations from it:

"We have a large and skilled army on the Rhine and an army of semi-literate unemployables at home. We have well-equipped forces to help us win wars which seem increasingly unlikely to happen, while we strive to win contracts with an under-skilled and under-educated work-force . . .When it comes to staffing our Embassies abroad, we are highly selective. Only the best will do."

[Interruption.] I welcome the author, and take him back to his speech last Thursday when he said:

"In staffing our schoolrooms, we take on anyone who is willing to do the job . . . The Victorian staircase of the Foreign Office is expensively re-gilded to delight the eye of foreign Ambassadors, while our shabby schools are administered from a squalid sixties building on the wrong side of the river."

Those are not the words of a Labour Member of Parliament but of the former Minister with responsibility for higher education in the Prime Minister's Government, and I pay tribute to what he said.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): I apologise for coming in halfway through the hon. Gentleman's speech. I sense that he may be quoting me just a trifle out of context. At the end of my speech I made the important point—at least it seemed important to me—that I would not spend a single penny on the current education system without insisting on quality in return for every penny. That is the crucial difference between my position and that of the Labour party. It would throw money at the system for no quality in return.

Mr. Robertson: Clearly, the Prime Minister has shaken the hon. Gentleman warmly by the hand in recognition of his sympathetic views. He may choose to disagree about the prescription, but his diagnosis is in stark relief to the expensive, cosmetic propaganda of the Department of the Environment about the quality of our education and trained labour force. He is closer to the mark than the propaganda.

This is a stirring time for European unity. On a continent where the east has dramatically and fortuitously opened up after 40 years of sterile oppression, the Community is a role model of non-coercive economic and political co-operation. As such, it offers and must be allowed to offer, an example and an eventual home for those countries which have been brought back to democracy and a mixed economy by their people. The Community must develop in a balanced way, thinking of ecology as well as economy, of workers as well as business and of controls on speculation as well as freedom of movement for capital. It must be a Community concerned with the substance of that which concerns the citizens of Europe—their education, housing, jobs and environment —and not just with the constant creation of money and movement of business men.

Whether we like it or loathe it, whether we welcome it or revile it, many contemporary forces have become European by circumstance or by the decision of free people. It is our duty to ensure that the decisions which ensure from that reflect the will of our people and that democratic accountability follows the sharing of political power. If we do that in the European Community, it has a future of enormous potential.

9·41 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Francis Maude): This is the third of the traditional six-monthly debates on the European Community, in which I have had the pleasur of participating. I do not know whether that qualifies me as a veteran, but I certainly feel like one. I sympathise with hon. Members when they say that there tends to be a hint of déjà vu about these debates.

Our debate in November last year was perhaps rather special. It took place in the days immediately following the breaching of the Berlin wall. Several hon. Members ranged free and cast their mind into the past with a sense of history and into the future with a sense of prescience, which was illuminating for the House. Today we may have reverted to the more traditional pattern, but nevertheless, there have been some fascinating innovations. The speech of the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) will live with us for some time. I hope that he will forgive me if I do not respond in detail to his remarks. They deserve a detailed response. I can reaffirm what my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said at the outset: the hon. Gentleman shall have an answer, but not from me tonight. Certainly, his anxieties will be properly considered.

Another traditional and welcome feature was the distinguished and distinctive speech of my right hon.

[Mr. Francis Maude]

Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell). He speaks with the authority which he carries naturally and with the authority of the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, whose illuminating report we have before us. The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) argued intensely, with great knowledge and some wisdom. That, too, enlightened our debate. Further speeches were made by my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, East (Mr. Knowles), the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) and, most especially, by my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen). He argued persuasively that he did not need to be lectured to by a junior economist. In those circumstances I am sure that he will forgive a junior Minister for failing to lecture him as well.

My hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) spoke powerfully about his concern at the way in which European Community trade policy sometimes operates. I assure him that the concerns that he has about the methodology applied in anti-dumping cases has been a matter of concern to us and we shall continue to raise them where appropriate. I can reassure my hon. Friend on some of the specific points that he raised. Considerable progress has been made on road haulage and qualified majority voting has enabled us to get some liberalising measures through against protectionist resistance by some of our partners.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West and others talked about fraud, which must be a matter for continuing concern. The Court of Auditors' recent report was welcome, thorough and good. It is essential to combat waste and fraud involving Community money. For some time we have pressed for more effective anti-fraud measures. My hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes), who expressed to me his regret that he would be unable to remain for the entire debate, wondered whether my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has dealt with fraud in his speech. My right hon. Friend urged an important institutional step, the strengthening of the capacity of the European Parliament in effect to enable its budgetary control committee to replicate our Public Accounts Committee, which is so effective.

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) particularly raised the issue of cross-frontier co-operation. When one listens to him one occasionally gets the impression that he feels that it is wrong to resist any proposal that is made in Brussels. One gets the impression that he feels that as soon as a proposition is made by the European Commission, the other 11 member states immediately sign up and say, "Yes please, we must have that because it is European." I assure him that they do not. There are many lively discussions in Brussels and the number of times that we are isolated is small. We have extremely good arguments and we win most of them. The number of times that we are in the minority and are out-voted is tiny.

The hon. Gentleman queried our assertion that we have led in cross-frontier co-operation. Our role has been particularly effectively in, for example, the Trevi group on co-operation on police liaison and we chaired the expert working group on customs co-operation fighting to control drugs traffic. We have also introduced the single immigration channel for all EC nationals. That is a more forward step than those in many other member states and Heathrow airport is far quicker than Brussels.

They are important moves. Nothing dramatic and no great ideals have been expressed, but they are useful measures that make the lives of our citizens better in some relatively minor ways.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Last week in the debate on children I said that in 1992 there will be few restrictions on the admission of pornography that particularly affects children. It would not be helpful if the Government did not take an active part in forthcoming debates to ensure that our adequate Customs and Excise laws are not thrown over in some spurious attempt to create a European ideal.

Mr. Maude: The hon. Lady is right to point out that there will always be some matters that our citizens require us to take seriously, in terms of restricting access. The treaty of Rome gives us the power to restrict access for reasons of public morality and we shall certainly not hesitate to use it if appropriate. The hon. Lady says that we should be in there arguing our corner fiercely. I assure her that we shall, but sometimes one is faced by a dichotomy of argument. There are those who say that one must not resist measures and be an awkward member of the Community. The same people frequently say that one must not stand on the outside; one must be involved. Frankly, being involved quite often means arguing our corner fiercely and making our case heard.

Sir Russell Johnston: All that I said was that one could not at one and the same time claim to be in the lead on cross-frontier co-operation, when the Schengen agreement allows free access. That is a contradiction.

Mr. Maude: It is not a contradiction. Our citizens require sensible relaxations in frontier crossings to protect their interests and make their lives easier when crossing the frontiers, and to protect their safety. That is what we do. The hon. Gentleman must understand that the Schengen group, who were talking about land frontiers between them, are in a wholly different category from us and a number of others with similar concerns about such measures.

The issue of German unification was raised by several hon. Members. It is important that it should be fully considered by the Community in the coming months. It is important that there should be full assimilation and that European Community law should be applied to the German Democratic Republic as soon as possible. This morning I heard from the Minister for Economics of the GDR in Berlin that that was the intention of the GDR, which is good news.

Eastern Europe is another theme that floated through the debate. There is a sophisticated programme of support from the Community, with a range of trade and co-operation agreements being revitalised, and association agreements coming forward during the next few months to enrich the relationship between the reforming countries and the Community. Of particular significance to us is the decision to locate the European bank for reconstruction and development in London, thus decisively confirming London's position as the financial centre of Europe. It is important that, as the major source of finance, it should have—as its articles require—a heavy emphasis on the

private sector. It is equally important that economic reforms in the countries that will benefit should proceed apace to allow free enterprise to bring the benefits that have been brought elsewhere.

Reference has been made to some of the countries of the European Free Trade Association. The House will know that discussions are proceeding to develop what has become known as the European economic area. We regard that as an important move that will create, if it succeeds, a single market of 360 million people, bigger than Japan and the United States combined. The achievement of that large area will be beneficial to us and the EFTA countries that sign the agreement. As is widely recognised by the EFTA countries, it could also be no more than an intermediate stage towards full accession as members. When talking to colleagues in Scandinavian countries recently, I found that there was a strong feeling that full application could be contemplated before long.

I do not think that there was any dissent among hon. Members that the Community should be ready to envisage a further widening and enlargement of the Community. It is difficult to contemplate that, at the end of this century, the Community will still be a Community of 12. When it started in the late 1950s the Community comprised no more than one third of Europe; it is now perhaps one half of Europe. None of us believes that its founders intended that it should remain so for ever. There is a strong belief that we should eventually move towards widening the community, but we must also deepen it, and do so quickly.

Much emphasis in the debate has been on economic and monetary union. I had the pleasure of winding up the full-day debate on that subject in November last year. I found it most interesting and enjoyable. I am pleased that on this occasion I can leave the pleasure of giving the Government's view to my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who will contribute to the debate on this subject on Friday.

Mr. Shore: The House will be very disappointed if the Minister does not address himself not to the technicalities of European monetary union but to the essential political objectives. Differing emphases have been expressed on the Government's commitment to economic and monetary union—particularly under stages 2 and 3—and I gave the Minister long notice of my direct question about it. Will he repeat the assurance given by the Prime Minister on 1 May, that we are and will remain opposed to locked, permanent exchange rates in EMU and equally opposed to the setting up of a central bank to control the monetary policies of the whole European Community? That is what the right hon. Lady told us on 1 May; I hope that the hon. Gentleman will endorse it tonight.

Mr. Maude: What was said by the Prime Minister five weeks ago certainly needs no reinforcing by me—*[Interruption.]* I have nothing to add to or subtract from what she said, but if the right hon. Gentleman wants to have another attempt, I invite him to come along on Friday and try with my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

Several hon. Members have spoken about what has become popularly known as political union. These debates about the future shape of the Community are wide ranging. None of us argues that the Community is perfect. It is a unique structure. It may not be a federal structure; it may not be a confederation. It is a model based on co-operation between nation states in which the right of decision making is ceded voluntarily. Further cessions of decision-making power cannot be forced, and when there is cession it can be revoked. Concessions on decision making have been made in the past out of hard-headed calculation of national interest, both by us and by other member states. I assure the House that subsequent decisions will be taken on the same basis. Treaty changes can be made only by unanimity and there can be no question of our being forced into changes to which we object.

The present debate, therefore, is not about radical restructuring: it is about practical changes to make the European Community more effective, and it includes the subject of subsidiarity, about which my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) spoke. He was right to say that it can be a snare and a delusion if it is not handled properly. We shall make sure that it is handled properly and used in a way that tends to decentralise decision making in the Community. My hon. Friend is right to say that it alerts us to the inherent tedency in organisations of this type for decision making to migrate to the centre. That must be resisted and what we propose will help to resist it.

There are some lessons for us to learn from what is happening in eastern and central Europe. There, we see countries that are rediscovering their nationhood—their sense of national identity. They are painfully and painstakingly developing autonomous national policies and rejecting centralised control, state intervention and the parasitic bureaucracies that have damaged them for so long.

The most important aspect of integration at the moment is the single market. I was sorry to hear the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) sneering at it. That showed that the Labour party has never understood the single market—or markets in general. It has never liked or trusted them. When the right hon. Gentleman referred to our priorities and to those of the wider Community—financial services, insurance, transport—he called them an adventure playground for financial institutions. The fact that neither he nor the Labour party has understood is that markets do not exist to benefit producers; they are there to benefit consumers.

Airlines are not hurt by the present arrangements by which cartels keep air fares high. It is the customers—the passengers—who suffer. It is the constituents of Opposition Members and of my hon. Friends who suffer, and it is they whom we seek to benefit by driving through these improvements. Similarly, it is not the German insurance companies that are hurt by the German restrictions on where German customers can buy their policies; it is the citizens themselves. If we are serious about creating a citizens' Europe—a people's Europe—we must drive the single market forward and widen and open the market.

That is where the concept of a "social Europe" comes in. It is about increasing standards of living and increasing the prospects of our citizens. That is what we shall continue to argue for forthrightly and plainly and we are winning the argument. We have decisively changed the way in which the European Community is oriented. We shall continue to win those arguments.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

[Mr. Maude]

That this House takes note of the White Paper on Developments in the European Community (July-December 1989) (Cm. 1023).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Lords Amendment to the Property Services Agency and Crown Suppliers Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Orders of the Day

Property Services and Crown Suppliers Bill

Lords amendment considered.

Clause 2

TRANSFERRED STAFF

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 2, line 23, leave out paragraph (b) and insert—

"(b) his ceasing to be employed in that service shall not be regarded as an occasion of redundancy for the purpose of the agreed redundancy procedures applicable to persons employed in that service."

10 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

10.1 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): This matter should not take long, although I had thought that the Minister would take the time to explain to the House why, after a great deal of argument by myself and my hon. Friends in Committee, not least by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), at that stage the Minister did not see sense, and why he has come to see sense as a result of what happened in the Lords.

The amendment is very much along the lines that we suggested in Committee. It will provide greater protection for the work force, which is what we were arguing for. If the Minister had agreed in Committee, it would not have been necessary to proceed in this way, but the House of Lords has seen fit to disagree with the Minister, and I am pleased about that. I am also pleased that the Minister accepts the Lords amendment. As I have said, it would have been easier if he had accepted that view in our Committee, but who am I to be churlish at this late hour and not to accept the Minister's late conversion?

I still have anxieties about the Bill but, as we are limited in what we can say in a Lords amendment debate, I shall simply say that it is a pleasure to accept the amendment. I do so happily, because it improves the position of the employees in the service, which is what is important to us.

10.2 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): If it is within the bounds of order, Mr. Speaker—I realise the limitations on a Lords amendment debate—may I invite the Minister to say whatever he can about any progress that has been made since the Committee stage? One of the troubles with the House of Commons is that we pass all these laws but do not monitor them properly. In a year's time, I for one would like to see how the provisions have worked out and to be able to read a serious report on what has happened. In the meantime, if it is in order, I invite the Minister to comment on how things have progressed since the Bill was in Standing Committee.

Mr. Chope: I am invited to do that, but all that I can say is that bids for the Crown Suppliers are under consideration at the moment. That is the current position.

Mr. Dalyell: Does the Minister have a timetable for when the decision is likely to be made? This matter seems to be going on and on, and some of us were under the impression that things would have been finalised by now. We may not have liked the Bill. but we thought that matters would be finalised.

Mr. Peter Griffiths (Portsmouth, North): I very much welcome the amendment, because it clarifies a previously uncertain situation. Although it does not meet the needs of everyone concerned with employment in PSA, at least we now know exactly what the position is and can respond properly to our constituents.

10.3 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): This amendment relates to what is effectively the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers. I ask the Minister for the assurance that, if bids are accepted, any and all information relating to the procedure will be given to all the bidders and that there will not be any secret information to be given only to civil servants, as has happened with the privatisation of the skill centres, which involved a good deal of criticism, not to say cynicism. I hope that the Minister can assure the House that everything will be completely open and above board, with all the bidders following the same fair and square procedure, with no insider dealing.

10.4 pm

Mr. Chope: I am happy to assure the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and the House that all the bids are in and are being considered on the same basis.

Mr. Cryer *rose*——

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is not a Committee.

Mr. Cryer: I was intervening in the Minister's speech.

Mr. Speaker: I think that the Minister had sat down.

Mr. Chope: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: In that case, I must put the Question.

Question put and agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(5) (Standing Committee on European Community documents).

Animal Health

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 4796/90, relating to animal health requirements for marketing certain animals and products of animal origin; and supports the Government's intention to negotiate satisfactory arrangements to ensure effective safeguards against the spread of animal disease.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

Question agreed to.

Fish and shellfish

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 4699/90 and 4779/90, relating to health conditions for the production and marketing of live bivalve molluscs and of fishery products, and 4783/90, relating to animal health conditions for the marketing of aquaculture animals and products; and supports the Government's aim of ensuring that any Council Regulations resulting from these proposals contribute to effective and efficient hygiene and health controls throughout the Community.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

Question agreed to.

SCOTTISH GRAND COMMITTEE

Ordered,

That, during the proceedings on the Scottish Estimates, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 88 (Meetings of Standing Committees) the Scottish Grand Committee shall have leave, at their sitting in Edinburgh on Monday 18th June, to sit until half-past Three o'clock; and that sitting shall constitute consideration on two days for the purposes of Standing Order No. 96 (Scottish Estimates)—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

Radio Reception (Yorkshire Dales)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

10.5 pm

Mr. William Hague (Richmond, Yorks): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the subject of the FM radio reception in the Yorkshire dales and I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State for being here to reply to the debate. This is a matter of concern to many of my constituents who live in the deepest and most remote dales, particularly Upper Swaledale in north Yorkshire. In some such places, it has never been possible to receive the FM signal of BBC radio stations. Although some of my constituents have thus been denied the opportunity to sample the superior stereo quality of FM broadcasts, they have accepted this as an understandable disadvantage of living in mountainous surroundings and have tuned into medium-wave broadcasts.

But this minor irritant is about to become much more serious. From August this year, Radio 2 will be broadcasting only on FM, to enable its medium-wave frequencies to be used by the new Radio 5. In addition, I understand from the BBC that over the next few years, both Radio 1 and Radio 3 will become FM-only networks so as to free their medium-wave frequencies for use as national commercial radio outlets.

I accept that these changes are an important prerequisite of the substantial future expansion of radio services and that the overall effect for the great majority of people will be a widening of choice and the availability of a greater variety of programmes than ever before. That is obviously a good thing. However, on current plans the extension of choice for most of the country will be at the cost of reducing choice in services for a small minority. In my opinion and that of many of my constituents, that is not an acceptable trade-off, nor is it necessary. The provision of additional transmission facilities to serve regions such as Upper Swaledale would allow the whole population to share in the widening of choice rather than imposing on that minority a narrower choice.

I accept that this is a problem for the BBC to solve. I wrote to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs about the matter, and he replied:

"In the cases of services in the Swaledale area it will be for the BBC to decide how best to fill any holes left in VHS FM services."

That would be fine, but the BBC has decided not to fill some of those holes for the foreseeable future.

I have already corresponded with the director general of the BBC about this matter and he has been kind enough to explain that 98 per cent. of the United Kingdom population is served by FM radio and that the extension of this service is a high priority. That is fair enough. However, the director general adds:

"Although a relay is planned in due course to cover the deficiency in FM coverage in Richmond, it will probably not prove to be technically possible for this relay to serve all those currently without FM radio in Swaledale. Given the limited size of the population it is unlikely that parts of Swaledale will be served in the foreseeable future."

The director general concludes:

"I realise how disappointing this reply may be to those living in Swaledale, but it would clearly not be right for me to raise any false hopes of an early solution to this very difficult problem."

I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will be able to encourage the BBC to find a solution to this admittedly difficult problem. My constituents in Swaledale may be few in number but they pay their television licence fee for the services of the BBC like anyone else. They are joined in the summer months by many thousands of tourists and other temporary residents who also have every right to be able to receive BBC transmissions. They are able to receive the transmissions of local radio stations such as Radio Cleveland and Radio Tees with sufficient signal strength to enjoy stereo reception.

They are therefore rather sceptical of protestations about extreme technical difficulties when it comes to national radio. If the BBC had at least a plan for rectifying the problem in Swaledale in advance of the transfer of Radios 1 and 3 to FM only, I think that we would have to say that that was fair and acceptable. My hon. and learned Friend will understand that the absence of any plan or hope while the plans to transfer radio stations to FM continue apace is not regarded as fair or reasonable by listeners or licence fee payers.

I hope that my hon. and learned Friend the Minister will be able to put the matter to the BBC in his future discussions with it. We are talking about people living near the middle of the British Isles in the late 20th century who are unable to receive the greater part of the broadcasts of the national state-run radio service.

Clearly the problem is not confined to Swaledale. It sounds impressive that 98 per cent. of the population is served by FM, but that means that about 1 million people are not served by it. Perhaps my hon. and learned Friend will convey to the BBC the likely feelings of the 1 million and inquire how many of them will continue to be without FM transmission when Radio 2 becomes FM only. Perhaps he will ask also how many are still likely to be in that unfortunate position when Radios 1 and 3 become FM only.

As far as I can tell from the BBC's engineering information maps, there are many gaps in coverage in the Pennine area, including parts of Teesdale, Wensleydale, Wharfedale and areas in west Yorkshire. Swaledale may be one of only a few areas that will still not be served after a few years have passed. If so, my hon. and learned Friend will understand that the irritation caused will be even greater. If there are to be only a few remaining gaps, it is surely worth the effort and expense involved in filling them and providing complete national coverage.

I am not technically expert in these matters and probably my hon. and learned Friend is not either. But he may have expertise. Perhaps his great abilities include this technical expertise. I understand that the solution lies in the provision of an additional repeater station or in the use of the Bilsdale moor mast. The transmitter, which is in my constituency, is used to transmit Radio Cleveland and Radio Tees and by the BBC and Tyne Tees Television to broadcast television programmes. Its signal for all those services is recieved all the way up Swaledale. There may be technical difficulties in the further use of the Bilsdale mast of which I am not aware, but if so they need to be fully explained. The alternative of a further repeater station would present siting problems, but that problem has been overcome elsewhere and I am sure that it could be overcome in Swaledale.

So far, the BBC has not made a very good job of satisfying local concern. Replies to letters of complaint from individuals and parish councils have often included

leaflets advising people to listen to stereo radio, how to buy portable sets to receive it and how good the quality of FM reception is. Not surprisingly, that has infuriated many people. I hope that the BBC will not be daft enough to do it again as long as the problem remains. It is senseless to ask people in areas such as Swaledale to purchase multi-element aerials and FM radio sets if the signal is absent or too weak to be of value: when nothing is multiplied by something, the answer is still nothing. All the high gain aerials and signal booster amplifiers are a waste of money in areas of negligible signal strength, let alone on the radio set itself.

Presumably the key problem for the BBC is one of resources. It will not have sufficient money or engineering staff to cover all the gaps at once, or even over several years. Perhaps I can prevail upon my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State to question the BBC about the cost of removing the gaps in coverage in areas such as Swaledale. Many of us would regard it as no more than a necessary cost of the changes in radio services to attend to that problem. If 98 per cent. of the nation is to benefit from increased choice, it is not unreasonable to expect some of the money provided by the nation for radio services—through the BBC licence fee—to be used, as a high priority, to ensure that the other 2 per cent. does not suffer restrictions in service as a result.

Let me provide an analogy. Let us suppose that my hon. and learned Friend and I go into a restaurant where there is a fixed-price menu, and are told that at our table most items on the menu are about to be taken off indefinitely, and one course to be omitted altogether. On inquiring why, we are told that the reason is to allow a better and extended à la carte service to be offered to all the other tables in the building. In that event, my hon. and learned Friend would complain to the management, and then to the owner. I am here tonight complaining to the owner, having received no satisfaction from the management.

I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will accept that there is a powerful case for the matter to be examined again by the director general of the BBC, and I hope that he will encourage him to do so. It is all too easy and convenient for large organisations such as the BBC to forget people in sparsely populated rural areas. However, it should be remembered that those people pay the same fees, and live in the same country, as everyone else. I hope that my hon. and learned Friend can assure me that the Home Office will do everything that it can to encourage the BBC to rectify this irritating problem.

10.17 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague) courteously said how good of me it was to attend. I echo and reciprocate that sentiment. His speech was the only jolly part of my evening: I arrived here post haste after watching England fail to defeat the Republic of Ireland. What a joy it is that you, Mr. Speaker, are present for the debate, rather than one of your deputies. Clearly I must raise my game—as England were unable to do—to answer my hon. Friend's cogent points.

Obviously, we must examine what we are doing to radio generally before turning to its controversial impact on my hon. Friend's constituents. We have arrived at an important stage in the history of radio. Until 1973—less than two decades ago—there was only BBC radio. However, since 1973 there has been independent local radio, which has proved very popular. Those stations have provided the BBC with a degree of competition, and the listener with additional and enhanced choice. That represents a considerable achievement on the part of the companies concerned and the Independent Broadcasting Authrity, which has effectively regulated the arrangements.

As the Government said in the Green Paper of 1987, there was evidence of stagnation nearly two decades on, and changes were needed to build on the success that had been achieved. Those changes were heralded in the Broadcasting Bill. We stand on the threshold of a major radio expansion: while much of the discussion of the Bill has focused on television, some of its most important impact will be felt in radio.

Over the next few years, we can expect the new Radio Authority to introduce several hundred new services, which will range from the existing wide-area stations down to services for very much smaller communities. There will be no reason why a station should not serve just a small neighbourhood or an audience that shares a particular, specialised taste in music if there is sufficient demand for that to be viable. Broadcasters will need to cater specifically for the interests of their audiences in a way that has never been required before.

At the other end of the scale, there will be three independent radio stations to provide competition to the BBC at the national level for the first time ever. Under the Bill, those services will provide a challenge to the BBC on a broad front. One will be a speech-based service, another will probably broadcast music other than pop music—I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker) will share my enthusiasm for that—and the third licence will be unspecified, and it will be open to advocates to put forward other ideas. I suppose that those will be inevitably bound up with pop music in some shape or form.

In order to introduce those new services, we must find new frequencies for them—and here we come to the heart of the problem raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks. For two of the new independent radio services, we have had to re-assign frequencies from the BBC. At its suggestion—I am grateful for its co-operation—we have selected the medium wave networks currently used for Radio 1 and Radio 3. That will leave the BBC with six networks on which to provide its services, and it is for the BBC to decide how to use those frequencies to fulfil its public service obligations.

There will be an end—and this is important—to the waste of scarce frequency brought about by simulcasting—that is, putting the same programme on two different frequencies. That is a luxury which, in truth, we can no longer afford. It is a waste of the ample range of creativities that exists within our broadcasting community and that would allow each of those frequencies to be used by a different service.

The BBC says that, in this new environment, it intends to make Radio 1, 2 and 3 FM-only services. Radio 4 would be on FM, but much of its output would continue on long wave as well. Speech-based services can exist much more readily on the AM network than can music, which undoubtedly benefits tremendously from the FM wave band. The remaining network on the medium wave will be used for the new Radio 5, to be launched in August. I

[Mr. David Mellor]

gather that it will be mainly sports and education programmes, and will therefore continue to be an exercise in masochism for those of us who admire English football. There will also be room for children's programmes to make a welcome return—certainly a welcome return from what has been happening in Cagliari.

Those changes have implications for listeners, and not just the listeners in Swaledale, to whose legitimate concerns I shall come in a moment. Most people will have only to switch their sets from the AM to the FM band. If, as most people do, they already listen to FM, they need do nothing unless they want to tune to the new Radio 5 to find out whether Scotland has finally managed to beat Costa Rica.

The remainder may have problems. Some may need to purchase new radios if they wish to continue to listen to Radio 2 and if their present set receives only on medium wave. The great problem is that suffered by a small minority, but nevertheless they are an important group of people. As my hon. Friend said, in a true democracy all are entitled to equal attention. I take his point on that, and not simply because he mentioned matters gastronomic, which he well knows are a particular interest, if not an obsession, of mine.

A number of areas have no FM reception, so in those places listeners will not be able to receive Radio 1, 2 and 3. Obviously that is a matter of real and genuine concern. My hon. Friend was right to raise it, and he has done a service to more than just his own constituents in doing so. While it is true that services reach 99·2 per cent. of the public, that does not mean that we can be complacent about the 0·8 per cent. of people who are not properly served.

I hope, believe and expect that the loss of those services will be only temporary. The BBC is currently engaged in a programme of building new transmitters to extend FM broadcasts to areas that are not presently served. It is for the BBC—because it is independent of Government, and it is only right that it should be—to determine the speed with which, and the order in which, it intends to carry out that programme within the resources that it has available.

I know that the BBC would assert that it is moving as quickly as it can to minimise inconvenience to listeners. It aims at building 20 new transmitters each year—more than three times the average number built in the last decade. In the current financial year, the BBC will spend more on radio transmitters than television transmitters for the first time since television was first introduced. Over the next five years, the BBC will spend about £26 million on the radio project.

About 150 new transmitters will be needed, and clearly their construction will take some time. Generally, the BBC will give priority to the larger unserved populations, which means that smaller communities will be at the back of the queue. I understand why my hon. Friend should, on behalf of his constituents, find that irksome, and he is right to protest about it. However, I hope it is clear that there is a genuine will and intention to extend FM reception to as many listeners as possible as quickly as possible—although I accept that that will not be achieved as quickly as my hon. Friend thinks desirable.

As to the loss of Radio 1, 2 and 3 on the medium wave, when the BBC stops transmitting those services on AM, radio sets across the country will not simply fall silent. Listeners will find BBC Radio 5 on the Radio 2 AM network, and in truth one might prefer listening to a programme about England's labours in Italy to the prospect of an easy listening music show as an alternative.

New independent national radio services will be broadcast on the Radio 1 and Radio 3 frequencies. The intention behind what will have to be a commercial venture is that they should offer services that will be attractive to the public. While I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern about the loss of BBC services, albeit temporary, it will be made up for by the existence of new national independent services, which I have every reason to hope and believe will be good and attractive.

I accept that there will be inconvenience, and it is probably precious little consolation that, nationally, the disturbance will be outweighed by the enhanced radio choice that will become available to listeners over the next few years. Nevertheless, I am confident that, overall, over less than a decade those developments in radio will be in everyone's interests.

Turning to the specific problem of the Yorkshire dales, the BBC has established a tuning clinic that visited Richmond recently, as part of a service that it is offering to several parts of the country where there are similar problems. It offers advice to listeners about how they might best cope with the changes. The BBC recognises that there is a reception deficiency and that it will be answered only by the provision of additional transmitters. My hon. Friend mentioned the Bilsdale transmitter. It is primarily used for TV transmissions, although it does have transmitters also for BBC Radio Cleveland and an ILR station, TFM Radio.

I hope that the BBC will bear that in mind when considering that site, although from the inquiries that I have made—as my hon. Friend rightly surmised, I am a bit of a babe unborn on such technical matters, but I am doing the best I can—I am led to believe that it does not provide a simple solution. The BBC would need to check whether the site could accommodate additional transmitters, and would also need to find frequencies for use at high power to reach the areas concerned. Such high-power frequencies are in short supply, and a more efficient use of spectrum might be to provide low power relays for Richmond and Swaledale, rather than to increase simulcasting over a wide area. I hope that what I have said at least shows that the BBC has considered and is considering the matter.

I have every sympathy with the difficulty faced by my hon. Friend's constituents, and it is sad that even the expedient of putting a rooftop aerial up does not provide a satisfactory remedy for many of them. As a result, and having regard to what my hon. Friend has said, and the eloquence with which he has drawn attention to their difficulties, I would wish to bring his remarks to the attention of the BBC as a result of this debate.

In so doing, I assure my hon. Friend that I shall make clear to the BBC the importance and the urgency of providing the necessary transmission facilities in the area for FM reception, and of bringing them on to the air as quickly as possible. As my hon. Friend says—a Yorkshireman who speaks about money speaks with a special authority, as we know—the people of Swaledale are paying precisely the same sum for BBC services as the

rest of us and, at the earliest possible moment, they are entitled to be able to receive all of its services. Therefore, I hope that it will not be too long before they do so.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty nine minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 12 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL

Order for consideration of Lords amendments read.
To be considered on Thursday.

Oral Answers to Questions

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Opting Out

1. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the aims of the policy that allows schools to opt out of local authority control.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): Before I answer the question, may I offer the House the apologies of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, who is unavoidably engaged visiting schools and training establishments in Germany? He sends the House his apologies. The engagement was fixed some time ago.

The aim of the policy is to improve parental choice and the use of resources to benefit the pupils. That is being achieved in the first grant-maintained schools. They are showing the way in maximising the commitment and enthusiasm of governors, parents and teachers. The policy is already proving an overwhelming success.

Dr. Twinn: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Does she agree that many more schools would benefit from grant-maintained status? Will she make the success story of grant-maintained schools more widely known, so that parents, governors and staff can give more consideration to applying for grant-maintained status?

Mrs. Rumbold: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The success of the policy is demonstrated by the growing number of schools that are beginning to apply for grant-maintained status. As my hon. Friend will know, there are already 29 grant-maintained schools and there will be 12 more in September. A number of further proposals are about to be made. Therefore, the best way of informing the general public and particularly schools about the success of the grant-maintained policy is by the growing number of schools that are obtaining that status.

Mr. Flannery: Is not the Minister literally whistling in the dark because the policy is an utter failure—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] It is no good Conservative Members shouting me down. The policy is being resisted all over the country. Like the city technology colleges and various other programmes, it is a partial step towards privatisation. Will the hon. Lady tell us the truth, because the eduation system is moving steadily into semi-chaos?

Mrs. Rumbold: I am not sure whether to take the hon. Gentleman seriously, but for the moment I shall do so and point out that the best way in which he can establish whether grant-maintained schools are a success is to visit one. He will then see the immense improvement in the morale of teachers and parents and in the way in which those schools are organised. The benefit of self-governing schools is indubitably for the best.

Mr. Pawsey: I hope that my hon. Friend will disregard the remarks of the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery). Does she agree that one of the ways in which we could create further interest in grant-maintained schools and increase the number of schools applying is by abolishing the wholly artificial threshold of 300 pupils? If that were abolished, many more schools would apply for grant-maintained status.

Mrs. Rumbold: My hon. Friend puts forward an interesting thought and I can assure him that we shall consider it, but at present we are extremely busy, as he will no doubt appreciate, with the number of applications and parental ballots that have already been successful.

Tinnitus

2. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what resources are currently being provided by the medical research council for research into tinnitus.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): In 1988-89, the latest financial year for which figures are available, the medical research council spent £149,000 on research into tinnitus.

Mr. Sumberg: Would not it be a good idea for research to be carried out on tinnitus caused by working in ships' engine rooms so that people such as my constituent, Mr. Harmstone, could claim industrial injury benefit? Will my hon. Friend have a word with the medical research council and put that idea to it? At the same time will he have a word with his colleagues in the Department of Social Security to see whether they can do something to rectify an extremely unfair situation?

Mr. Jackson: I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security to my hon. Friend's question. The medical research council and the universities are autonomous institutions at arm's length from Government, but I shall draw their attention to the question.

Mr. Ashley: Is the Minister aware that many researchers tend to shun research into intractable problems, however great the suffering may be? The suffering with tinnitus is great, because of the roaring and shrieking sounds that people have to endure. Little research is coming forward and any help that the Minister can give to the MRC would be very much appreciated.

Mr. Jackson: I note what the right hon. Gentleman has said. The MRC has spent just over £2 million on research

into hearing generally and it will see the remarks about tinnitus that the right hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) have made.

Mr. Key: My hon. Friend is well aware of the depth and breadth of research carried out by the MRC. What has been the increase in the MRC's vote since 1979?

Mr. Jackson: I am glad that my hon. Friend asked that question. The amount is substantial. There has been a 28 per cent. real terms increase in the MRC's funding since the Conservative party came into office.

School Buildings

3. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received concerning the repair and improvement of school buildings.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Alan Howarth): I believe that it may be in order to congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his elevation to the position of education spokesman for the Social and Liberal Democrats. We shal take a cordial interest in seeing how quickly the hon. Gentleman proceeds along the cursus honorum trodden by his predecessor in office, the right hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown).

In answer to the hon. Gentleman's question, my right hon. Friend has received a number of letters and other representations from local education authorities, hon. Members, diocesan bodies and others about the repair and improvement of school buildings.

Mr. Taylor: I thank the Minister for his kind comments. How does he envisage following the lead set by his predecessors who, in 1981, laid down minimum standards for school buildings, to be reached by 1991? It is clear in my county and in other parts of the country that schools will not reach those standards. Does the hon. Gentleman intend to put in extra money to allow them to reach those standards, or does he—to echo the words of the Minister of State to me in an Adjournment debate—intend to review those standards, presumably to cut them?

Mr. Howarth: We shall continue to make the excellent progress that we have made over the past 10 years in making money available to improve school buildings. I am pleased to be able to tell the House that the capital expenditure per pupil in our schools has increased by 13 per cent. since 1978-79, the last year of the previous Labour Government, when Labour was supported in office by the hon. Gentleman's party, or its predecessor. Of course, I recognise that there is a considerable backlog of work. We must look at the needs sensitively and practically. We are examining the implications of the 1981 building regulations.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: Do not those concerns have their roots in the maladministration of some local authorities? If they do not make rational, sensible analyses of their surplus school places, clearly there is not enough money to maintain the places that they really want. That problem must be addressed.

Mr. Howarth: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Our best estimate from Her Majesty's inspectorate and the Audit Commission is that there are still more than 1 million surplus school places in the system. Authorities that are not willing to grasp that nettle are guilty of tying up resources that are lying unproductive in the system, instead of making that money available for the benefit of children's education.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: Is the Minister aware that in the county of Northumberland there is a repair bill of £1·5 million for all schools? Will he do something about that problem, or is he just going to stand there and let off bags of wind?

Mr. Howarth: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman was not able to join the all-party deputation from his county, which recently came to see me and the Department. We had a useful discussion about the problems of school buildings in Northumberland. I am pleased to be able to say that my officials are involved in a close dialogue with officers of the authority. I hope that we can assist the authority in formulating reasonable proposals for the next round of allocations, so that Northumberland can make the further progress that is necessary to deal with the pressing problems of repairing some of its village schools.

Mr. Robert B. Jones: Will my hon. Friend confirm that, as opposed to capital spending, if extra revenue were made available through the grant system, there would be no guarantee that it would be spent on school maintenance? Does my hon. Friend recall, for example, that when the Government made additional money available to local authorities for spending on road maintenance, only a tiny minority of it ended up being spent on roads?

Mr. Howarth: My hon. Friend, who is knowledgeable about these matters, has put his finger on a real issue. I am hopeful that local management of schools will make an impact on that problem. Local education authorities are obliged to devolve a significant proportion of their schools' budgets to school level. In that way, we can at least ensure that school governors, head teachers and their colleagues in the schools will have a proper say about the allocation of resources within the system.

Gene Manipulation

4. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what response he has given to the proposals of Professor Beringer of the department of botany in the university of Bristol for the expansion of the United Nations framework for covering problems related to gene manipulation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Professor Beringer has made no formal proposals to Ministers on this subject. However, the United Nations Environmental Programme, together with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and the World Health Organisation, set up an informal working group in 1985 to consider all aspects of biosafety. Britain was invited to be an observer to some of the discussions of that group and the British Government will continue to support initiatives of the United Nations in that area.

Mr. Dalyell: Who is responsible for this complex and delicate issue? Is it the Department of the Environment, the Department of Education and Science or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, or is it the Prime Minister who, as far as we know, has not gone back on what she

told the House in 1981, which was that she was the Minister who was personally responsible for co-ordinating science policy? It is not easy.

Mr. Jackson: The Prime Minister has a general, overall responsibility as chairman of the relevant committee. However, it is an area of responsibility for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. I have drawn his attention to the question and I am sure that he will consider its implications sympathetically.

Local Government Finance

5. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will meet representatives of those local education authorities which have been charge-capped to discuss the implications for education.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has no plans to meet representatives of charge-capped authorities. The authorities designated for charge capping had the opportunity to put forward an alternative cap to that proposed by my right hon. Friend. Those who have done so have been given the opportunity to meet my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities or the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope), to make oral representations.

Mrs. Mahon: Is not the Minister simply abandoning the children of the capped authorities? I draw her attention to the document—a copy of which I have placed on the board for the Minister—from the secondary heads of the Calderdale Secondary Head Teachers Association, which highlights the crisis that will occur in education in Calderdale should the Minister go ahead with the cap. May I also draw her attention to the discrepancy between the £1,799 spent on each pupil in Calderdale and the £2,961 spent on the private sector at Leeds grammar school? Is not that simply immoral?

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Lady misunderstands. The responsibility for the policy of charge capping rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. He will be making his decisions on the matter in due course. I also remind the hon. Lady that education is only one part of the total budget on which an authority is judged.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Calderdale council set a community charge of £450 and a safety net of £160 was granted by the Government. Is my hon. Friend aware of that? I hope that my hon. Friend also realises that Calderldale council has before it a budget, which could be instituted, that would reduce spending by £50 a head with no redundancies. Secondary school heads and others are appalled that the socialists push the children to one side.

Mrs. Rumbold: I respect my hon. Friend's views about his own local authority. It is perfectly true that Calderdale authority set its spending an excessive 21 per cent. higher, equivalent to £160, which is a considerable amount of money for each charge payer to pay. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend's condemnation of his irresponsible authority.

Mr. Straw: Is not it shameful that the Secretary of State for Education and Science appears to have washed his hands of the consequences of poll tax capping on our schools? Given that one half of local authorities' total spending is on education, is the Minister saying that the Secretary of State takes no view as to whether poll tax capping will or will not harm education in those 20 areas?

Will the Minister now answer the question put to her by my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon): what conceivable justification can the Secretary of State for the Environment have for objecting to poll tax-capped authorities spending £1,900 or less per pupil when, in the right hon. Gentleman's constituency, the Government are spending £4,650 on the fees of pupils at Kingswood school, a private day school? Does not that expose the deeply hypocritical double standards operated by the Government?

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman would be better placed were he aware that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is considering proposals for charge capping. When he has made up his mind and has come to the House with his view, the point will come when the total budget for local authorities confronted with any sort of cap is known and they can then decide for themselves where their priorities lie. That is a matter entirely for the local authorities.

The hon. Gentleman's question about the assisted places scheme was ridiculous. He should look closely at the figures that he is comparing, as he is not comparing like with like. Instead, he pursues the posh socialist's patronising view of the ability of working people to choose where their children go to school. What the people want is choice in education. They do not want to be directed by Opposition Members.

Mr. Hind: Will my hon. Friend look carefully at the charge-capped authorities and ensure that, when they reduce their expenditure on education, as I am sure many of them will, they do not do it with the maximum pain to parents and children and to maximise the political capital that they can make out of it? Will she also ensure that, where there is local management of schools, central bureaucracies at county hall are dismantled so that the money drifts downwards to the schools, where it is needed?

Mrs. Rumbold: I note with great interest what my hon. Friend said. He is obviously very knowledgeable about the way in which the education service is organised in his authority's area. It is for the local authorities, should they be confronted with charge capping, to make their own decisions. Of course, there is a route by which schools can ensure that they get the maximum amount of money from the local authority, and it is called seeking grant-maintained status.

Teachers' Pay and Conditions

6. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received about teachers' pay and conditions; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold *rose*——

Hon. Members: Get on with it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Minister is having a busy time.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend receives— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am afraid that there was so much reaction from the Benches below the Gangway that I did not hear the Minister's answer.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am happy, Mr. Speaker, to repeat that my right hon. Friend receives frequent representations on the pay and conditions of teachers.

Mr. Nellist: Has not the Minister even considered the representations from her Department's hand-picked interim advisory committee, which says that, given inflation, the offer made to teachers this year means that a majority of them will still be paid less in real terms this year than they were last? How is that supposed to help morale and to stop the haemorrhaging of teachers from the profession?

Mrs. Rumbold: It is interesting that the local authority in the hon. Gentleman's constituency has only recently adopted some of the flexible arrangements provided by the interim advisory committee over the past two years. If the authority follows the interim advisory committee's recommendations on flexibility more closely during the coming year, I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that some of his allegations about that committee's recommendations are far from accurate.

Mr. Norris: In areas such as west Essex, we are grateful for the special assistance that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has given us to recruit teachers because of the high costs of housing. When monitoring organisations such as Reward have shown in regional surveys that the cost of living in London is about £8,000 a year more than it is in an average shire county, will my hon. Friend the Minister bear it in mind that we still need to do more to reflect those cost differentials if we are to attract the right people to teaching in the south-east?

Mrs. Rumbold: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There is no doubt that there is a requirement for greater flexibility within the south-east and the London area, particularly in the home counties, because of the clear differential between the cost of living and the cost of housing there and the costs in other areas where such things are not so expensive. The interim advisory committee has addressed that and one hopes that there will be continuing progress when any future negotiating machinery is set up.

Teacher Vacancies

8. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the latest estimated number of teacher vacancies in schools; what were the similar figures for the same month in 1976 and 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: In January 1989 there were 3,116 full-time teacher vacancies in maintained nursery and primary schools in England, and 2,424 in maintained secondary schools. We hope to be able to publish the 1990 survey results shortly.

No figures exist on teacher vacancies in 1976, and only secondary schools' figures for 1979. In January of that year there were 2,600 full-time vacancies in maintained secondary schools in England. Where we can make a direct comparison between secondary school vacancies in 1979 and 1989, we find that there were rather more vacancies in 1979.

Mr. Greenway: Is my hon. Friend aware that the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and I addressed a packed meeting opposing vicious cuts in education and in the supply of teachers in January 1969 when the Labour Government were in office?

Mr. Cryer: Oh.

Mr. Greenway: The hon. Member for Blackburn was then president-elect of the National Union of Students.

By 1976 those of us who were running schools had to trawl the area to get teacher bodies to put before classes because there was such a shortage of teachers under that Labour Government. Will my hon. Friend the Minister assure me that everything possible will be done to ensure that the national curriculum goes ahead with a sound supply of good teachers to implement it?

Mr. Howarth: My hon. Friend speaks from his experience of the responsibility of running a school during the very difficult period when the previous Labour Government were cutting public expenditure. The House should heed what my hon. Friend said and we certainly do.

No one should pretend that there will not be formidable difficulties in recruiting all the teachers whom we need during a period in which the demand for highly skilled manpower in the economy is growing and the number of people entering the work force is falling. That is why we have been introducing a range of measures targeting the problem. They include bursaries to attract teachers to train in shortage subjects; new routes to qualifications for graduates and mature entrants; support for distance learning courses and specific grants to support recruitment strategies for local education authorities in areas that face shortages.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is it true that there are about 1,300 teacher vacancies in London? Is not it also a fact that one reason why it is difficult to attract teachers to London and to retain them there is the price of property and rents? Does not the Minister accept some responsibility? Has he told his ministerial colleagues responsible for housing that if they had not destroyed the local authorities' house-building programme in London, perhaps the teacher shortage would not be quite so bad in the capital city as it is?

Mr. Howarth: London indeed faces exceptional problems in recruiting and retaining teachers. That is why we have directed special efforts towards helping the local education authorities in London and we shall continue to do that. On the hon. Gentleman's point about housing, I am pleased that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was able to support the purchase of former Inner London education authority property by the London teachers' housing association.

Mr. Dunn: Is the Minister aware that there are particular problems in the recruitment and retention of teachers in London and the south-east? Will he undertake to inquire whether the Government intend to introduce regional pay or school-centred pay bargaining as a way around the problems that we in the south are experiencing?

Mr. Howarth: Following the advice of the interim advisory committee, in the last three years the Government have introduced an extended range of flexibilities to enable employers, whether local education authorities or governors, to introduce greater differentials to take account of local difficulties in recruitment and retention which labour conditions and the cost of living in London and the south-east impose. About 175,000 teachers, a high concentration of them in London and the south-east, are now in receipt of incentive allowances. As a result of this year's pay settlement, there will be increased discretion for employers to award extra income and extra supplements.

Mr. Fatchett: Is the Minister aware that the Government will find it difficult to deal with the growing crisis of teacher shortage when—for the second consecutive year—they have imposed a cut in teachers' real standard of living? Is he further aware that the collapse in teacher morale, the fear of job losses through the introduction of LMS—local management of schools—and the events at Davenant school in Essex, where parents are being charged £50 to pay the teachers, will do little to help teacher morale but will simply create a situation in which more teachers will leave the profession and more parents will become demoralised, all as a result of the Government's stewardship of the education system?

Mr. Howarth: The hon. Gentleman should blush when making such references to pay. Under the last Labour Government, teachers' pay rose by 6 per cent.—*[Interruption.]* That is a fact. Under the Conservatives, the real value of teachers' pay has risen by 30 per cent. Every time the hon. Gentleman and his Friends seek to portray the teacher supply situation in the lurid terms that they love to use, they exacerbate the problem. It would be good to hear from Opposition Members some recognition of the fact that in schools in, for example, some of the inner London boroughs, superb work is being done by teachers. Those local education authorities are working with might and main to recruit and retain the teachers they need and to give children better opportunities.

As for what has happened at Davenant school, my information, which is not complete, suggests that there was nothing in the LMS formula which would have required that school to shed teachers. Indeed, I imagine that as a result of the fund-raising efforts that the school community has undertaken it will find itself usefully better off.

Opting Out

9. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the number of opting-out ballots held under the Education Reform Act 1988.

14. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many secondary schools have held opting-out ballots to date.

Mrs. Rumbold: Parental ballots have been held at 92 schools and parents at 71 of those schools have voted in favour of an application for grant-maintained status. All but two of the schools were secondary schools.

Mr. Marshall: Is my hon. Friend aware that Hendon school, the first grant-maintained school in London, is now oversubscribed? Does she agree that that shows that such schools are popular with parents and teachers alike and illustrates the folly of the Opposition policy of abolishing grant-maintained schools, CTCs, grammar schools and the independent sector?

Mrs. Rumbold: Yes, my hon. Friend is right. The politics of envy will never do anything for the pupils in our schools. It is absolutely clear from the number of parents applying for their children to go to grant-maintained schools and city technology colleges that the number of applications has increased. The morale of teachers in the grant-maintained school sector is very high indeed. I believe that that has much to do with the fact that they are looking after their own affairs without intervention and are confident that they are giving the best possible education, without unnecessary intervention, to the children in their care.

Mr. Atkinson: While thanking my hon. Friend for the good news received yesterday that Bournemouth school for boys has been granted permission to receive the full benefits of self-govering status, may I ask whether she agrees that the demand for opting out comes much more from the governors of schools, who appreciate the benefits, rather than from parents, who remain largely uninformed of them? Will she consider initiating a new campaign to inform parents of the benefits of grant-maintained status?

Mrs. Rumbold: I am delighted to hear that my hon. Friend is glad to learn that Bournemouth school has been accepted as a grant-maintained school, subject to a couple of technical agreements between us and it, but he must understand that the parents are the people who are balloted. They express through the ballot box, perfectly fairly and legitimately, their support for the grant-maintained policy. It is interesting that they are supporting it increasingly through the ballot box, and with success.

Mr. Rooker: What about the parents of pupils at Sylvan high school in Mr. Speaker's constituency who were balloted and voted against its becoming a city technology college, which was then imposed on them? The school has been wrecked, teacher morale has gone down the plughole and children are expected to study on a building site. How can the Minister say that the parents' views are paramount?

Mrs. Rumbold: The city technology college programme is exceedingly successful. We hear the politics of envy time and again from Opposition Members. Any kind of improvement, any sort of choice, any type of assistance from industry is always scorned. Conservative Members are interested in the pupils, in the best for the children and for the teachers. CTCs are one of the many policies that we have followed to achieve just that.

Mr. Straw: Does not the Minister's bluster disguise the fact that many leading Conservatives now oppose opting out and have lost confidence in it? Is she aware that Mr. Roy Schutz, Conservative chairman of the education committee in the Conservative borough of Barnet—the Prime Minister's own—has described an opted-out school in his constituency as an "unfettered dictatorship", and that the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), who used to have the Minister's job, has described opting out as "a side alley"? Is not the truth that, despite all the propoganda and bribes and the cynical use

of school closure plans, the fact that fewer that 1 per cent. of all secondary schools and no primary schools at all have opted out shows how much the policy is an expensive and divisive flop?

Mrs. Rumbold: I often wish that the hon. Gentleman cared more about the children in the maintained sector and less about his own policies. The policy of offering grant-maintained school options is most important because it gives choice to the very people who care about their children.

I believe that the hon. Gentleman must have been misquoting Mr. Schutz, who is no longer the chairman of Barnet education authority. It would be as well if the hon. Gentleman got his facts right before coming to the Dispatch Box and reading rubbish from the newspapers, thereby misleading the general public and his colleagues about the policies that the Government are pursuing with great excellence.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Is my hon. Friend aware that teachers, parents and pupils—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Ten years of bad manners on the Labour Benches.

Does my hon. Friend accept—*[Interruption.]*—that parents, teachers and pupils of Lancaster boys grammar school are delighted to have freed themselves from the stultifying control of Lancashire county council—*[Interruption.]*—which dislikes grammar schools and over the years has deliberately starved the school of funds?

Is my hon. Friend aware that Lancaster girls grammar school voted 10 days ago to opt out—*[Interruption.]*—and looks forward to substantial improvements if the application is approved?

Mrs. Rumbold: I am sure that my hon. Friend is absolutely right——

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not think that many hon. Members heard what our hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) said. It seems that the microphones were not working during her excellent supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: I think that the Minister heard, as she is giving the hon. Lady an answer.

Mrs. Rumbold: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the benefit of the House, I should say that my hon. Friend was rightly saying how pleased and delighted she was that there are schools in her constituency which are becoming grant maintained and she believes that the parents, teachers and pupils will benefit from the excellence of those schools continuing to run as self-governing schools.

Student Loans

10. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the administration of the student loans scheme.

Mr. Jackson: I visited the Student Loans Company yesterday. It is making excellent progress. The company is well on course and the decision to locate in Scotland has been fully vindicated. I am confident that the company will offer an efficient service to students and value for money to the taxpayer.

Mr. McFall: Why does the application form require two referees? Is it to vet student suitability or is it, as the chief executive of the Student Loans Company said at Strathclyde university recently, to help the company to keep contact throughout the period of the loan? If it is the latter, how will this work in practice?

Mr. Jackson: It is quite normal to seek referees in these cases, and it is not a qualification for having a loan. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not implying that the Student Loans Company should not make every effort to recoup for the taxpayer money lent to students to help to maintain them while they are studying.

Mr. Patrick Thompson: I congratulate my hon. Friend on the recently announced increase in the access funds to help students who may have particular difficulties. Can he say more about the administration of the funds and the present position?

Mr. Jackson: We hope that the funding councils will shortly be announcing the sum to be allocated to the institutions as access funds. The distribution of such funds by the institutions will be a matter for them to carry out at their own discretion. We believe that this will be a useful supplement to the resources that they have to assist their students.

Mr. Andrew Smith: Do not we face a serious accommodation crisis in polytechnics and universities as a consequence of this scheme, and in particular as a result of the Government's failure to announce the student loans regulations, details of the withdrawal of benefit or how the access funds are to operate, as the hon. Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) asked? As students and the institutions will pay the price for the Government's incompetence in introducing this ill-judged scheme, does the Minister owe it to them and to us to tell us what he intends to do about it?

Mr. Jackson: The regulations will be published shortly. I have already answered the question about access funds. I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman said.

Teacher Training

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures he is taking to encourage students to study shortage subjects during initial teacher training.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department has supported expenditure of more than £56 million since July 1986 on a range of measures to combat teacher shortages. These include a bursary scheme to improve recruitment to initial teacher training, a substantial programme of publicity and advertising, and new routes into the profession aimed particularly at mature entrants.

Mr. Field: My hon. Friend and I are both believers in the free market. How can it be right, under the law of supply and demand, that when the nation demands more mathematicians, physicists and engineers we offer students studying those disciplines the same level of student grant, supported by the same level of student loan, as students studying sociology and politics, neither of which are endangered species?

Mr. Howarth: I shall confine my answer to recruitment to teacher training. We have responded to the reality that my hon. Friend's analysis highlights. While in an ideal world every teacher who is contributing in the best way that he can in a school would be paid on a comparable scale, the demand for people with skills in mathematics, technology and science in our modern and highly successful economy is growing all the time. Unless we can offer bursaries to encourage people to train in those subjects, we shall not have enough of them, just as we shall not have enough of them unless we can offer incentive allowances to them once they are qualified. The Government's policies take full account of that.

Mr. Win Griffiths: In subjects such as physics, chemistry and mathematics, there is a shortfall in graduates going into teacher training for this year, next year and the year after. Does the Minister accept that the Government have failed in their attempts to get teachers for those important subjects?

Mr. Howarth: Once again the hon. Gentleman is determined to portray the teaching profession as being in a state of total collapse. The profession greatly resents that portrayal.

Let us consider the statistical realities. In 1989 recruitment to the secondary school shortage subjects of mathematics, physics, chemistry, craft, design and technology, and modern foreign languages was down by 0·5 per cent., but that does not represent a collapse. The hon. Gentleman will be aware from his membership of the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts that we have an energetic programme, particularly the bursary scheme that I have already mentioned, to sustain recruitment. We saw the response last year to the introduction of the new chemistry bursary. Recruits to initial teacher training in chemistry have risen sharply. This year, following our introduction of a bursary for teacher-students of modern languages, the signs are once again that recruitment is on the upturn.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Cummings: Will the Prime Minister find time this afternoon to consider the plight and anxiety of the many thousands of parents and carers of autistic and mentally handicapped children who are denied the mobility allowance? Does the Prime Minister understand the difficulties experienced by parents and carers when those children accompany them on public transport, given a somewhat unhappy and perhaps hostile public? Will the Prime Minister instruct her Secretary of State to put forward new regulations to enable the mobility allowance to be paid in such cases?

The Prime Minister: I hope that parents travelling with such children do not meet hostility, but sympathy from the public. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, we have increased the amounts spent on mobility allowance by a colossal extent, but I cannot accept that at present we should extend it to those people. Under our disablement provisions we have increased the provision made for people who look after highly disabled children at home enormously, to the extent of about £65 a week.

Q2. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Brown: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that in the event of Midland Montagu ever being given the opportunity to consider the cost of her Government's future economic policies it would never be able to say that those policies would cost an additional £50 billion of public expenditure per year.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question must be of the Prime Minister's responsibility, and I do not think that that was.

Mr. Brown: It is a matter for my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has been here a long time and he knows he must ask a question covering the Prime Minister's responsibility. She may answer that part which was of her responsibility.

The Prime Minister: I confirm that we are not likely to have policies which consist of spend now, pay later, which would only lead to much higher taxation, much higher borrowing and record inflation. Those were the Labour party's policies last time.

Mr. Kinnock: Is it true that the Prime Minister has resumed her habit of taking advice on economic affairs from Sir Alan Walters?

The Prime Minister: Sir Alan Walters is a friend of the family—*[Interruption.]*—and I shall continue to see him as a friend of the family. It is astonishing that the right hon. Gentleman is so small-minded as to ask such a simple question.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the Prime Minister recall that when her previous Chancellor resigned he said:

> "The successful conduct of economic policy is possible only if there is, and is seen to be, full agreement between the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Recent events have confirmed that this essential requirement cannot be satisfied as long as Sir Alan Walters remains your personal economic adviser"?

With that in mind, should not the Prime Minister be more careful in her choice of family friends?

The Prime Minister: If the right hon. Gentleman objects to my seeing family friends, he is getting worse than the KGB.

Q3. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hannam: Has my right hon. Friend seen the survey by Michael Porter, the Harvard economist, who has spent the past four years surveying the top 10 major economies? Is she heartened by his comment that there were few

economies which had been in such bad shape at the end of the 1970s and had recovered so quickly and dramatically as Britain's had during the 1980s?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I saw that excellent report. It pointed out that competitiveness and endeavour are the only way to bring prosperity and that we have brought prosperity to and have transformed Britain. We have record production, record investment, record incomes, record social services and a record number of jobs—an excellent record.

Mr. Ashdown: Does the Prime Minister recall that a week ago her Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said that he favoured a Europe in which we travelled in different directions, at different times and at whatever speed we liked, whereas yesterday her Foreign Secretary said that he wanted a Europe in which there was closer and closer integration? Which of those two contrary views represents Government policy?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman struggles hard with his questions. With the coming of the common market, the complete single market for which we have worked hard over many years, there will be much closer integration in trading matters. With regard to other matters, we wish to see the sort of Community in which national Parliaments, particularly Parliaments such as this, play an important role in agreeing the policy of the Community.

Q4. **Mr. Aitken:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Aitken: When the Cabinet comes later this week to its important decision on whether to subsidise the channel tunnel rail link, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that the difference between the subsidised Eurorail high-speed line and the unsubsidised British Rail faster service on the improved existing line is likely to be merely a shorter travelling time by 20 minutes or so? Can she confirm that that relatively small saving of time can be achieved only by a funding by the taxpayer of several hundred million pounds? Does she accept the view of many of us that, public expenditure priorities being what they are, that sort of project is not worth it?

The Prime Minister: I agree that a colossal subsidy would be required. We take the view that international services should not have subsidies. We do not subsidise international air services or international ferry services, and we do not believe that we should subsidise an international rail service.

Mr. Loyden: If the Prime Minister is so satisfied about the economic situation, why are the banks failing to support major companies which are collapsing day by day?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Gentleman looked at the regular reports, he would find that extensive borrowing facilities are still given by the banks to major companies.

Q5. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Bowis: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is the experience of her Government that as she has been able to bring tax rates down, so the wealth has been generated to increase the tax take, which could be spent on services and those in need? Does she agree that if tax rates were to increase again, money could not be spent on those in need? Will she find time in her busy day to spend an hour or six explaining that basic economic truth to the Leader of the Opposition?

The Prime Minister: The answer to the latter part of my hon. Friend's question is no—my hon. Friend has done that. I agree with my hon. Friend that the top 10 per cent. of taxpayers now not only pay more in absolute terms than they did, but pay a greater proportion of the income tax yield. It used to be 35 per cent., but the top 10 per cent. of taxpayers now pay 40 per cent. of the yield, which has helped considerably to increase the prosperity of this country and enabled us to spend far more on the social services.

Mr. Robert Hughes: Does the Prime Minister share the growing public anxiety at the number of former Cabinet Ministers who obtain well-paid jobs in industries they were responsible for privatising, and if not, why not?

The Prime Minister: Successive Government have taken the view that it is valuable to the people of this country that those who have great experience in public affairs put their talents at the service of industry and those who have experience of industry put their talents at the service of the Government. When Lord Wilson was asked a similar question, and was asked to apply minimum waiting periods, he replied:

"these matters are better left to the discretion and good sense of the individuals concerned."—[*Official Report*, 20 June 1968; Vol. 766, c. *171*.]

That has happened on both sides of the House and I share the noble Lord's views.

Q6. **Mr. Malins:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Malins: Does my right hon. Friend agree that traffic levels on roads in south London have reached intolerable levels and are likely to worsen in years to come? Does she further agree with many of my constituents in Croydon that efforts should be made to keep people off the roads and encourage them to use a much more efficient, faster and cheaper public transport system? Finally, will my right hon. Friend give consideration to a policy of road pricing, if appropriate, and also much tougher action against those who park so badly on many of our roads?

The Prime Minister: The level of traffic now coming into London reflects the enormous increase in prosperity. We are putting considerable resources—far more than ever before—into London Transport. We put about £540 million of investment this year into London Transport. Also, the Central line is being upgraded at a cost of £700 million. Those are large sums which should help to relieve the congestion on public transport.

Mr. Bernie Grant: Does the Prime Minister support the right of parents to remove children from school on the basis of the racial composition of the school?

The Prime Minister: If parents remove children from school, they usually do so because they are not satisfied with the education that the child is receiving. Every parent has the right to secure the best education possible for the child in the locality. The hon. Gentleman makes a great mistake to mix that up with racial matters.

Q7. **Mr. Wilkinson:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Wilkinson: Has my right hon. Friend had time this morning to study the reported remarks of Mr. Pöhl, president of the German Bundesbank, who suggested yesterday that there could be a two-speed progression to European monetary union? Does my right hon. Friend envisage that the United Kingdom will be in the first group with France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Benelux countries? If so, does not that mean that we should enter the exchange rate mechanism sooner rather than later?

The Prime Minister: With regard to the exchange rate mechanism, the conditions were laid down at Madrid. They have not changed. With regard to a two-speed Europe, I hope that there will not be a two-speed Europe. The House has made its views clear on Delors stage 3. It would have nothing to do with ceding that amount of sovereignty. After all, if one cedes sovereignty over all monetary and economic matters, one has ceded the fundamental core of the things that we are here to decide and, of course, that must be honoured. We have not yet got into discussing the EMU in the intergovernmental conference. I hope that it will listen to the views of the House and of this Government, and may perhaps be influenced by them.

Mr. Cunliffe: Does the Prime Minister agree that it is completely indefensible that the chairmen of the five major building societies in this country should receive a 50 per cent. increase in salary when thousands of mortgage interest payers are out of their minds and straining their wits trying to meet interest rates which are the highest in our history, combined with an evil poll tax?

The Prime Minister: I believe that those chairmen and those at the top of industry and business should lead by example, and they should take those matters into account when they are negotiating wages and salaries with their own people.

Q8. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Watts: In view of the exciting developments in eastern Europe, does my right hon. Friend agree that it is vital that the European Community keeps its doors to the east wide open, with the welcome mat clearly displayed, rather than becoming a much more exclusive club?

The Prime Minister: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. Most of us hope that eventually the countries of eastern Europe will join the European Community. At the first stage they will have association agreements, but it would be wrong for the European Community to tie up its arrangements, directives and bureaucracies so much that it was made impossible for others to join. That would be a great mistake.

USSR (Prime Minister's Visit)

3.30 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement on my visit to the Soviet Union from 8 to 10 June at the invitation of President Gorbachev, in the course of which I visited Moscow, the Ukraine and Armenia.

I held very constructive and friendly talks with President Gorbachev, which enabled us to take forward some of the matters discussed at the United States-Soviet summit the previous week. I also had talks with Prime Minister Ryzhkov, Defence Minister Yazov, together with the Soviet chiefs of staff, and the newly elected mayor of Moscow, Mr. Popov. In addition, I met a group of Jewish refuseniks.

I congratulated President Gorbachev on the very successful summit in Washington, and assured him of Britain's continuing support for policies of economic reform and greater democracy within the Soviet Union. We too easily forget how remarkable are the changes that have already taken place, and how much they have taken forward the cause of freedom.

The greater part of our discussion dealt with the future security of Europe following the unification of Germany. We are entering a new period in relations between east and west. That was underlined by the statements issued last week by the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Turnberry and by Warsaw pact Ministers in Moscow, which reflect the move away from confrontation towards a more co-operative relationship. President Gorbachev and I agreed that the presence of American forces in Europe is a stabilising factor, and that they should remain.

I explained our view that a united Germany should be a member of NATO—indeed, that would be the natural result of unification. We believe that it would contribute to Europe's stability. However, we recognised the sensitivities for the Soviet Union and had put forward various proposals to allay those sensitivities, including the strengthening of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as a forum for regular political consultation between east and west—though not as a substitute for NATO. We saw that forum as a means to involve the Soviet Union fully in discussion of Europe's future.

President Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union had not reached any final view on those matters. He too made a number of proposals, including a joint declaration between NATO and the Warsaw pact, underlining the defensive nature of both alliances, and signalling a rapprochement between them. We agreed that those matters should be pursued further between Foreign Ministers. I am confident that a solution that is satisfactory to everyone, and which enhances the security of Europe as a whole, can be found.

Our discussion also covered the situation in the Baltic states. President Gorbachev made it clear that he accepted the principle of self-determination but that it must be exercised through constitutional channels. He emphasised that the use of force or diktat would be contrary to everything else that he was trying to achieve in the Soviet Union. I said that we believed that the people of the Baltic states were entitled to the independence that they clearly wanted. As there was no difference about the principle of self-determination, I hoped that discussions could soon be started to resolve the many practical problems.

On economic matters, President Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union was now putting in place the infrastructure of a market economy. He recognised that that would be a massive task.

We also dealt with a number of regional and bilateral issues, including the question of emigration of Soviet jews. A list of outstanding refusenik cases was handed over to the Soviet authorities.

With Mr. Ryzhkov, I discussed the severe difficulties which face the Soviet economy and how the United Kingdom might help, in particular through management training and other advice, for instance on small business formation. We signed a number of agreements enlarging our economic and cultural co-operation. I was also able to announce the Government's decision to establish 10 new lectureships in Soviet studies at British universities.

With Marshall Yazov and his military colleagues, I made clear Britain's determination to keep a secure defence including nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union is of course carrying out substantial modernisation of its own nuclear weapons, of which it has a very large quantity. Indeed, even after Trident comes into service, our nuclear deterrent will be a smaller proportion of Soviet nuclear weapons than in 1970, when Polaris came into service.

I subsequently visited Kiev for the "British days in the Soviet Union" exhibition. Our firms are doing an excellent job in promoting their skills and technology in the Ukraine. The exhibit which depicts the life of an ordinary British family is most impressive, and is attracting enormous numbers of people. While in Kiev, I also addressed the members of the Ukraine's Supreme Soviet and answered questions. Further, I laid a wreath at the memorial of Babi Yar, where 30,000 Jewish women and children were massacred during the German occupation of the Ukraine.

In Armenia, I opened the new primary school for 400 children in Leninakan. That has been financed both by a contribution from the Government and by private donations, following the disastrous earthquake in 1988, and has been built by a team of British workmen. The gratitude displayed by the people of Leninakan and Armenia to Britain for this help was very moving.

The changes taking place in the Soviet Union offer an historic opportunity for the people of that country to move towards full democracy and a market economy. I believe that those are the most exciting developments to have taken place since the end of the second world war. At the same time, with German unification, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from eastern Europe and the prospect of an agreement to reduce conventional forces, we are entering a new and more positive period in Europe. Britain is playing a full and constructive part in both those processes, while always maintaining our sure defence through NATO.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): May I first thank the Prime Minister for her statement on her visit to the Soviet Union, which came at a particularly propitious time, in the same week as the Warsaw pact ceased to exist as a military alliance and NATO, in the terms of the Turnberry communiqué, extended the

"hand of friendship and co-operation"

to

"the Soviet Union and to all other European countries."

The Prime Minister has been right to praise President Gorbachev for his courage in pursuing domestic reform and changes in international policy. Did she tell President Gorbachev that her support for his efforts includes active steps to conclude further agreements to limit both nuclear and conventional weapons and forces in Europe?

Could the Prime Minister tell us what practical subscription to that process she offered to make? Did President Gorbachev take the opportunity of the Prime Minister's visit to give her any indication of the proposal that he has made in the Supreme Soviet today that Germany should be a member of both NATO and the changed Warsaw pact? If he did, what attitude did she express to that approach?

Will the right hon. Lady confirm that, at her meeting with the Soviet military high command she said that the British Government do not now regard the Soviet Union as an enemy and will support a joint declaration by NATO and the Warsaw pact, to the effect that they are both defensive organisations? Does the Prime Minister accept that, in order to build upon such a development, it would be sensible to establish the conference on security and co-operation in Europe as a continuing functional institution through which NATO member countries, the remaining Warsaw pact countries and those countries which belong to neither grouping can safeguard their own security, systematically foster the political, diplomatic and other exchanges which are the ingredients of common security for both west and east and promote the continuing advance of human rights?

In her discussions on the future of Germany, did the Prime Minister convey to President Gorbachev that there is a widespread view in the west that the future of Europe includes a Germany that is united, that is a member of NATO and that has a smaller Bundeswehr and no non-German forces in what has been the German Democratic Republic?

Did the Prime Minister also convey the fact that, as an alliance of free and democratic nations, NATO would not station nuclear weapons in Germany without the express consent of the German people? Now that the elections throughout the east of our continent are confirming and consolidating the changes of the last six months, will the Prime Minister join other western leaders and President Gorbachev in working with determination for a new structure of European security which meets the future needs of our continent and its peoples?

The Prime Minister: After we have completed the first round of conventional force talks, which must be completed in time for a new CSCE, it is expected that there may be a further round of talks. It is possible that aircraft may not be dealt with in the first round, but other talks may follow it on other station forces in Europe. As for Mr. Gorbachev's proposal that Germany could be a member of both NATO and the Warsaw pact, I think that I have made our position clear; it follows from the unification of Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany is a very staunch member of NATO. East Germany is joining and becoming unified with West Germany under article 23. It follows that the whole of Germany will continue to be a staunch member of NATO. That, I believe, is what Germany wants. It is certainly what NATO wants. It is right for NATO and it is right for the security of Europe. I doubt very much whether one country can be a member of two different pacts.

As for my discussions with the military, NATO has always been a defensive alliance. It is quite clear that the Warsaw pact is now altering its terms to become a defensive alliance. I made it clear that we should always need a sure defence. Each country will need a sure defence, because we never know where another threat may come from. There have been times when we have had to engage in out-of-area activities in order to protect our freedom at home and our trade routes. It will always be necessary, in my view—as I told them—to have a sure defence, including nuclear weapons, because there has been no deterrent anything like as strong as nuclear weapons to deter war.

The CSCE is a forum that includes 35 signatories from the United States and Canada right across central Europe to the Soviet Union. I made a speech about that a few weeks ago in Cambridge, when I proposed that we should enlarge the use of that forum and that foreign Ministers should meet regularly twice a year so that we could continually have discussions with people with whom we do not have regular discussions. I thought that that would be a way of including the United States, the Soviet Union and eastern European countries in regular discussions with us. NATO is to take on a more political role, so our transatlantic relationship will continue only through NATO. However, it will go right across the European divide. That divide is diminishing and we hope that it will diminish further, but that is a task for the CSCE.

With regard to the unification of Germany, a smaller Bundeswehr is under consideration as part of the reassurance that the Soviet Union will need if Germany is to remain a full member of NATO, as I believe she must. With regard to NATO, Germany is a member of NATO, so of course one could not station nuclear weapons in Germany without the consent of NATO. Nuclear weapons are stationed in Germany. They are a fundamental part of the present agreed NATO strategy of flexible response——

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): It is immoral and outrageous.

The Prime Minister: —a strategy that was endorsed at the Turnberry meeting of NATO. We believe in a war-free Europe and nuclear weapons have kept a war-free Europe. There is nothing immoral in that.

With regard to new defence structures for the whole of Europe, I made it clear at the press conference that I do not think that it is time for that. We must continue to work through NATO which has been our shield and our security, the Warsaw pact and the other forums that I have mentioned through CSCE and get the next conventional forces agreement signed so that we can have a CSCE conference, possibly by the end of this year.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. In order that I may call as many hon. Members as possible, may I ask for single questions please? Then I shall be able to accommodate most of the hon. Members who are standing.

Mr. Michael Marshall (Arundel): On a day when the House welcomes a delegation of parliamentarians from the German Democratic Republic, who in three weeks time enter into economic and monetary union throughout

[Mr. Michael Marshall]

Germany, will my right hon. Friend take this opportunity to wish them well and reiterate what she said earlier about the Government's commitment to membership of NATO which those German parliamentarians maintain they wish to enjoy?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I gladly respond to my hon. Friend's invitation. The economic and monetary union between the two Germanies comes into effect at the beginning of July. It will be a great step forward and will lead to unification. East Germany is perhaps the most fortunate of the eastern European countries in that it can plug straight into the structure of a market economy—its banking system, its legal system and its company law system. I hope that they will do extremely well and we wish them well when full unification occurs. We believe that they shall continue to be a full member of NATO.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): Does the Prime Minister agree that a reconstructed NATO would result in a United Kingdom again becoming the guarantor of European freedom? Does she further agree that a Royal Air Force base on the United Kingdom would be a vital factor in discharging that responsibility?

The Prime Minister: In NATO, we are all responsible for one another's security. Of course, as I made clear through my visit, we shall retain our own independent nuclear deterrent. Of course, it is absolutely vital that we maintain a full ability to have anti-submarine warfare and full air cover of the home base.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): We on this side of the House welcome my right hon. Friend's statement of her success in the Soviet Union. Can she tell us whether General Yazov understood as much as the political leadership of Russia understands that the Warsaw pact is dead and that he and his generals must start reducing their armaments promptly?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend knows, Russia has a colossal military might and she keeps very well up to date both her conventional weapons and her nuclear weapons. She has produced far more intercontinental ballistic missiles in the past year than the United States has. We understand that, but our reading of the Warsaw pact has always been that it consisted very considerably of Soviet Union military might. It is staying together at the moment as a very different pact, with a different military philosophy, which is one of defence. As my hon. Friend knows, the Soviet forces are expected to come out of Hungary and Czhechoslovakia fairly soon.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): I congratulate the Prime Minister on a successful visit to the Soviet Union. I would not wish in any way to detract from the warmth of her reception, but how she must wish and hope for the day when she gets the same reception in Liverpool and Leicester as she got in Leninakan.

Does the right hon. Lady not think it odd that, at Turnberry on 7 June, she was saying that we must have the most modern nuclear weapons that we can lay our hands on, placed as close to the Soviet Union as we can get them, whether the Germans want them or not, and the next day in Moscow she said that the cold war was over? Is she aware that she is giving the strong impression that the cold war may be coming to an end in her head, but it certainly is not coming to an end in her heart?

The Prime Minister: That is a very muddled question, but I shall do my level best to answer it. The right hon. Gentleman is well aware that we will always have to have a strong defence because we never know what may happen in the future—on the other side of Europe or in the middle east or because of attacks on our trade routes, without which we could not survive as a free country. Therefore, we must keep a strong conventional defence and a strong nuclear defence. There has never been a deterrent as strong as a nuclear deterrent to deter anyone who would wish to attack this country or its overseas territories. That was made very clear.

As for the reception given in this country, I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman would wish that his party had won one election since the last war, let alone three.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Did my right hon. Friend discuss with Mr. Gorbachev the problems of the defence of the Soviet Union, in view of the strengthened NATO which will come about as a result of the East Germans joining NATO? Surely that is the most outstanding problem, and one that has probably led to the slowdown in the conventional arms talks in Vienna. Did my right hon. Friend discuss that matter with Mr. Gorbachev?

The Prime Minister: We had hoped that the CFE talks would be completed. I believe that they will be completed in time for a CSCE conference this year. As I said in my statement, it is clear that the Soviet Union is sensitive to the change in the position of Germany, in that East Germany will now become a member of NATO as she unifies with West Germany. For that reason, we tried to find some ways to allay the Soviet Union's fears.

A reduction in the size of the Bundeswehr was one, but the United States and Britain are working on a number of other proposals. Obviously, people in a country that lost 27 million people during the last war are especially sensitive to this change. We know of our own apprehensions, so we should be able to understand theirs and make special provision to meet them—but not at the cost of a unified Germany not being in NATO.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): When the Prime Minister met Soviet Defence Minister Yazov and his chiefs of staff—a potentially crucial meeting—was the future of Soviet troops in East Germany touched upon? How receptive was what is, in effect, the Soviet defence council to the Prime Minister's assurances that an enlarged NATO will play a stabilising role, that no unilateral advantage is being sought and that now partnership can succeed confrontation?

The Prime Minister: We did not specifically discuss with Marshal Yazov the future of the troops in East Germany. As the hon. Gentleman knows, that matter has been discussed in several forums and between Foreign Ministers. Most people accept that there must be a transitional period during which Soviet forces remain in East Germany. It has been suggested that the cost of taking them from East Germany to quarters elsewhere should be met partly by the Federal Republic of Germany,

but that is a matter for Germany. As the hon. Gentleman knows, this is part of the process of alleviating the sensitivities of the Soviet Union.

I think that it is well understood in both alliances that the presence of American forces in Germany is a stabilising factor for peace. It is also understood in the Soviet Union that it is good for the Soviet Union to have American forces in Europe. I think that most of us believe that, had American forces stayed in Europe between world war 1 and 1939, there would never have been a second world war. Therefore, we must never make the mistake of doing without them again.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): My right hon. Friend was right to stress what this country can give in training the Soviet people and in the academic area to help them in their difficult transition away from communism. Did she go further with President Gorbachev and with Prime Minister Ryzhkov in explaining to them that the social market economy, as practised under her Government, is the only way to guarantee personal freedom and personal responsibility, and that any idea of a halfway house, with state direction, high taxation and social engineering, would be destined to failure, as we have seen under the British Labour party whenever it has had power?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. His point is now fully understood—certainly at the top in the Soviet Union and by many who want reforms to go even faster. I never expected to hear the virtues of Milton Friedman extolled as eloquently as I heard in the Soviet Union this time, both by President Gorbachev and by Mr. Popov. They know the extent of the changes that they must make. Indeed, President Gorbachev pointed out that it would require massive legislation—about 30 pieces of legislation—to set up the fundamental structures of banking, company law, private property and contract law, none of which they have. It is a massive task and they know precisely what they want to do. The question is how to do it and it is with that "how" that we can help them.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): When the Prime Minister visited the graves of 30,000 Jewish victims at Babi Yar, did it lead her to reflect on the recent decision of the House of Lords on the War Crimes Bill and to decide what our response should be in this House?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman will understand that it brought back all the fears and agonies as one thought of the things that those people had suffered —not in some bygone century, but in this century and in the lifetime of some of us. Of course one thought of it. One cannot go to such a place without thinking of it and without feeling it. The right hon. Gentleman will have noticed how I cast my vote in the free vote on the occasion to which he referred. I have not changed my mind.

Mr. W. Benyon (Milton Keynes): I welcome my right hon. Friend's success in Russia. Does she believe that this is the moment to consider the total demilitarisation of Germany, East and West, and the repatriation of the British Army of the Rhine?

The Prime Minister: I do not think that the total demilitarisation of Germany, East and West, would contribute to security. I should not be sure how long that could last. The only thing is a sure defence, with Germany in NATO. Germany has been a staunch member of NATO and, in particular, neither Chancellor Kohl nor Mr. Genscher has ever faltered. Our only guarantee of a sure defence is to have adequate weapons and nuclear weapons to deter anyone. Wars are caused by the weakness of nations, not by their strength.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Prime Minister aware that her offer of help with management training will have been welcomed, but that it is wholly inadequate for the economic crisis that would be engendered by the move to the market economy? Could she not offer something far more substantial in terms of economic assistance to the Soviet Union? If she does so, will she ensure that the funds are not taken from our allocation to the third-world countries, which is already inadequate?

The Prime Minister: Many western European countries, and the United States, are helping extensively with management training and with bringing people to our countries to see how we do it. It may not be a great deal, but it is a start——

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): Peanuts.

The Prime Minister: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would stop interjecting—[AN HON. MEMBER: "He has a peanut brain."] That may be right. The Soviet Union can have any advice that it wishes to have in how to construct company law and in how to set up banks. Such advice will also be given by Germany, by France and by the United States. The Soviet Union can also have any advice that it seeks on how to distribute the powers between the federal Government and the several republics. Hitherto, the Soviet Union has not had devolved powers in the way that the United States, Canada or Australia have had them. There is a wealth of both good will and practical help available, and we can help, too, with small businesses. We have also set up lectureships dealing with the Soviet Union because we did not feel that enough studies of the Soviet Union were being conducted in our universities.

In the end, however, the Soviets will have to do it themselves. It is one thing to train managers in how to manage here, within the whole structure of the free market economy; it is quite another for them to go back to the Soviet Union, where bureaucracy still reigns. That is why it is so important that the Supreme Soviet should get through the 30 main legislative measures that will enable a free market economy to begin to operate.

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Did my right hon. Friend discuss with the Russians the need for increased parliamentary and political answerability as the CSCE progresses? Does she feel, as the leader of the Liberal Democrats seems to feel, that the EEC is the best body to achieve that, or is it perhaps the Council of Europe, where many of those countries already have visitor status and in respect of which they have applied for full membership?

The Prime Minister: I did not discuss those specific matters with President Gorbachev. The freedom of speech in the Soviet Union and the challenges now made in respect of every policy would not have been possible five, or even three years ago. The atmosphere is very lively indeed. When I was in the Ukraine, I went to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine—a new Supreme Soviet, newly

[The Prime Minister]

gathered together—and the questions that its representatives asked me were no-holds-barred questions, which I answered with my customary diplomacy.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): Given the declared wish of Chancelllor Kohl and the West German coalition Government to complete political unification before Christmas and to hold all-German elections in that time scale, did the Prime Minister get the impression that President Gorbachev was prepared or able to deal with all the outstanding issues in the two-plus-four process, as well as all the external issues, to enable such a deadline to be met?

The Prime Minister: It is possible, but it will not be easy. I think that a great deal will depend on the measures that we can find to allay the Soviet Unions fears about the unified Germany being in NATO. Those measures are still in their infancy. I think that the idea only came up at the United States-Soviet summit. It was taken up at Turnberry and is being discussed by Foreign Ministers now. Obviously we shall have to try to find a mixture of measures to allay those fears. When that has been done, there will be the will to go ahead and solve the external aspects of unification. We are hopeful about getting the problem solved this year.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the way in which she handles British interests in foreign affairs and defence abroad; it is outstanding. I also congratulate her on the amazing recept ion that she received in Armenia. I do not think that any overseas visitor could have received a warmer welcome.

Can my right hon. Friend tell the House what specific discussions she had with President Mikhail Gorbachev and his colleagues about the Soviet economy, because it is upon the success of that economy that the continuation of perestroika and glasnost depends?

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend. I think that, by giving me such a reception, the Armenians were thanking Britain—giving us enormous thanks—for the school that we are giving them. It is a lovely primary school. They came over to see a similar school in this country and we have taken advice to ensure that the new school is earthquake-proof. It will probably be one of the best primary schools in the Soviet Union, and the Armenians are delighted with the future that it offers their children.

I discussed the Soviet economy with President Gorbachev and Mr. Ryzhkov. The Soviet economy has enormous problems, not only with production but with transport and distribution. For example, about 30 or 40 per cent. of its agricultural production never reaches the market because of the lack of storage and of a good system of distribution.

We are helping with that through the food processing part of our exhibition here. If we can do something about that on know-how lines to turn the agricultural produce into products that can be stored properly, that will be a great advance. President Gorbachev is aware that it is difficult to put the whole framework of freedom into place, including the introduction of private property. It is interesting that we were told in Armenia that only 7 per cent. of co-operative land is privately owned, but it produces 34 per cent. of the food.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): Did President Gorbachev say of his talks with President Bush that they could agree much deeper nuclear cuts if it were not for Britain and its nuclear weapons, particularly Trident, being a stumbling block? Did the Prime Minister tell President Gorbachev when Britain would directly join the disarmament process of offering nuclear cuts of our own?

The Prime Minister: The Labour party is always wanting to give up Britain's nuclear deterrent. Trident will have only four boats, one of which will always be on station. Indeed, for most of the time we will probably have two on station. That is vital for a nuclear deterrent. When Trident is fully commissioned, it will comprise the same proportion of the then reduced Soviet nuclear weapons following the strategic arms reduction talks as Polaris comprised when it first came into service. Even after the 50 per cent. cuts by the Soviet Union, Trident will not comprise a bigger proportion than Polaris, so much has the Soviet Union nuclear capability been increased since 1970. It is vital that we do not give up our nuclear deterrent.

Mr. William Powell (Corby): My right hon. Friend will be aware of how welcome is the announcement about extra lectureships in Russian and Soviet studies in our universities. That is long overdue, and we need to expand that area of learning. Was my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister able to discuss further the future of Berlin and in particular when the four powers will withdraw their military resources from Berlin and hand over air traffic control to the German authorities?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's welcome for the Government's decision on more lectureships in universities. We do not have enough here, and with the new situation developing, we need more for those people who want to study those subjects.

We did not go into detail over the two-plus-four talks over Berlin. I feel that those will not be resolved until we have the other possibility, to which I have referred, of allaying Soviet fears about unification. I made it very clear that we want the two-plus-four talks on Berlin to be fully agreed so that we can get a peace settlement. Any arrangements that we then make with the unified Germany would not be under the remnants of the occupation forces, but by virtue of a new agreement between each of us and the new Germany. We wish to get a full peace settlement, but it is quite a target to get it all completed by the end of this year.

Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): Does the Prime Minister accept that the whole House expresses gratitude to her for her statement that she believes that the Baltic states are entitled to the independence which they are seeking? Does she envisage that the CSCE process or the European political co-operation process can assist in monitoring the movement towards independence or guaranteeing that the outcome is as we in this House would all wish it to be?

The Prime Minister: It is vital that the talks on the practicalities should begin. The practicalities will be enormous. First, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the

territory which at present comprises Lithuania is not the territory that was the subject of the protocol between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. There will be problems about access to the sea for the Soviet Union and with regard to defence forces, weaponry and nuclear power stations there.

It is vital that they get down to detailed discussions; undoubtedly, all the economies are tied in together in a detailed way. We cannot say what will come out of those discussions. If they are related to the Helsinki accords, the hon. Gentleman will recall that we did not recognise the legal annexation of those three Baltic states, but we recognised the de facto annexation.

The Helsinki accords state that borders shall never be violated and that they can be changed only by agreement. To reach such an agreement, negotiations will have to take place between the Baltic states and the federal Government of the Soviet Union. I am sure that, if they need any advice or details of patterns of devolution or patterns of how the former, almost colonial, territories become independent, we shall be in a good position to give that advice.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Is it not highly unlikely, and contrary to all human experience and the lessons of history, that Mr. Gorbachev will be able to make the transition from dictator to elected leader of a democratic country? In those circumstances, would it not be unwise for us to rely on him being able to carry out his present intentions?

The Prime Minister: None of the events that have occurred would even have been started without him—it has been a fantastic achievement to get this far—and I believe and hope that he will be in a position to carry them through. It is a very unusual transition to freedom. Most demands for freedom come from the bottom, as they have done in some east European countries—for example, in Poland and Czechoslovakia—but sometimes the rulers at the top—for example, President Gorbachev, and in Hungary—have said, "Communism will not do. We must change it." In such cases, the movement has started from the top to try to persuade the people to change to a different way of life to achieve dignity and prosperity.

I agree that this is the largest change that will ever have come about, to go from a complete dictatorship to a free society, persuading many people who are not yet ready to take responsibility that they should take it and will be able to take it and that it will bring them not only dignity but greater prosperity. I think I would be a bit more optimistic than my hon. Friend.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Is not the real challenge for Mr. Gorbachev to get food into Soviet shops and consumer durable goods on to Soviet shelves? What initiative is the right hon. Lady taking, from the point of view of our Departments of State, in particular the Department of Trade and Industry, to ensure that joint ventures in every way and in every sector to realise that objective are established to expedite the transition in the Soviet economy?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I agree with the hon. Gentleman. The people want food and more goods in the shops and not to have to queue for so long every day to get the bare necessities of life. But that is easier to say than to do. They come here and look at our supermarkets and are absolutely amazed that it can be done.

I hope that we shall be able to help with advice on food processing, but they just do not have the structures for distribution. I refer not only to the roads and railways but to the whole infrastructure, including what is involved in getting food to wholesalers and then to retailers. They have none of that structure, and it will not be easy for them to get it.

We already have some joint ventures in the Soviet Union, as have some other European countries, and we signed two more while I was in Kiev. It is not easy for free enterprise to operate against a background of bureaucracy, when it has agreements under which it will supply part of the components to make a particular form of product and the Soviet Union will provide the others. Frequently, those which are due from the Soviet Union run very late—they are not used to doing things on time—so it is not easy to continue a joint venture and make a profit or even to plough back investments. A great deal remains to be done, and while we always give a certain formula for doing it, it is a question of translating that into practice, and that is rather more difficult.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on keeping human rights on the front burner at a time when she must have been preoccupied with matters of world peace and world economic security. Was she encouraged by the responses that she got from President Gorbachev to her questions about the future of the Russian refuseniks who have so wrongfully been refused the right to leave?

The Prime Minister: When we talked to President Gorbachev about human rights and the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate, he would say, "Look, they can go. Look at the numbers going. As far as I am concerned, there is no blockage." Nevertheless, there are in fact a number of cases of people who cannot get out because, under the present law, they might have to obtain the signed agreement of some of their relatives, and that is not always forthcoming.

Refuseniks with whom I had a meal and a meeting told me that some of them had been trying to get out for nearly 15 years and that their exit visas had been blocked. We have put their cases to the Soviet Union and it is clear that another law has still to go through the Supreme Soviet, which is what President Bush is waiting for in return for his trade agreement. We must look carefully at that law to see that it will gain the exit visas of those who have wanted to come out for so long.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): I thank the right hon. Lady for her concern with the refuseniks and especially for her visit to Babi Yar, and for her staunch support for the effort to have our war crimes legislation changed, which she has reiterated today. Did she discuss the worries about the anti-Semitic activities of Pamyat with President Gorbachev, and if so, what did he reply?

The Prime Minister: I did not discuss them on this occasion, but I have talked about them on previous occasions. At that time we were pleading for more synagogues to be able to have their normal times of worship and the usual equipment and apparatus that they need for them. I have also talked to Mr. Gorbachev about

[The Prime Minister]

the increasing freedom of speech that has been given to the Soviet Union, which has, alas, brought out many hatreds and much venom. When meeting some of the refuseniks before, I learned that many of them are having a much more difficult time now than before. That has led to many Jewish people applying to leave the Soviet Union who would never have wanted to leave because it has been their home for generations; some of them are fearful for the future and for their children's future.

This is one of the great tragedies: freedom can be used sometimes for good and sometimes for evil. We have raised this matter on previous occasions, and of course I spoke to the present refuseniks about it.

Sir Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): Following my right hon. Friend's visit to the Ukraine and Armenia, does she feel able to share with the House any assessment that she has made of the strength of demand for more self-determination in those and other republics; and how does she address Britain's interest? Is it served by the retention and maintenance of a strong unitary Soviet Union or by the flourishing of a greater independence?

The Prime Minister: It is obvious, as one goes about and sees many people after two or three years of increasing freedom of speech and an increasing capacity to vote for different people and even for different parties, that many aspiring politicians have come to the fore and are now real politicians who want to exercise real power and real responsibility. It is obvious that, in the republics, they are seeking far greater devolution of powers than they have now.

The trouble is that the centralisation of powers in Moscow has been total. Although they have had Governments in the republics, they have not really been able to set their own budgets or exercise much power. Undoubtedly, as I saw in the Ukraine and elsewhere, they want a clear sign of what powers remain with the federation and what powers go to the separate republics. There are many models from which they can choose; they can look at the United States, Canadian or Australian models—*[Laughter.]*—or at our own. They have in fact to learn to make a constitutional law for the first time. That comes easier to us; we have made such laws for many countries, and we too could help the republics if they wanted that. There is a strong move towards more powers for the separate republics.

Mr. Dennis Cannavan (Falkirk, West): In view of President Gorbachev's considerable movement of position towards a united Germany, why is the Prime Minister stubbornly insisting that a united Germany must be a full member of NATO and its integrated military structure? Instead of continuing an outdated but nevertheless potentially dangerous confrontation between nuclear powers, would it not be better to work out a coherent and more positive strategy for all European security, involving the Soviet Union and eastern European countries, and to work towards a nuclear-free Germany, a nuclear-free Europe and eventually a nuclear-free world?

The Prime Minister: To borrow a phrase that has been used several times, first on this side of the Atlantic and then on the other, if one had alliances with no nuclear weapons, one would be making Europe free for conventional war. Everyone should know that conventional weapons, however strong, are not enough to stop war. We knew that from world war 1 and world war 2. Since the end of the last war, we have had the longest period of peace in Europe for centuries. That has been achieved because nuclear weapons have stopped any war, and they have therefore been the greatest guardians of the peace. I believe that we must keep them.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to have regard for the subsequent business. I shall allow questions to continue for a further 10 minutes—that will allow a full hour of questions to the Prime Minister—and then we must go on.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): During the Prime Minister's successful visit to the Soviet Union, did she and President Gorbachev discuss the possibility of a visit by Her Majesty the Queen?

The Prime Minister: We did not discuss it on this occasion. We have it in mind for a future occasion.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): The Prime Minister gave an interesting response to my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on his question about Trident, on which she touched during her speech. In the light of the decision of President Bush not to modernise the Lance missile, and given the fact that the technology for Trident comes from the United States, has she envisaged a situation in which President Bush and Mr. Gorbachev might decide upon the fate of the Trident missile? Is that not a good enough reason, among other reasons, for us to participate in overall negotiations for the reduction of nuclear weapons?

The Prime Minister: No. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the association between the United States and this country over atomic weapons is of very long standing. In negotiations, it has always staunchly stuck up for our view point and for the special relationship that it has with us. We shall need United States technology for the modernisation of Trident, as we needed it for the delivery mechanism of Trident. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the nuclear warhead is our production.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): Can my right hon. Friend confirm the rumour that, during several hours of talks, President Gorbachev did not once use the word "socialism"? If so, next time she sees him, will she ask President Gorbachev to make available someone from his office to come to London to see whether similar enlightenment can be injected into the Labour party?

The Prime Minister: We were talking pretty nearly all the time about the economy—the free market economy, the necessary changes, its desirability—and I cannot remember one reference to socialism. That is because President Gorbachev is looking to the future.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): Can the Prime Minister throw light on press reports about the much-needed £7 billion aid package to the Soviet Union from the western countries? If so, what part do she, her Government and British business expect to play in this? Would not her efforts be better directed at such an aim rather than at modernisation of nuclear weapons, which every opinion poll in West Germany shows the German people do not want on their soil?

The Prime Minister: It is always difficult to throw light on any press reports. I think that the hon. Gentleman is referring to a report to which I partially referred—that there has been talk of West Germany helping considerably with finances to the Soviet Union, particularly for the considerable number of troops that are in East Germany, which would have to stay for a transitional period and then move back to different quarters in the Soviet Union, and possibly adding some more to that. We do it through our know-how agreements with eastern European countries as well. There is also a line of credit.

The hon. Gentleman denigrates nuclear weapons, but it is only because this country was staunch on the stationing of nuclear weapons and on Pershing and cruise and then President Reagan was staunch on the strategic defence initiative that, finally, the Soviet Union was made to realise that it could never win on the latest technology of military machines. It was that staunchness that brought the Soviets to that realisation. It would be far better to try to improve the Soviet economic performance by a market economy than carry on with the terrible dead hand of socialism.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): During the course of her most successful visit, did my right hon. Friend have the chance to discuss with President Gorbachev the western frontier of the Soviet Union—that part that takes in the piece of Poland that the Soviet Union won through the disgraceful Soviet-Nazi German pact of 1939? Did she perhaps suggest to him that, since it is now 50 years since the war ended, it is time for the Soviet Union to give up any vestige or gain that came from the disagreeable agreement between those countries? Could I press my right hon. Friend a shade further—

Mr. Speaker: No. One question, please; more than that is not fair.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: May I ask whether my right hon. Friend discussed with President Gorbachev allowing that part of Poland a measure of self-determination?

The Prime Minister: No. We did not go further than discussing the Baltic states. Inevitably one makes reference to the western part of the Ukraine, which also came from Poland as part of the 1939 agreement. That part that came from Poland consisted of Ukrainians who previously came from the Ukraine, and they were probably pleased to get back to the Ukraine.

My hon. Friend knows that the history of central Europe has been a turbulent one and much land has been first the possession of one country and then another. The point of the Helsinki accord signed in 1975 was to stabilise existing frontiers and not to change them at all except by agreement. That is why we have said that, obviously, negotiations must start with the Baltic states. I do not know of any suggested change of the western Ukranian border. I have not heard of any because itself was partly in Poland, then in the Ukraine, then in Poland, then in the Ukraine. I am afraid that there have been many difficult periods in that territory.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): When the Prime Minister was in the Soviet Union selling second-hand capitalism, did she explain to the ordinary working-class people of that country about the cardboard city in the heart of London, about the hundreds of thousands of young people in this country who turn to the blind alley of drugs, about the universal hatred of the poll tax, or about the millions of ordinary, decent working-class families in this country for whom capitalism cannot provide a decent standard of living? Is she aware that the one thing she has in common with President Gorbachev is that, if they stood this week for direct election, neither of them would have a chance of winning?

The Prime Minister: Second-hand capitalism is infinitely more valuable than first-hand socialism, which gives a rotten deal to the ordinary citizen. It denies them freedom and prosperity. People came to the British exhibition in the Ukraine, which was a carefully researched exhibition of a person working in a factory and his wife, the housing in which they lived and the goods and car that they had. Those who visited the exhibition were absolutely amazed; they said that the truth had been kept from them and that if that was capitalism, they wanted it.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): During her very successful visit, was the Prime Minister able to give any assurance to Mr. Gorbachev that Britain would not sign any treaty incorporating East Germany into the European Economic Community if the automatic consequence of that would be to erect the common external tariff and import levies between East Germany and east Europe? Does she agree that any such move would hold back freedom of trade instead of improving it because at present east Europe uses the inner-German trade agreement to facilitate trade? Was she able to give any assurance on that important issue for people?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend never misses an opportunity. As he knows, the unification of Germany will come about through article 23, under which the people of East Germany can apply automatically to join West Germany. I agree that that will cause us problems with the goods from East Germany, which are essentially still made under the Communist system, highly subsidised and without any of the structure of a market economy. We have to be wary of those. In addition, we must make special arrangements and establish a transition period for the common agricultural policy. We hope that those derogations will be as short as possible, but goods from communist countries made under a completely different set of rules cannot circulate freely in the Community.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): The Prime Minister rightly places heavy emphasis on the importance of NATO, but does she accept that France is a member of the treaty, not of the organisation, which creates some difficulty for NATO in carrying out its operations?

Will the Prime Minister seriously reconsider the problems of institutionalising the CSCE? Europe already has institutions, such as the Council of Europe, the Western European Union and the EEC, but the difference between them and an institutionalised CSCE is that, in those other institutions, parliaments are represented, whereas in an institutionalised CSCE only Governments will be represented, and that would mean a serious diminution in the democratic nature of the discussions that would take place.

The Prime Minister: France left the military structure of NATO under de Gaulle, and NATO's headquarters moved from Paris to Brussels. I have always thought that that was a retrograde move and hoped that one day France

[The Prime Minister]

would rejoin. However, we exercise increasingly frequently with French troops and co-operation with NATO is improving greatly, but it is not a recipe that I would advise anyone else to follow.

The CSCE is the only structure in all those that the hon. Gentleman mentioned which embraces the western Atlantic countries—the United States and Canada—right across to the Soviet Union. The others do not. Therefore, we think it much better for its Foreign Ministers to meet more regularly so that America the Soviet Union and the European countries—Nordic countries, west European and central European countries—can meet together. I do not think that it would be possible to have a great amalgam of parliamentary occasions—35 countries would be far too many. I have not forgotten the role of the Council of Europe. It is evident that east European countries—Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia—could be ready to join the Council of Europe long before they were ready to join the EC.

BILL PRESENTED

Former Ministers (Interests)

Mr. David Winnick presented a Bill to prohibit former Ministers of the Crown, within a period of five years after leaving office, from accepting any employment with or payment from a company which was privatised while they were in office: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 6 July and to be printed. [Bill 159.]

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Mr. Speaker: With permission, I will put together the two motions relating to European Community documents.

Ordered,

Veterinary medicines

That European Community Documents Nos. 4228/89 and COM(90)135, relating to the licensing of veterinary medicines, be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents.

Veterinary checks

That European Community Document No. 8062/88 and the Supplementary Explanatory Memoranda submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 13th December 1989 and 26th March and 27th April 1990, concerning veterinary checks in intra-Community trade in live animals with a view to the completion of the internal market, be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

Development Control (Protection of Greenfield Sites)

4.33 pm

Mr. Terry Lewis (Worsley): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to protect from development greenfield sites in suburban areas, for the substitution of opportunity sites where there exists a presumption, in district plans, to build.

The Bill would protect green field sites in our urban areas from avoidable development. Many hon. Members represent constituencies in which there is an ever-present threat to precious open space of development by private developers. Recently, the greed of those developers and the building industry has superseded the interests of the communities that they seek to exploit. I do not for one moment suggest that private house building should be unnecessarily constrained or, in the context of the Bill, reduced dramatically. However, a balance between the private and public sectors must be struck in the interests of cohesive development and for the optimum social provision in existing communities.

Of course, that prospect is anathema to the substantial vested interests involved, which the Government have so far failed to address effectively. The result has been the consumption of green fields on a grand scale and their substitution with bricks and concrete in areas where open land is a precious asset for people who live in the vicinity. That is the main issue that my Bill seeks to address. It addresses others, but I regard that issue as the most useful starting point.

Historically, there was a series of planning safeguards designed ostensibly to protect the public from the eccentric development about which I speak. The county structure and local plans, shortly to be replaced by unitary development plans, should have been adequate to the task of developing our towns and cities in the interests of people. The former failed, and I fear that unitary development plans will fail too, unless a proper framework of law is provided outside the UDP proposals which is designed to tackle at the root one of the principal causes of urban sprawl.

My Bill addresses that problem by focusing attention specifically on opportunity or windfall sites, as they are called. These are usually sites in inner urban areas, all of which could not have been considered for housing a few short years ago. Let me say at once that I accept that the need to include windfall sites in any overall development plan is recognised by local planning authorities. I also note that the previous Secretary of State for the Environment also tentatively recognised that fact. However, in his draft response, for example, to the Greater Manchester planning conference, he qualified his position by saying: "authorities should maintain a general presumption against the release of peripheral open land unless this can be shown to be consistent with urban regeneration, and secondly, that they should ensure that the calculation of the contribution of windfall sites to housing land should be realistic."

That signals a hopeful note, but for me it does not go nearly far enough.

In my constituency, statutory local plans came into force in 1982. Now, eight years on, aside from other factors about which I am profoundly dissatisfied, several green field sites have been unnecessarily lost to housing development. That has happened precisely because there exists only a presumption to calculate windfall sites in the

land supply equation. In those eight years, many sites have become available for housing development. It could not have been foreseen that those sites would become available. In my area, three cotton mills, a colliery site, a British Coal workshop and even a cricket field, all of which fulfilled their original purpose in 1982, have or will soon become housing developments.

Therefore, it is not a matter of calculation. Those changes were unpredictable and defy calculation. It is a matter of putting in place procedures which will effectively take into account windfall sites. I argue that that can be done only at the time when the windfall occurs. That is the sole purpose of my Bill.

To put the issue beyond all doubt, I propose that, as soon as a windfall occurs, an equal deduction should be made from previously allocated peripheral green field sites. That would be done on the basis of substitution, not calculation. It would be house for house, acre for acre. Only in that way will the interests of the local community be met.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Terry Lewis, Mr. Gareth Wardell, Mr. Roland Boyes, Mr. Martin Redmond, Mr. George J. Buckley, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. Tom Cox, Mr. Ronnie Campbell, Mr. Bob Cryer, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Lawrence Cunliffe and Mr. Ken Eastham.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
(PROTECTION OF GREENFIELD SITES)

Mr. Terry Lewis accordingly presented a Bill to protect from development greenfield sites in suburban areas, for the substitution of opportunity sites where there exists a presumption, in district plans, to build: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 July and to be printed. [Bill 160.]

Orders of the Day

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call upon the Secretary of State for Scotland, I must announce to the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

4.40 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I have read the reasoned amendment which the Opposition tabled and which you, Mr. Speaker, have selected for debate. I notice from its contents that it appears that the greatest objection that the Opposition have to this miscellaneous provisions Bill is that it consists of miscellaneous provisions. Perhaps that is not a surprising observation by the Opposition, and naturally we look forward to the constructive contribution that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) will make.

This is an important measure covering a wide range of proposals that affect the law and practice in Scotland. It has three major parts and some minor, but useful, provisions. It has already been the subject of extensive debate in another place and some important and helpful amendments have been made. However, the central purposes remain. They are, briefly: to introduce new arrangements for supervising charities in Scotland; to improve choice in legal services; and to make important adjustments to the law on liquor licensing.

Part I of the Bill will establish an improved system for the supervision of charities in Scotland. In July 1988, I issued a consultative memorandum, "Supervision of Charities in Scotland", the response to which confirmed my view that the current arrangements for supervising charities are inadequate for modern needs. It is not widely appreciated that Scotland does not have—and never has had—a Charity Commission. In Scotland, bodies that wish to be recognised as charitable in order to qualify for tax relief must apply to the Inland Revenue for confirmation that their objects are charitable.

The difficulty with the current arrangments is not that the Inland Revenue is in any way unsuited to the role of granting charitable recognition. It was evident from the comments made by the numerous charitable bodies that the Inland Revenue's claim branch in Edinburgh has established a considerable reputation for its knowledge and helpfulness in dealing with organisations seeking recognition.

The difficulty with the current arrangements is that the Inland Revenue's dealings with charities are governed by a rule of absolute confidence. The Revenue cannot so much as acknowledge to a member of the public, or to any official body, that it has recognised a body as being charitable. Nor is there any body to which it can report instances that it may discover of wrongdoing by a charity where such wrongdoing is not related to a tax matter.

[Mr. Malcolm Rifkind]

For charities to sustain the important function that they play in Scottish society, they must retain the confidence of the public who support them. The best way of maintaining that confidence and good will is to ensure that every charity is openly accountable for the manner in which it conducts its affairs and makes use of the money that it has under its trust. Charities are rightly held in high esteem, but the charitable world, like any other, can attract rogues—and, as elsewhere, one bad apple can spoil the barrel. In instances where misuse of charitable funds takes place, or where serious mismanagement occurs, it is right that there should be provision for the affairs of the charity to be investigated and for those responsible to be brought to account. Those views are not exclusively mine—they are strongly held in the voluntary sector itself.

With those objects in view, clause 1 of the Bill makes provision that will enable the Inland Revenue to disclose to members of the public the names and addresses of bodies that it has recognised as being charitable and to pass to my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate information about any non-charitable activity among such bodies. That is a most important provision. For the first time in Scotland, members of the public will have a right to be informed which bodies have received recognition as charities for tax purposes. The clause also requires any charity to provide, for a reasonable fee, to anyone who requests it, a copy of its explanatory document—that is, its trust deed or other document setting out its aims and objectives.

Clause 2 will prevent bodies that have not been recognised by the Inland Revenue—or, if they are established in England and Wales, by the Charity Commission—from representing themselves as charities to the Scottish public. It provides that bodies which have not been recognised and which represent themselves as charities shall be guilty of an offence.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): As to the publication of names and addresses and other information about charities, the Secretary of State will be aware that there is some concern that a full description of the purposes and functions to which the money that the charity receives is applied, if it is a grant-giving charity, may not be disclosed. If it is a charity that is a recipient of grants, again its purposes may not be properly known. Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman say whether all such information will be publicly available in future, and whether it will be possible to publish a directory of grant-giving and grant-receiving charities in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: As to the hon. Gentleman's initial point, one is likely to find out most about a charity's prime purpose not so much from its constitution, which is likely to be widely drafted—that has been the experience of most charitable organisations—but from the title of the charity and how it distributes its income. Because the charity's accounts will be available, one will know how the sums received by a charity are being allocated. In addition, we have said that we shall be happy to see co-operation with, for example, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, if it wishes to draw up a directory of the type that the hon. Gentleman mentions, to provide the additional information to which he attaches importance.

Clauses 3 and 4 place a duty on charities in Scotland to keep proper accounting records and to make available to members of the public, on payment of a reasonable fee, copies of their annual accounts. Those accounts must include a report of the bodies' activities over the year. By those provisions, individual members of the public will, for the first time, be able to discover in respect of any charity in Scotland what its charitable purposes are and what it has done to promote those purposes. Ready, direct, public access to information provides the key to the Bill's supervisory provisions.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Will credit unions fall within the provisions of that part of the Bill?

Mr. Rifkind: I think not, although I shall check that I should not have thought that a credit union would be recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue for tax-raising purposes. Unless it is, it would not normally meet that criterion. However, I shall certainly have that point checked.

Clauses 5 to 7 are concerned with the investigation of mismanagement and the penalising of offenders. They enable my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate to carry out investigations within Scotland where it appears that the organisers of particular charities have been guilty of mismanagement or other wrongdoing. They also give the Lord Advocate powers to petition the court for orders remedying and preventing the continuance of abuse, and for orders imposing penalties on those responsible.

Clauses 8 and 9 concern a different aspect of reform. The doctrine, known as cy pres, or approximation, enables a public trust whose purposes have failed to petition the Court of Session for approval of a scheme authorising the application of trust funds to a purpose as near as possible to the original purpose. Unlike the position in England and Wales, the cy pres procedure is in Scotland available only where it is no longer possible to carry out the trust's purposes in the manner prescribed. Clause 8 widens the opportunity for reorganisation by enabling application to be made to the court where the trust's purposes have become obsolete or lacking in usefulness.

Clause 9 goes yet further by providing procedures that will enable small public trusts having an annual income of not more than £5,000 to reorganise without the necessity of seeking court approval at all. Clause 10 enables certain very small trusts no longer capable of achieving the purposes for which they were established to spend capital in order to achieve their charitable purposes. Taken together, those provisions will go a long way towards unlocking charitable funds and enabling them to be applied to better effect in modern society.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Does the Secretary of State accept that one of the unexpected benefits of what is a wholly welcome provision is that health boards might be able to divert money given to them in trust in order to bail themselves out of financial difficulties? The right hon. and learned Gentleman may think of Lothian health board, for example, which expects to make an adjustment to its various trusts to help itself out of its present difficulties. Will the Bill contain a safeguard to ensure that the purposes of trusts will not be altered in such a way as to substitute private trust funds for public funding—which I am sure he agrees is the basis on which health boards ought to be funded?

Mr. Rifkind: I agree with the hon. Gentleman, and if he looks at clause 9 he will see that that procedure for reorganising the expenditure of the trust without the court's approval applies only to trusts with an annual income of not more than £5,000. We are talking about small trusts and trusts with a more substantial financial establishment, which continue to require the approval of the courts if they wish to depart from the original purposes of the trust. Therefore, I do not think that in practice the considerations to which the hon. Gentleman referred are likely to be affected in any significant way by the provision.

I trust that I have said sufficient to outline the broad purposes of part I of the Bill. It has been designed to meet the particular needs and circumstances in Scotland and to take account of concerns expressed not least by the charities themselves.

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): The Secretary of State will be aware that the word "charity" has a much broader definition under the law of Scotland than it enjoys under the law of England and Wales. It seems to me that a consequence of clause 2, as proposed, is that if, for example, the trustees of a local hall committee in a small community were to seek to raise money, describing what they were doing as being for charity, because that organisation was not a recognised body, those trustees would be guilty of a criminal offence. Does not the Secretary of State feel that that is a sledgehammer to crack a nut, which thus far does not appear to have caused much difficulty?

Mr. Rifkind: I think that the hon. and learned Gentleman would be well advised to consult the charities, which believe that the provisions are highly desirable. We are concerned about any organisation, large or small, which presents itself to the public as an organisation with charitable purposes, which may be seeking the tax advantages that go with charitable status and which seeks to persuade the public to divest themselves of certain resources to help the objects of the charity. The provisions are applied to protect the public from unscrupulous organisations. I believe that all responsible organisations will be only too happy to welcome the provisions, as indeed those representing charities have already done.

Mr. Foulkes: I want to mention another issue that relates to part I of the Bill, before the Secretary of State moves on. He will be aware that in Scotland, especially in Edinburgh, there are several trusts, such as the George Heriot Trust and the George Watson Education Board, among others, which run private schools. What provisions of this part of the Bill will be applicable to those organisations?

Mr. Rifkind: In so far as those are charitable trusts that currently receive tax benefits recognised by the Inland Revenue, the Bill applies in its entirety to them, in the same way as it would to any other charity.

Part II of the Bill deals with legal services. This part of the Bill is based on the conclusions reached after considering responses to the two consultation papers: "The Practice of the Solicitor Profession in Scotland", and "The Legal Profession in Scotland".

As I emphasised in that statement, the fundamental objective of the reforms is, within the Scottish legal tradition, to increase choice for the client of legal services, while at the same time preserving and, where possible, improving, consumer protection mechanisms. The main areas for increased choice are conveyancing and executry work and representation in litigation. Hon. Members will be aware that a number of amendments were made in another place that have strengthened the provisions in part II, which deal with protection of the clients of conveyancing and executry practitioners. I am determined that any new providers of legal services will compete with solicitors on a fair basis, and that clients will enjoy no less protection than that offered by solicitors.

As the House would expect, I have attached importance to the distinctive Scottish legal system, and I believe that the provisions fully reflect that. For example, the mechanisms to allow solicitors to qualify for rights in the Supreme Courts build both on existing rights in the sheriff courts and on the essential requirements for practice as an advocate.

The establishment of a unitary regulatory body, the Scottish Conveyancing and Executry Services Board, to oversee the registration and regulation of conveyancing and executry practitioners, has been widely welcomed. The board will, after an initial period, become self-financing and will fund its activities from the fees that it charges to those registered with it. The board will be an independent body charged with certain statutory functions. Its functions will apply to a very wide range of practitioners, from sole practitioners to large institutions, and it will require to establish its own distinct identity without showing bias towards any one group.

Contrary to what some have attempted to suggest, this part of the Bill does not allow just anyone to undertake conveyancing work. Prospective practitioners will have to comply with stringent registration requirements, to be set out in regulations. Once registered, a conveyancing practitioner will be bound to comply with a code of conduct and practice, also to be prescribed in regulations. Finally, disciplinary sanctions are available against those who fail to comply, the deterrent effect of which will be at least as great as that of the sanctions attaching to solicitors. The board's powers will enable it to revoke registration if necessary.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman explain why he has not brought forward a code of conduct, which could be included within the primary legislation and which would be much more acceptable to the legal profession?

Mr. Rifkind: Certainly there are some matters that require statutory force, but I should be reluctant to include them in primary legislation because, by its very nature that would require further primary legislation if any subsequent amendment or improvement were required. Therefore, while it would be appropriate to spell out what is proposed and intended, the profession would welcome the flexibility implied by secondary legislation in respect of any future improvements in the light of subsequent experience.

It has been suggested——

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): Before we leave the subject of conveyancing, has the Secretary of State any plans to study surveyors and the inadequacies of the service that they provide?

Mr. Rifkind: I should be interested to hear what the hon. Lady has to suggest. I have expressed views in the

[Mr. Rifkind]

past about certain aspects of surveying as it affects house purchase in Scotland. I look forward to the hon. Lady's comments on that subject, which we shall study in some detail.

It has been suggested that there is no demand for the changes to the provision of conveyancing services in Scotland. Attention has been drawn to the high levels of customer satisfaction that opinion surveys have revealed for conveyancing work undertaken by solicitors. I readily accept that the solicitors' profession in Scotland provides an extremely high standard of service, and has much of which it can be proud. Whether or not other conveyancing practitioners can offer a service as attractive as that provided by solicitors is something that the public should be able to ascertain for themselves.

It is slightly misleading to speak of breaking a monopoly on conveyancing services. Although solicitors, in every practical sense, have had a monopoly, that is the result of the reservation to solicitors of the right to charge for undertaking a relatively small part of the conveyancing transaction. That restriction makes it an offence for persons other than solicitors to draw or prepare the conveyancing deed if they are doing it for a fee.

Under current law it is theoretically possible, therefore, for a person to conclude missives and do everything else involved in a conveyancing transaction, save preparing the actual deed. Nevertheless, the narrow legal restriction has had the wider practical effect of reserving almost all conveyancing business to solicitors. I readily grant that there is a public interest in the quality and accuracy of our registers of deeds and titles to land. That is one reason why it would be wrong to allow simply anyone to undertake conveyancing, but it is not sensible or historically accurate to assert that that restriction is or was designed to perform other functions such as guaranteeing independent advice for house buyers. While that may be one consequence in the existing framework within which conveyancing services are offered, the Government do not believe in forcing clients to use a single set of service providers when others could offer a competent service within a framework which provides adequate customer protection.

Building societies or others will be required to employ suitably qualified persons to provide interviews with each prospective client and to oversee every conveyancing transaction. A "suitably qualified person", in this instance, means either a solicitor or, in due course, a qualified conveyancer. Solicitors who join the employ of, say a building society do not thereby lose any of their competence in conveyancing. I am firmly of the view that all those qualified and capable of offering conveyancing services should be able to do so, subject of course to rigorous consumer safeguards. Part II of the Bill satisfies that objective, and provides clients with greater choice, while maintaining and sometimes enhancing existing safeguards.

I have been concerned throughout the Bill to ensure that a level playing field is established between solicitors and other providers of legal services—*[Interruption.]* The phrase has regular contemporary currency and I knew that it would be clear to the House exactly what I intended to convey.

I am particularly concerned that there is no threat to the network of rural solicitors' offices. A number of measures, both in the Bill and in regulations to be prescribed in future, will serve to prevent unfair competition and thus diminishing the availability of legal services in rural areas. Those measures include the requirement, to be included in regulations made under clause 15, that all conveyancing practitioners offer all prospective clients an interview with a suitably qualified person, either close to the property being conveyed or close to the client's home or place of work. It will prevent anyone from offering conveyancing services from his head office without establishing face-to-face contact between the conveyancer and the client.

Such regulations will also require conveyancing practitioners to price each service separately. To support the measures, clause 81 of the Courts and Legal Services Bill makes it an offence for a provider of lending services to make any loan conditional on the purchase of another service or to make any service available only if the client takes out a loan.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): As the Bill allows anybody to go into partnership with a licensed or qualified conveyancer, why does my right hon. and learned Friend think that only building societies, banks and institutions of that nature will take advantage of the Bill? If it is on a level playing field, why could not hairdressers say, "While you are having your hair cut, why not arrange to buy your house?"?

Mr. Rifkind: That may be a theoretical possibility, if those people are able to meet the statutory requirements. Whether they would be likely to have much success in attracting clients on that basis is at the least doubtful.

The measures should serve to prevent any market dominance by conveyancing practitioners that is detrimental to the availability of legal services in rural areas. If any further fine tuning appears necessary in that context, we shall be receptive to suggestions. Moreover, my Department has been undertaking research into the geographic availability of legal services throughout Scotland, so that it will be possible in future to ascertain whether or not increased competition has led to any diminution in the availability of legal services, particularly in rural areas. That is something, therefore, which the Government are keeping under review because, while I do not believe that the proposals relating to conveyancing in the Bill will adversely affect rural solicitors, I consider it to be an important enough issue to merit vigilance.

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): How long will that review take? By the time it is completed, all the lawyers' practices in rural areas might be closed.

Mr. Rifkind: We are publishing this week a document on the current availability of solicitors' offices in various parts of Scotland, including the rural areas. We intend to monitor on an on-going basis any changes in that provision over the next few months and years.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Obviously, that is a matter of great concern to individuals such as myself. How will the Secretary of State ensure that, in the interim, facilities are available in rural areas? Conveyancing may represent the bread-and-butter money of rural practices and rural solicitors may have built up expertise in farming or fishing law, which is of great importance to individuals in my constituency. What will happen if there is a diminution of

services during that period? Will my fishermen and farmers be expected to travel to multi-disciplinary practices in Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Glasgow, or will the Minister ensure that facilities remain available to them in the interim period?

Mr. Rifkind: It is reasonable to conclude that, as long as there is a demand for solicitors' services in the towns in the hon. Lady's constituency, solicitors will be only too happy to provide those services. The hon. Lady should have the confidence that I certainly have in members of the legal profession in her constituency continuing to attract members of the public to use the services that they provide.

I remember when it was proposed to take undefended divorces from the Faculty of Advocates and allow those matters to be dealt with in the sheriff court. Many members of the faculty, including myself, were worried whether that would lead to the destruction of the Faculty of Advocates. In practice, over the period that has elapsed since then, there are virtually double the number of advocates working in Scotland doing other forms of work.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm what he said earlier, that reasoned amendments to ensure the survival of rural practices and rural solicitors would be received kindly by the Government, who would co-operate if possible? Was that the substance of what he was saying?

Mr. Rifkind: Naturally, we are anxious to ensure that the end of one restrictive practice does not lead to the creation of another. That means that there must be an opportunity for fair competition between solicitors' practices and building societies or banks that may employ solicitors or licensed conveyancers to do conveyancing work. I confirm that we shall consider in a positive light constructive and sensible proposals to ensure that that is achieved.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): I have listened most carefully to the right hon. and learned Gentleman. He has just confessed that he is a member of the Faculty of Advocates, and I should like to offer him some free advice. Perhaps he should have mentioned that when he opened the debate, if not as a declared interest, certainly as a moral declared interest.

Mr. Rifkind: Normally, subject to your advice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one declares an interest if one has the possibility of financial gain from the provisions of a Bill. If the provisions of the Bill mean that the Faculty of Advocates is to lose its monopoly position in the Court of Session and the High Court, there is hardly likely to be a financial interest to declare in terms of the normal criteria affecting those matters. However, my membership of the Faculty of Advocates is referred to in the Register of Members' Interests. Had the hon. Gentleman consulted that document, he would have been well aware of my background.

Clause 22 will enable solicitors to acquire rights of audience before the highest courts in Scotland. It is fair to say that for us in Scotland, the admission of solicitors to Supreme Court practice is a natural progression. Solicitors' rights of audience before the sheriff court are already extensive. Solicitors are already able to plead in jury trials that may result in sentences of up to three years' imprisonment; and the sheriff's civil jurisdiction overlaps extensively with that of the Court of Session. It is commensurate with the overall aim of this part of the Bill that clients should have access to as wide a choice of supreme court pleader as possible.

As my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate made quite clear in another place, that is not to say that any compromise is contemplated on standards. The Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary depend on those who appear before them to provide the highest standards of pleading and legal argument. Clause 22 of the Bill makes provision for solicitors to acquire rights of audience in the supreme courts only where they satisfy the council of the Law Society that they measure up to such standards. Those standards will themselves be approved by the Lord President of the Court of Session and by the Secretary of State.

Mr. Foulkes: As a former councillor, the Secretary of State will recall that as a very junior bailie I served on the bench in Edinburgh, so some strange people serve on the bench. What are the consequences of solicitors doing the jobs of advocates in the Supreme Court, for appointments to the bench? Should there not be appropriate consequential changes?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is certainly right that the presence of baillies on the bench can have curious consequences. I recollect on Edinburgh baillie saying to a person convicted before him that he would fine him £50, and had there been any evidence against him, he would have sent him to prison, but I am sure that the hon. Gentleman did not make that particular observation. As for the entitlement of solicitors to judicial appointment, if the hon. Gentleman consults the Bill he will see that there is provision to that effect and I shall refer to it in a moment.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: As the purpose of the provisions is increased choice, will the Secretary of State give the House an undertaking that a person admitted to legal aid will retain the choice of a solicitor and an advocate or solicitor-advocate and that, by virtue of these provisions, he will not be prevented from having the representation that he prefers?

Mr. Rifkind: I am happy to give that assurance to the hon. and learned Gentleman. It is in the public interest that that should be made quite clear and unambiguous in this context.

It can only be right that a solicitor who can demonstrate that he has the requisite ability and experience and who is willing to accept the obligations that attach to supreme court pleading should be able to provide such a service. Moreover, steps have been taken to ensure that solicitors with supreme court rights of audience shoulder similar obligations to provide representation in all cases as advocates. It is clearly important that the rules governing the two groups of supreme court pleaders should be based on comparable principles. Clause 22 provides for that. That approach also applies to rules governing the conduct of non-lawyers who acquire rights of audience, or rights to conduct litigation in any court under clause 23.

Clause 25, coupled with the provisions in schedule 7, which repeal the statutory barriers to solicitors forming partnerships with non-solicitors, removes the statutory bar to multi-disciplinary practices. I regard those measures as enabling ones, which provide an opportunity to the

[Mr. Rifkind]

solicitor profession to develop its own approach to practice with other groups, unfettered by statutory barriers. The measures do not impose an outcome. The Law Society of Scotland remains entirely free to make such rules on the matter as it sees fit.

It will not, however, be possible for the society to make a rule prohibiting multi-disciplinary practices unless that rule has been approved by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director General of Fair Trading. The purpose of the Secretary of State's involvement is to ensure that any prohibition is no more restrictive than is necessary in the interests of justice. My involvement is therefore confined to any rule that prohibits multi-disciplinary practices in relation to court work. Any other restriction will fall to be considered in due course under the proposed legislation on restrictive trade practices, outlined in the White Paper issued by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

There will therefore be no compulsion for solicitors to enter into multi-disciplinary practices, but the statutory barriers to their doing so will be removed. Whether such practices come into being will depend on whether there is a demand for them. That is as it should be where a service is responding to client needs by expanding the choice available.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Has the Secretary of State taken steps to ensure that multi-disciplinary practices will be monitored? Is not there an inherent danger that the establishment of such practices will result in the same fate for the legal profession as for the accountancy profession —a smaller number of larger practices, with people taking on lucrative work instead of following the ethic of service to the community?

Mr. Rifkind: All that we are removing is the statutory bar on multidisciplinary practices. The Law Society will be able to continue to make that a requirement of practice in the profession. The statutory bar on multi-disciplinary practices was introduced only in 1933. It may be of interest to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) to know that when the matter was discussed in 1933 a certain Mr. J. Maxton MP criticised the introduction of a statutory framework precisely because it gave a voluntary association

"statutory powers to control and direct the lives of men, the methods of a great profession, powers which should reside nowhere else than in the central Government itself."

It is that statutory bar, which one J. Maxton MP imposed, which is being removed, for the reasons that I have given.

Advocates' partnerships are, for the time being, very unlikely to be in the interests either of clients or of the court system as a whole. Clause 25 therefore also requires the approval of the Secretary of State for any rule that prohibits partnerships between advocates. That approval has the effect of putting the rule beyond the scope of any challenge under forthcoming legislation on restrictive trade practices. If, however, in the future the Faculty of Advocates changed its attitude to partnerhips, it could submit an amended rule for approval. I do not see any need for such a change in the immediate future.

The complaints procedures for legal services are also strengthened considerably by the Bill. A new public office of Scottish legal services ombudsman is created, with wider responsibilities than that of the lay observer, which is to be abolished. The ombudsman will deal with grievances about the handling of complaints by the Faculty of Advocates, by the new board and by any body that acquires practising rights under clause 23, as well as by the Law Society of Scotland.

In making those reforms to the complaints procedures relating to legal services, I have attempted to build on those already in place. Given the enhancement of the lay observer's powers, all of which the ombudsman will inherit, and the changes to be made to the statutory provisions on complaints procedures of the professional bodies, I believe that those with a grievance against a solicitor or other legal practitioner will be well placed to obtain a just and reasonable outcome for their complaint.

The remainder of part II contains a number of comparatively minor, though nevertheless valuable, measures, all of which are aimed at extending choice and opportunity both for the client and for the practitioner.

Clause 24 remedies the anomalous situation, which has arisen under community law, whereby Scottish, English and Welsh lawyers are not able to obtain the same recognition as qualified legal practitioners in each other's countries as are lawyers from other member states. A reciprocal measure is contained in the Courts and Legal Services Bill for Scottish lawyers seeking recognition south of the border.

Taken as a whole the measures in part II represent a significant step forward for legal services in Scotland. Part II does not, in any event, force anyone to do anything. It simply widens the opportunities available and removes some outdated and unnecessary restrictions.

Part III proposes reforms to the system of liquor licensing in Scotland. A new code of liquor licensing was introduced in the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976, which took account of many of the recommendations made by Dr. Clayson. The Government believe that the 1976 Act has stood the test of time, principally because the provisions reflected public attitudes. The proposals in part III of the present Bill build on the existing regime, taking account of trends in those attitudes since 1976 and of practical experience of the operation of the 1976 Act.

In drawing up the provisions in part III, we have had regard to a survey conducted by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and a consultation exercise undertaken in 1986 by my Department. Over 2,000 responses were received and all were carefully considered.

There are three themes running through this part of the Bill: enhancement of the more civilised regime that has been in place since 1976; eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic procedures; and tightening up the law in areas where experience suggests that that is needed.

As regards the more civilised regime, clauses 41 and 42 introduce a system of children's certificates which will enable licensing boards to permit children to enter suitable licensed premises in the company of their parents or other adults. The Bill makes it clear that children may enter those premises so as to have a meal in the company of adults. As the provisions relate specifically to meals, the hours when they may be admitted will be limited to the period from 11 am to 8 pm. Clause 42 enables a board to suspend a children's certificate, following procedures that include provision for a hearing, where it considers that the premises concerned no longer constitute an environment suitable for children to be present.

The Bill also proposes that the present requirement for licensed premises to be closed in the afternoon between 2.30 and 5 pm, unless an extension has been granted, should no longer apply.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Clause 37 raises a matter of considerable delicacy in places such as Bathgate. The Law Society considers that

"There should be equality of opening times between licensed premises, licensed canteens, registered clubs and public houses and that the inequalities in trading hours for off-sales premises, etc. should be removed."

Will the Secretary of State comment on the Law Society's views?

Mr. Rifkind: As a general principle, I do not take exception to that, but there may be circumstances when that would not be entirely appropriate. We propose to extend the opening hours of off-sales premises on Sundays for precisely the reasons to which the hon. Gentleman refers. Where, however, a distinction is drawn, we believe that it can be justified in the light of the consultation exercise.

The widespread grant of afternoon extensions under the present provisions shows that continuous trading is now widely accepted, and responses to the consultation paper confirmed that. On the other hand, it remains the clear majority view that there should be no addition to the Sunday opening hours of public houses, which run from 12.30 to 2.30 in the afternoon and from 6.30 to 11.00 in the evening. The Bill proposes no change on that point.

Mr. McKelvey: In the light of all the representations that have been made, does the Secretary of State consider that it would be sensible to allow those who manage public houses to apply for an extension on Sundays so that the licensing boards could consider their applications and then grant an extension, or otherwise? Why are extensions not allowed for public houses when extensions are allowed for other establishments?

Mr. Rifkind: We are tightening up the exemptions in ways that I shall illustrate. We are responding to the results of the consultation exercise, which suggest that, with regard to Sunday, although not to other days of the week, the significant majority view is that people do not wish Sunday afternoon extensions to take place.

We believe that the traditional view—that Sunday afternoon should be a time of peace and quiet when there should be no noise or disturbance from public houses, many of which are located in residential areas—ought to be respected. The Bill reflects the results of the consultation exercise. Naturally, we look forward to the views of hon. Members in all parts of the House on that matter, as on all other issues.

Mr. Dalyell: What is the right hon. and learned Gentleman's reaction to the Law Society's worries about the restriction on the boards' discretion? The Law Society refers particularly to clause 38 and states:

"The Law Society considers that Licensing Boards should be flexible bodies capable of responding to immediate and local needs. The Law Society views with concern attempts in this Clause to restrict the Board's discretion in respect of Sunday opening of licensed premses."

This is a delicate issue in West Lothian.

Mr. Rifkind: These are delicate issues in various parts of the country. We have tried to establish a balance that reflects what appears to be the views of the public arising out of the consultation exercise. The Bill proposes that off-sale trading on Sundays should be permitted between 12.30 and 10 pm. Trading on Sundays has been permitted elsewhere in Britain for some years, and there is a clear demand for relaxation of the law on that point in Scotland. It is considered to be anomalous that people should be able to buy groceries and other provisions in supermarkets on Sundays, but should be restricted from buying alcohol for consumption off the premises.

On the theme of tightening up the law, the 1976 provisions relating to the grant of regular extensions of permitted hours have given rise to much criticism. The proliferation of late-night extensions in some areas has been a source of distress and disturbance to local people and has imposed heavy demands on medical services and the police. A large number of complaints have been received from members of the public and hon. Members. Clause 39 accordingly requires a licensing board not to grant an application for a late-night extension unless it is satisfied that there is a need in the locality for such an extension and that it would be of such benefit to the community as a whole as to outweigh any detriment to the locality.

Mr. Darling: The Secretary of State and I know, as Edinburgh Members, that the city centre in Edinburgh has a particular problem because of the sheer number of late-night premises being allowed to open. How will a board determine whether an extension would be of benefit to the community as a whole? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that there is a difference between the various pubs in any one street? Several may cause no problems, but one may be a source of problems. Would it not be better to allow licensing boards the power to take someone off the road, as it were, until he put his house in order and to make it easier for individuals to object? In that way, we could differentiate between those places that cause no harm and those that are a constant source of irritation to the people who have to live around them.

Mr. Rifkind: I note that point. Over the past few years, instead of being the exception, as was envisaged in the earlier legislation, late-night extensions have been the rule. Almost without exception, they have been granted, causing annoyance and disturbance to many residents who, even in the early hours of the morning, find themselves disturbed by noise. A well-run public house can still be a noisy establishment, even if no crimes are committed or no irresponsible behaviour is apparent—there can be singing and other such activity. It is necessary to find a balance.

That is why the criteria that a licensing board is invited to consider include the question whether the need in an area for an extension is such as to outweigh any detriment to the locality. It must be for the board to look at the circumstances in each case, to consider the objections that might be put by local residents and to come to a sensible judgment as to whether the criteria are satisfied. It is our view and that of the vast majority who commented on the matter that late-night extensions, particularly in residential areas, should be the exception rather than the rule, for the reasons that I have given. The ultimate discretion lies with the licensing board.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: I have some difficulty in following my right hon. and learned Friend's argument. Clause 38(4)(a) states:

"A licensing board shall refuse to grant or renew a public house or a refreshment licence in respect of the permitted hours on a Sunday if it finds that the opening and use on a Sunday of the premises to which the application relates would cause undue disturbance or public nuisance in the locality, but the refusal of an application on that ground alone shall not prevent the licensing board from granting the application in respect of days other than Sundays."

That seems to conflict with what my right hon. and learned Friend said.

Mr. Rifkind: Not really. Until now, any application to open on a Sunday has required a separate application to the licensing board. One of the reforms proposed in the Bill is that, if a new public house is to be opened, the initial application can cover both weekdays and Sundays. It is not unreasonable to think that, although there may be a single application covering both Sundays and weekdays, the board should be permitted to make a distinction in respect of Sundays if the circumstances appear to justify it. The clause is drafted in its present form to give boards the maximum discretion.

Mr. Graham: Does the Secretary of State accept that under-age drinking is causing a rampaging disaster in villages and towns throughout Scotland? Will he take cognisance of that fact and keep off-sale premises closed on a Sunday? Most of the young people are getting their drink from off-sale premises one way or the other. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give folk in the villages and towns of Scotland peace on a Sunday?

Mr. Rifkind: The provision in the Bill reflects the strong views that were expressed in the consultation exercise. I appreciate the fact that the hon. Gentleman's view may be shared by the minority of those respondents and, no doubt, he will put forward his views in due course.

Mrs. Fyfe: Has the Secretary of State any ideas on how the public could find it easier to draw to the attention of the licensing boards their complaints about licensed premises in their area? Would the right hon. and learned Gentleman like to hear my views in due course as well?

Mr. Rifkind: I should certainly like to hear the hon. Lady's views in due course. Obviously, there is an opportunity for persons to bring to the attention of the licensing boards any reasons why they believe that the terms of the licence are not complied with. No doubt, if the hon. Lady has particular points to raise, she will seek an opportunity to do so.

Clause 46 provides the police with a power to enter registered pubs at any reasonable time without a warrant. Such a power was recommended by the Clayson committee, and the Guest committee before that, and our consultative exercise revealed overwhelming support for it. There was considerable debate on the matter in another place, and we recognise the concerns of some registered clubs about the exercise in practice of those powers by the police. I have every confidence that chief constables would have due regard for those concerns and would use the powers only where they were genuinely necessary and with due regard to the sensitivities of members and the management of registered clubs.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): The clause gives that power to police constables, not just chief constables. Why does the right hon. and learned Gentleman consider the clause to be necessary? Most clubs are self-regulating and organise themselves in a fair, efficient and disciplined manner. If any trouble or law-breaking occurs, the police already have the powers to deal with the situation. In the last analysis, the sheriff may refuse to renew a club's licence. It is utterly unwarranted to give those powers to the police and it will be seen as a gross invasion of privacy. The opposition to the clause comes not just from social, miners' welfare, sport and labour clubs, but—as I know from my conversations with Conservative Members—from Conservative clubs. Many hon. Members are determined to fight the clause. I ask the Secretary of State to say that he will withdraw it.

Mr. Rifkind: Before getting carried away, the hon. Gentleman should consider the responses to the consultation exercise, which show that some 67 representations were in favour of the proposal, with only nine against. Among the 67 in favour, there were 21 licensing boards, 18 community councils and others, 15 organisations with health and alcohol interests, five licensed trade interests, four police organisations, two Churches, the Law Society and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Mr. Foulkes: What about the nine against?

Mr. Rifkind: The nine comprised three licensing boards, four community councils, the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Faculty of Advocates—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I acknowledge that that is a powerful combination.

Mr. Richard Alexander (Newark): My right hon. and learned Friend must be aware that in that list, no clubs said that there is a need for the provision. Is he further aware that such a provision has never been carried out? Does he agree that whatever happens in Scotland, once clause 46 becomes law in Scotland, the next stage is for clubs to be open to the police in the rest of Great Britain? I assure my right hon. and learned Friend that that would be wholly unacceptable to many Conservative Members.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): I am grateful to the Secretary of State for giving way before he answers his hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander) and I hope that my intervention will not prevent him from answering his hon. Friend.

The Secretary of State will be aware of the great deal of discussion about the matter in the other place. In the Licensing (Scotland) Bill 1976, the Labour Government tried to include a provision that gave the police right of entry into clubs without a warrant or without invitation. We were defeated on the Floor of the House, with the right hon. and learned Gentleman voting against us. Can he explain his change of mind?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is correct and he has made the point to which I have just drawn attention. When many organisations that are intimately involved in health and in the prevention of alcohol abuse, such as the Churches, the Law Society and the vast majority of community councils, as well as the licensing boards themselves, join together, that is a powerful combination of points of view.

Licensed clubs are the only licensed premises where the police do not have such a right. There may be arguments

against that and we shall be happy to listen to views on it. However, it is right that the Bill should reflect a view that is not merely the majority view, but the overwhelming view of a wide diversity of interests that took the trouble to comment on the proposals.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: I was a member of the minority on the Clayson committee who were opposed to the extension of that right. As was pointed out by the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing), the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976, when it was first laid before the House, contained such a provision. If there is to be an extension of police powers, there must be a justification for that extension. The fact that many bodies may be in favour of the extension does not of itself justify it. Is not the right hon. and learned Gentleman under an obligation to demonstrate to the House why there should be an extension of a right that already exists in the form of the right of the police to seek a warrant before a magistrate if they are able to satisfy a magistrate that there is good reason for them to have entry to a particular club?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. and learned Gentleman is correct to make that point. The evidence from the police is that they believe that in a minority of clubs, there is irresponsible behaviour that requires to be investigated by the police. They believe that if they were required to seek a warrant before having permission to enter the premises, they would not be able to prosecute the interests of justice. They believe that just as they have the right to enter a public house without a warrant when they believe that such activities are being conducted, so they should have a comparable right in respect of the clubs.

I fully accept that those are controversial matters and that hon. Members will wish to probe deeply into the justification for the proposal. It represents the overwhelming view of those who took the trouble to comment on those matters.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rifkind: No. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, because many hon. Members want to take part in the debate. I have given way a great deal.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rifkind: I would rather not, if the hon. Gentleman will forgive me.

Mr. Dalyell: I would rather that you did.

Mr. Rifkind: I am sorry. However, I have given way to the hon. Gentleman several times already and other hon. Members wish to speak. The hon. Gentleman will no doubt catch——

Mr. Dalyell: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rifkind: No, I will not give way.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The Secretary of State is clearly not giving way. The hon. Gentleman must resume his seat.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that the Secretary of State should give way. He has made——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows better. He must resume his seat. It is a matter for the Secretary of State and he is clearly not giving way.

Mr. Dalyell: I plead with the Secretary of State to give way.

Mr. Rifkind: I would rather not, if the hon. Gentleman will forgive me.

Mr. Dalyell: You know why.

Mr. Rifkind: I do not have the faintest idea why.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) will seek to catch my eye to explain why later in the debate.

Mr Dalyell: I should have thought that, on a point of fact, the right hon. and learned Gentleman would have given way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Many hon. Members are waiting to take part in the debate. We are getting on. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman, who is very experienced in these matters, might wait to see whether he can catch the eye of the occupant of the Chair and make his contribution then.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must keep his seat.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I very much hope that the hon. Gentleman will not press me into having to use the disciplinary powers that he knows I possess. Perhaps he will wait patiently and seek a later opportunity.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer now to part IV.

Mr. Dalyell: Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Rifkind: No, I will not give way. I refer now to the remaining——

Mr. Dalyell: Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not push me. I hope that we shall be allowed to get on with the debate. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that it is for the right hon. or hon. Member who has the Floor to determine whether he or she gives way. The Secretary of State is clearly not giving way. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not push me into having to do what I do not want to do.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer now to the——

Mr. Dalyell: The Secretary of State is not giving way because he knows that he has misled the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. If this goes on, I shall have no option but to ask the hon. Gentleman, under the

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

powers conferred on me by Standing Order No. 42, to withdraw from the Chamber for the remainder of this day's sitting.

Mr. Dalyell: I do not want that to happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am afraid that my repeated warnings to the hon. Gentleman have given me little option.

Mr. Dalyell: Please, I do not want to withdraw.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman also withdraws the allegation that the Secretary of State deliberately misled the House——

Mr. Dalyell: I am prepared to do anything you ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I do not want to be thrown out.

Mr. Rifkind: Part IV contains a number of provisions with regard to the social work services and to the probation social inquiry reports. It provides for 100 per cent. Government funding of such services in the interests of improving the probation service. There are also provisions relating to fines, including a provision to enable unitary fines experiments to take place with a view to relating fines more closely to an offender's ability to pay. The opportunity has also been taken to correct a deficiency in the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1987 relating to the confiscation of the proceeds of drug trafficking.

Clause 53 reduces the periods of separation required to establish the irretrievable breakdown of marriage. The reduction is from two years to one year where the other party consents to divorce and from five years to two years without the consent of the other party. That reflects the Scottish Law Commission's conclusions that the present periods of separation are unnecessarily long and have the effect of causing many divorcing couples to use behaviour or adultery grounds, with all their attendant unpleasantness and hostility, as a means of obtaining an earlier divorce. The Government believe that the modest amendment proposed by the commission, which received substantial public support on consultation, will meet much of the criticism of the existing law without going beyond what is generally acceptable to members of the public.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): It seems that the object of clause 53 is to make divorce easier. There is a great deal of concern, certainly south of the border, that we are making divorce easier the whole time. There is also a great deal of concern that the results of that increase the sum of human misery. There is more research evidence to that effect. My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor has said that we need to make divorce harder. Does my right hon. and learned Friend have any plans, for example, to protect the interests of children more carefully than at present in divorce proceedings?

Mr. Rifkind: I can reassure my right hon. Friend. We have followed the advice of the Scottish Marriage Guidance Council. In its submission in support of the proposal, it said:

> "We can appreciate that others may be concerned about the reduction of time in relation to encouraging couples to take marriage less seriously, but we can honestly claim that we, in our work have not experienced this attitude."

It believes that the proposal will help, as does the Scottish Association of Family Conciliation Services, which said in its submission:

> "It is encouraging to see Scotland leading the way in this legislation."

The thrust of the bulk of the advice received is that the current arrangements lead to a somewhat arbitrary and artificial state of affairs, and that is why the reform has been proposed.

The final matter to which I wish to refer is the provision——

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: The Secretary of State has referred to the Scottish Marriage Guidance Council and the family conciliation service. What view does the Scottish Office take of the need to ensure adequate funding for the training of counsellors? That is a very important matter, as many solicitors now refer potential divorcees directly to such services. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman ensure that the funding is available to enhance those services?

Mr. Rifkind: That question does not arise directly from the Bill, although I shall certainly look into it.

Finally, let me refer to the provision in the Bill for the High Court, or the sheriff court in Scotland, to receive evidence from abroad by means of live television links. My noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate stated in Committee in another place that he would intend to bring the provision into operation on the same basis as that for England and Wales—that is for serious and complex fraud, murder and culpable homicide.

As a result of an amendment passed in another place, those procedures will not be available in any trial involving alleged war crimes committed in German-held territory during the second world war, which, as Scots law stands at present, the Scottish criminal courts do not have jurisdiction to try. In respect of this Bill, the Government have decided to accept that position.

Following the defeat of the War Crimes Bill on Second Reading in another place, we have under review the whole question whether our courts should have jurisdiction over such war crimes. It is in that context that we shall also consider whether the House should be asked to remove the restrictions set out in clause 56(3). I would commend that approach to hon. Members who are concerned about that clause. I suggest to them that questions about the availability of the procedures set out in clause 56 are subordinate to the larger and prior question whether there should be jurisdiction, and should not be discussed further in proceedings on this Bill.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): As the Secretary of State knows, a crucial question arises here: what happens if the non-Scottish members of the Cabinet decide to seek rapidly to reverse the decision made in the House of Lords?

Mr. Rifkind: As the hon. Gentleman will be aware, the decision of the House of Lords to reject the War Crimes Bill on Second Reading means that the Bill cannot proceed during this Session. The implications of that decision are still being considered, as is the question whether steps should be taken in the next Session of Parliament to deal with the matter. It is in that context that I believe that it would be sensible for the provision to be considered.

As I said at the start of my speech, the Bill is an important measure containing wide-ranging proposals. I

look forward to hearing hon. Members' views. It may help if I say that I am arranging for copies of the notes on clauses to be made available to hon. Members for the Committee stage of the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

5.42 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I beg to move,

That this House declines to give a Second Reading to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]* which lacks a coherent theme embracing in one measure widely different and controversial issues; and which does not offer adequate protection to the interests of the consumer, is based on a flawed concept of competition, and fails to face up to the problems of delay and expense in the legal system and the unmet need for legal services.

I have never been entirely convinced of the Government's sureness of touch, and there are many examples to support my view. Yesterday, the Government sent the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), on a trip to Genoa to act as the Scottish team mascot. There were pictures in the press of a rather unconvincing—and, to be fair, unhappy—figure clutching a Scottish scarf. In a flamboyant moment, the Scottish Information Office produced a press release under the heading:

"Mr. Forsyth wishes Scotland team 'buona fortuna'".

All that I can say—I hope, without overstretching the linguistic abilities of the Scottish Information Office—is that a more appropriate phrase might have been "il bacio della morte", the kiss of death.

In any event, the Bill is another example of the Government's unsureness of touch. I hasten to assure the Secretary of State that I do not object to the Bill merely because it is a miscellaneous provisions Bill. I have a number of more fundamental arguments to deploy in my speech.

The Secretary of State will have gathered from the amendment standing in my name and those of my right hon. and hon. Friends that, on balance, we do not much like the Bill. That is not to deny that it contains some good provisions, but the concept and management of the Bill are disappointing, none the less. I ought also to make it clear that I have no objection at all to law reform (miscellaneous provisions) Bills. On checking the records, I discover that I have managed to serve on a very high proportion of the Committees which have considered them in the past 20 years, and most of them I have found extremely interesting and useful. They are gatherings of odds and ends—proposals whose time has come—but by and large they tend not to be controversial.

Here, however, I believe that there is a difference of degree, as this Bill contains a number of provisions which are by any standards contentious and controversial, and which have given rise to fundamental opposition in serious quarters. The most obvious case in point is the part of the Bill which deals with changes in the legal structure—a subject which I believe would have justified a major Bill in itself. We have also crowded in changes in the licensing law and a fundamental change in the divorce law. No one could describe those as nice adjustments on the margin.

The Bill even deals with the provision of evidence in criminal trials. The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn) will remember many discussions of that in our proceedings on previous law reform Bills, when the introduction of new clauses created a major furore. This is a very different sort of Bill and the provisions that have been miscellaneously gathered together in it raise more serious questions than is usual. When we come to deal with new clauses, we shall want to raise a number of matters under the lengthy and extensive long title. The Secretary of State will remember that Lord Macaulay of Bragar moved amendments in connection with the law on diligence and warrant sales, and no doubt we shall wish to return to those questions.

I wish to raise another most important matter about which I feel extremely strongly. This Bill is one of only two Bills to come from the Scottish Office this Session. Presumably the Government are the masters of the timetable, and the timing of proceedings on the Bill means that the Bill will go into Committee on 19 June. As we understand it, the House will rise before the end of July.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Hear, hear.

Mr. Dewar: The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) raises a cheer at the prospect, and I take his point.

As I understand it, we shall have five weeks for the Committee stage of the Bill and there is no way in which that can be extended, either by agreement or by force. We are literally boxed into that five-week period. I must stress to the Patronage Secretary's representative and the Secretary of State that I do not think that five weeks will be sufficient for the scrutiny of the Bill.

I took the trouble to refer to the proceedings on the previous Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced in 1985. It was a much less substantial Bill, much of which was given over to leases, crofting tenure, the valuation of sheep stock and similar fascinating matters. Of course, it dealt with some important matters and I do not for a moment undervalue it. We had important debates on the detention of children in secure accommodation and on evidence in rape trials, for example. I remember that my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) took a particular interest in the latter.

Nevertheless, it was undoubtedly a less controversial and less extensive law reform Bill than the present Bill, yet it went into Committee on 5 January 1985 and did not come out until 26 March. It occupied 26 sittings, many of them lasting well into the night, and more than 1,000 columns of *Hansard*. Everyone who served on that Committee accepted that its exchanges were constructive and that there was no filibustering. The Committee clearly felt that it needed the time that it took.

I suggest that, as the five weeks of the Committee stage of this Bill tick away, and as we struggle to try to cover the extraordinarily extensive measures before the House, we are likely to find tempers getting frayed. I suspect that we shall also be conscious of the fact that we are not doing the kind of job for which we were elected in scrutinising and considering the full implications of the Bill. I make a genuine protest at the way in which the Bill has been managed; I deeply regret what has happened.

The Committee on the 1985 Bill consisted of 18 members. The Government's representation consisted of 11 hon. Members, all of whom had been elected to Scottish seats. It is a sign of the times that, at the subsequent general election, seven of those gentleman perished and only four survived. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that the members of the Committee will almost certainly include a number of Members who represent seats south of the

[Mr. Dewar]

border. I make no complaint about that, because I realise that it is now inevitable, but I suspect that hon. Members will regard with curious indifference the intricacies of our debates on Scottish licensing law and similar matters. Again, that underlines this very unfortunate situation. People have a right to be angry about that, and I suspect that many of the bodies which will brief us will be unhappy as well.

The merits of the proposals do not matter at the moment. However, we would all agree that the changes in the legal structure are far-reaching and have raised widespread fears. I suspect that they will not be as adequately scrutinised as I should have liked—or, to be fair, as many Conservative Members would have liked. If they are properly scrutinised, inevitably that will happen at the expense of other important issues. I hope that that point is accepted. It is too late to salvage the situation now, but that is an adverse comment on the way in which the Government have managed Scottish business in this and recent Sessions.

I wish to make another preliminary point before I consider the merits of the Bill. I hope that Opposition Members will be able to take a constructive and reasonably flexible view in our debates on the Bill. The Bill contains a number of issues which have normally received a free vote in the House and we intend to follow that precedent in Committee. For example, I do not intend my views on licensing law to be laid down as a standard that other hon. Members must follow. They may regard me, as they will discover in a few moments, as hopelessly reactionary on those matters. I will be unashamed and may even have to stand the indignity of finding myself on the same side as the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross and against others who are normally my allies.

Mr. Foulkes: My hon. Friend means the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), not the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn).

Mr. Dewar: Indeed, the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker)—I do not see why I should be called upon to distinguish between peas in a pod in these matters. *[Laughter]* I appear to be turning a serious point to laughter.

With regard to licensing law, divorce law reform and other issues, we shall vote according to our individual views. That is the right way to approach a Bill of this kind, and we hope that our example will be followed on the Conservative Benches.

I wish now to consider the specific provisions in the Bill and to make a general charge buttressed by example. In our amendment, we state that we believe that the Government have failed to do what is necessary to protect consumers' interests adequately. I recognise that the Secretary of State will make a case for saying that the attack on the conveyancing monopoly and the arrival of the legal services ombudsman are important advances from the consumer point of view. I would agree with the latter, but I believe that it is a more arguable proposition in the former case.

I have spoken to representatives from the citizens' advice bureaux and the Scottish Consumer Council. They support some of the Bill's propositions, but feel that in many areas opportunities have been missed. They have indicated, for instance, that in English legislation there are a number of consumer protection measures which have not been extended to Scotland. For example, there is the Lord Chancellor's advisory committee on legal education and conduct, with its rather interesting provision in English legislation that eight of the 14 members will not be salaried judges, barristers, solicitors or teachers of law, but ordinary people and presumably valued as such. That provision is lacking in the Bill, and we might consider it in Committee.

In the English version of the authorised conveyancing practitioners board, there is to be a proper balance between the interests of authorised practitioners and those who make use of their services. The Scottish equivalent contains nothing like the same adequate safeguard. There are some points about the powers of the ombudsman position that is to be created, particularly in connection with inadequate professional services, to which we shall wish to return in Committee.

My general point is that there is little in the Bill about access to legal services and the unmet legal need. There is no assault on delay and expense and no attempt to simplify the precise and intricate rules that govern our courts, and in particular the art of building a closer accord, the mysteries of the adjustment and the procedure role. That might be achieved by rules or internal committees, but the cost and delay of litigation is still one of the major problems of our legal system and the Bill does not appear to acknowledge the existence of that problem. In that regard, we simply have clause 32, which allows a solicitor outside Edinburgh to borrow a Court of Session process, which may be a small step for out-of-Edinburgh solicitors, but not for the common weal of Scotland. The legal world will not move as a result of that. There is a feeling of disappointment which I hope the Secretary of State will recognise.

I wish now to consider the specific contents of the Bill, and in doing so I must be careful to declare an interest. I am a partner in a firm of solicitors in Glasgow. Even in these days of advertising, I shall not mention its name, but it can be found in the Register of Members' Interests. Although I have not seen a client in anger for many years, and certainly not with a view to charging him a fee, that is a connection which I value and it is of some relevance because much of the Bill deals with the interests of the solicitors' profession.

With regard to the structure of the legal profession and the so-called attack on the monopoly, I do not believe that the argument has been made. There is a feeling that the Secretary of State has been dragged along in the wake of the Lord Chancellor and that there has not been a great deal of room for a distinct and separate Scottish approach. I accept that competition is important, although there is clearly a distinction in a regulated profession hedged around with necessary and important safeguards and competition in the retail trade or in the general market place.

The arrival of advertising, to which I have referred, and much more importantly, the abolition of scale fees which was long overdue, have undoubtedly had a considerable impact on conveyancing charges. I suspect that they have been more effective than anything that is likely to be created by this Bill.

There will be new animals on the legal scene, including qualified conveyancers who, I presume, are roughly

equivalent to the licenced conveyancer who appeared in England in 1985. There will also be a conveyancing practitioner, equating with the authorised conveyancer south of the border. The latter is an institution rather than an individual. In Committee we may wish to draw a distinction between those two rather different phenomena.

So far as I can see, it is inevitable—if it were not so, I should have fought to make it so—that the Scottish Conveyancing and Executry Services Board will equate largely in its powers and approach with the Law Society of Scotland's role in regard to solicitors. In Committee we shall have to look at indemnity, the guarantee fund, the clients' accounts provisions and the qualifications. Many of those matters are fundamentally important.

We cannot ring-fence conveyancing. Someone involved in conveyancing will have to advise his client on many aspects of the law, including the law of contract, matrimonial homes law, family law and tax and financial matters. We cannot ring-fence such matters and we are genuinely interested to learn what is to be included in the code of conduct. I would argue that the code of conduct could, with advantage, have been included in this Bill so that it could be placed on the record.

I am sceptical about the impact of the Secretary of State's new brand of qualified conveyancer because, if we consider the history of licensed conveyancing in England, it is clear that its impact has been very small. The Library has advised me that there are 710 licensed conveyancers in England at the latest date for which figures are available. I suppose 710 sounds quite impressive, although England is a big place. However, only 250 of those are in private practice. The rest work for institutions or legal firms of one kind or another. The Library brief states—if I am not out of order in quoting it:

"It was originally envisaged that licensed conveyancers would set up in private practice but experience has shown that in the three years or so since they came into existence, licensed conveyancers are using the qualification to seek employment with firms and organisations that have established conveyancing departments."

That is not what was intended or what I presume is in the mind of the Secretary of State. However, I believe that many of the difficulties, fears and problems have arisen perhaps for little return, even in terms of the Secretary of State's theories, if we consider the English equivalents. Although I cannot consider the issue at length now, we shall consider in Committee the broader concerns, particularly the potential arrival of banks and building societies on to the scene.

In an exchange, the context of which I cannot recall, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland said that he had talked to a bank and a building society and that they had assured him that they had no interest in getting into the sphere of conveyancing. That may have been the case, but it does not seem a conclusive argument to judge what is likely to happen.

It is because I recognise that there are attractions in the one-door approach that I worry about it. I recognise the enormous impact that could be made if, for example, a building society said, "I will fix your mortgage, I will buy and sell your house through our estate agency arm and I will also do your conveyancing, all for one all-in fee." That will be particularly attractive to people who do not like the idea of having to fix a mortgage, then find a solicitor and then move on to an estate agency, or in whichever order the tasks are undertaken.

Such a one-door approach is bound to cause worries in the longer term about independent advice—those worries are well known and we shall return to them in Committee as the Secretary of State did not deal with this issue fully and effectively—and about the impact in rural areas.

Great concern has been expressed on that score and I will only say at this stage, in the interests of brevity, that the Government case has not been laid out. We must make sure that we are on a level playing field, to use one of the clichés of the afternoon, and not the legal equivalent of kicking up the slope in Easter road for those who have remained in the more conventional conveyancing field.

In the other place, Lord Hughes, who had a distinguished career as a Scottish Office Minister on my side of the political divide and, more importantly, was chairman of the Royal Commission on legal services, honourably recalled in the debate in the other place on 27 March that the Royal Commission had recommended the breaking up of the solicitors' conveyancing monopoly, but that that was

"in the state of play as it then was."—[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 27 March 1990; Vol. 517, c. 792.]

He went on to enumerate a large number of changes, including the abolition of scale fees, which had taken place in the interim. He made a point of saying that the royal commission had never recommended the creation of a new breed of conveyancer, and he came to the conclusion that he was persuaded, as chairman of the royal commission, to oppose clause 14, as it was in the House of Lords, being the proposition that had come from the Government. His views as chairman of the royal commission are of considerable interest.

On the whole, I am favourably disposed to the provision on rights of audience. In Committee, we shall want a great deal of information about how the system will work and what is intended. Much will depend on the rules. I hear talk, for example, that a solicitor who wishes to practise in the Court of Session or the High Courts will have to do a tutelage and that examination hurdles will have to be overcome. The rules appear to be firmly in the hands of the Lord President. It will be a matter of anxious interest how those powers are exercised. I do not know whether the Secretary of State is able to anticipate them, but we shall be pressing him in Committee on that.

The issue is of importance, in particular to the Faculty of Advocates, because if some solicitors will retain their position in their own firms of solicitors but will have a right of audience in the High Court—which is where it may be most relevant—there may be occasions, for example, when they will decide that they do not need to employ advocates. There may be occasions when advocates fall out, for example, because of timetable problems in their practices, when the obvious solution will be for the solicitor advocate to take over the case in which he is prepared and the consultations about which he has attended.

From the point of view of the faculty, if that happens on a wide scale, there will be a multi-disciplinary practice, in a sense, because one solicitor partner will be converted into an advocate. That, I envisage, could be a matter of anxious consideration in deciding where the balance lies. We cannot talk intelligently about the subject until we know more about the conditions and circumstances in which it will arise.

Similarly, on the question of multi-disciplinary practices—it is a natural progression—clause 25 is

[Mr. Dewar]

puzzling. I listened carefully to the Secretary of State's remarks and I am not much clearer. I understand that the rules prohibiting advocates from taking part in a partnership either with another advocate or with some other person must be approved by the Lord President and the Secretary of State. I am told that there is an understanding that those rules will be so approved. In other words, there will be a prohibition on the emergence on that type of partnership. I will not say that, in a sense, it is a fait accompli, but the clause on its face is rather deceptive because there is no chance of MDPs emerging in that area.

A worry of mine is that when we come to solicitors, we again have a prohibition which requires the approval of the Secretary of State. His approval may be forthcoming —the right hon. and learned Gentleman will be able to help us on that issue in Committee—but as he pointed out, that is a solicitor offering professional services to the public in relation to any court proceedings, and that gives rise to an odd situation. The implication is that a firm which has no court activities—a purely chamber or commercial practice—will have a right, subject to Office of Fair Trading oversight, to move into multi-disciplinary partnerships. There could be a possibility of a split in the profession, with some firms exercising that right and others being stopped from doing so.

The Secretary of State will appreciate that a rural practice, which might be more attracted to the idea of having other forms of partner, such as an accountant, within its number, could be prevented from doing so because of having a court practitioner among its number, while the narrow and prosperous commercial practice in Edinburgh or Glasgow may be able to branch out in that way. That would be an unsatisfactory situation and I give notice that we shall want to examine it in Committee. We shall also want to examine carefully the effect of multi-disciplinary practices and the prospect, for example, of large accountancy firms buying up large commercial practices in Scotland.

While I must not speak for too long, or I shall trespass on tolerance, I must point out that I am puzzled why, in clause 29, the provision about speculative work, presumably by court practitioners, and an enhancement of fees as a reward for taking on speculative work, has appeared. It takes us into the interesting area of contingency fees.

I suspect that it has appeared—since I am told that it was not asked for—because it duplicates clause 48 of the Courts and Legal Services Bill south of the border and was in the Lord Chancellor's White Paper. I do not like that suggestion, and, if that is the reason, it is not good enough. If the Secretary of State cannot do better than that, it will get a hostile reception.

I merely mention—it is no bad thing to advertise areas of difficulty—that the proposal that a client who has reached agreement in a written agreement about fees should then be precluded from going to taxation in the courts—I understand that to be the effect of clause 29—would be a retrograde step. We might have agreements reached between clients and solicitors which are not even-handed in terms of the expertise with which they are approached. The right to go to taxation is important and should be maintained.

I welcome the ombudsman provision, although we shall examine the powers and to what extent he or she will be able to operate above and beyond what is achieved by the lay observer.

Mrs. Fyfe: Does my hon. Friend think that the Committee will be able to look into the question of judges occasionally making judgments in serious cases which demonstrate that they are completely out of touch with the thinking of the vast majority of the populace?

Mr. Dewar: I am sure that the Committee will give some time to that, especially if my hon. Friend is prepared to serve on it. One obvious answer is to give a right of appeal against sentence to the Crown. I have severe doubts about that, however, although clearly it is worth considering. My own instincts are against it for all sorts of reasons that we may return to.

I hurry on to the licensing provisions. I have made it clear that there will be a free vote on them, so there is no great virtue in talking about them at length. Personally, I believe that Clayson was a success and a major reform which did much to liberalise and civilise consumption of alcohol in Scotland. I should like to see that process continue, but not necessarily by supporting all the proposals in this measure.

Weekday opening from 11 am to 11 pm is sensible and I have no objection to it. The stop-start provision on weekday opening is rather illogical, but I have no enthusiasm for off-licenses on Sundays. I recognise the argument that, if other commodities can be sold, then why not alcohol? On the other hand, I recognise that off-licences, although often small shops, have a large impact on urban areas, since the product sold is consumed in the immediate vicinity of the premises, and we could do without that on a Sunday.

I certainly support the limitation on late licences although I agree that there is an interesting argument about the needs of a locality and the benefits to a community—we shall return to that, too. I also welcome the fact that the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Clydesdale (Mr. Hood) on under-age drinking—it was an attempt to limit it—has reappeared, at least in part, in this measure. Obviously, the supermarket provision—the three points of sale—has gone under the second point in the Bill, and we shall want to consider that carefully. I am sure that the Committee will unanimously want to take seriously the problems of under-aged drinking and to put further controls on the statute book.

I am afraid that there is widespread opposition among Labour Members to clause 46 and police entry to registered clubs. The case against that was effectively put in another place by Lord Cawley. There was one of the few votes—it was close—on this Bill when this clause was discussed, and the case for it is not sufficiently made merely by saying that it was recommended by the Clayson and Guest committees. There is a clear distinction between a public house, which members of the public are invited to enter at their will, and a members' club. I am not satisfied that the invasion of privacy that this proposal represents is justified.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) expressed concern in his characteristic way, in a number of attempted interventions, because the Secretary

of State was parading the Law Society's support for this idea during the consultation exercise. But Members have received a letter dated 8 June 1990 which says of clause 46:

"The Law Society views with concern the apparent increase in police power to enter registered clubs without warrant."

I do not doubt that the Secretary of State has correctly reported what was said at an earlier stage, but the Law Society has had second thoughts, and I am glad to have made my hon. Friend's point on his behalf.

We believe that warrant on cause shown is a necessary protection for private clubs, and we shall argue thus in committee.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): I shall be brief, and I do not intend to seek to catch Mr. Speaker's eye later, but I remind my hon. Friend that, back in 1961 and subsequently, when considering licensing in England and this issue of warrants, the then Home Secretary said that one of the most valued privileges of clubs is freedom from police entry without warrant and that that privilege should be retained as it has been in England. Does my hon. Friend agree that the privilege should be retained in Scotland and that that reinforces the case for it?

Mr. Dewar: Yes, it sounds an interesting passage, which might be recycled with advantage at a later stage. My hon. Friend makes a serious point about a serious point. We should not be cavalier about giving away rights in the proposed way.

Like most hon. Members, I have a long-standing interest in divorce and hence in clause 53. I remember, back in the 1960s, moving a 10-minute Bill to replace the matrimonial offence with the ground of irretrievable breakdown. It was right to reduce the importance of the matrimonial offence, with all its inherent tendencies to embittering claim and counter-claim. I also accept that the law must reflect social reality—an important principle, easily forgotten. I recognise that the move to two years without consent and one year with consent was recommended after a good deal of thought by the Law Commission—rather quaintly bolstered by a public opinion survey by which Ministers in another place laid great store.

I must record my doubts about this matter and about the speed of change. I am rather surprised by this provision —as was Lord Hailsham, who felt that there was virtue in keeping the basic groundwork of divorce the same north and south of the border. Recently, the Lord Chancellor has made speeches about easier divorce which do not sit easily with this provision. I accept, however, that there is a case for change and I shall support some change. For example, I think that the five-year period during which consent can be withheld is too long. There is a genuine danger—although it can be exaggerated—of undue pressure being applied when it comes to negotiations over possessions and terms, or perhaps even access and custody, when one party refuses to grant a divorce and knows that he has five years in hand.

Meanwhile, the other party may have found a new partner, and children may be on the way or have arrived. Unpleasantness can then arise and an unfair advantage can be given, so I think that the five-year period should be reduced. There are no absolutes in this, but my judgment is that it should come down to three years, probably not to the two years proposed by the Law Commission. It is important that marriage should not be seen as a trap. If both parties are satisfied that the marriage is at an end, and if the courts are satisfied that the proper arrangements have been made for the children, there is a case for thinking in terms of one or two years—it is a difficult judgment. However, I would not go as low as the Government propose on the non-consent provision.

Dr. Godman: Given that I am not likely to receive an invitation to join the Committee which will scrutinise the Bill—*[Interruption.]* In view of what the Whip is telling me, perhaps I should withdraw that remark.

Does my hon. Friend agree that the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 needs to be changed in another crucial way? While an order can be obtained under that Act to remove an accused perpetrator of child abuse or sexual abuse from the matrimonial home, the procedure is far too slow and cumbersome. Surely in all such cases it is the accused perpetrator who should be removed from the matrimonial home, not the children?

Mr. Dewar: I should like to read what my hon. Friend has said. The Act is an area of some difficulty. There is no doubt that it was an important change in the law and that it was welcome and socially desirable, but there are problems in its operation. One ambiguity in the Act is tackled in this Bill by the matrimonial interdicts and the circumstances in which they have to be reported to the police. No doubt, with my hon. Friend's help, we shall return to that in Committee. One of my regrets is that the opportunities for exploring these matters will be limited by the time factor, but I accept that my hon. Friend has made a perfectly legitimate point for consideration.

I hope that we shall debate video evidence and the Government's approach to it in Committee. I have always seen this as having to do with child abuse, or with the protection of complainers in certain sexual assault cases —especially rape—or with the Roskill report on serious fraud. The clause gives an unlimited right, subject to the judge's satisfaction that it is in the interests of justice. The Secretary of State has said that this will be implemented only for murder, manslaughter and serious fraud——

Mr. Menzies Campbell: Culpable homicide.

Mr. Dewar: Indeed—I am sorry.

I will have to look at this, but, apart from fraud, these were not the offences that I thought would require video linking. It makes deeper my genuine puzzlement as to why we are taking this approach and why we are being faced with that list. There are problems with video links. Cross-examination will be particularly difficult and there will be problems with the assessment of credibility because television can be a distorting medium.

Dr. Godman: Have not the Government missed a fine opportunity to bring us into line with extant English legislation—the Criminal Justice Act 1988? Why have they refused to take this opportunity?

Mr. Dewar: My hon. Friend is making, in a direct and sensible way, a point that I was trying to make in a roundabout way, and that is that the list set out by the Secretary of State is not the one that I anticipated. It excludes some of the offences that I should have thought would be those for which the arguments for video linking would be strongest, such as offences involving children and sexual offences. However, these offences appear to be specifically excluded. That is why I said that I was puzzled

[Mr. Dewar]

by the exchanges during the Secretary of State's speech. We shall come to this in Committee. On the basis of what I understand to be the position, my intention is to look for substantial changes. If, despite the difficulties, we are to have index linking, it should come for offences where it is appropriate rather than for these offences.

I am surprised by the provisions dealing with war crimes. I shall not press the Secretary further, but the exception written into the Bill by the other place is indefensible and if it gets on the statute book it will have to be removed. I say that as one who has no enthusiasm for the War Crimes Bill, as I proved with my vote on it. It may be right to pause before final decisions are taken, but to leave the Bill as it is seems, to put it in the kindest way, quaint, and not something that I should want to do.

The Bill covers many subjects—charities, definitions of homelessness, community service orders, probation hostels, the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981, the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984—all of which would justify extensive debate. We shall have to see what we can do in Committee. I am depressed about our prospects for doing so in the time allowed. This is not a good Bill. I do not go as far as the dean of the faculty of law at Edinburgh university, Professor Wolfson, who said that this should have been called the Scots Law (Abolition) Bill. Nor do I believe, as he suggested, that this is the death of the Scottish legal system. I do not even share his fear that the atmosphere in the Scottish courts will be set by slick accountants from Clapham. That is a little excitable.

There are genuine and substantial fears about what the Bill proposes. The way in which it has been handled reflects little credit on the Government. The balance of the argument is against the measure. I have no hesitation in urging my colleagues, and perhaps others, to vote for our amendment.

6.23 pm

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): I speak tonight, I hope without prejudice, but with some experience of the matters covered by the Bill. I regret to say that I find most of it extremely unsatisfactory. I should declare an interest, or perhaps many interests, because the Bill covers so many sectors that it is difficult to know which interest to declare. I am a Queen's counsel, I am a practising lawyer, I drink on Sundays and, from time to time, I subscribe to charity. At the moment, I am not homeless, nor am I intending to divorce my wife. Lest these matters arose in the course of the Bill, which may require a new clause to alter the Scottish calendar, I would declare them in advance.

This is a bad Bill. It is a sandwich of stale bread and poisoned meat. Part I is a thick bit of bread about charities. Part II is a very thick piece of beef which is seriously contaminated. Part IV is a miscellany of breadcrumbs and Part III is no doubt a potion on the licensing laws to help us to swallow the indigestible bits.

I have always had my reservations about theoretical organisations such as the Law Commission reinventing the law as they believe that it should be, but a miscellaneous provisions Bill is useful so as to adjust the law to the reasonable changes and subtle circumstances of our life in all its manifestations in Scotland, from time to time as circumstances dictate. However, the convulsion that the proposals in the Bill will cause and its effects on the legal profession should not be undertaken in a miscellaneous provisions Bill, and certainly should not be embarked upon in the middle of June. I agree with the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar): it is an imposition and an unfairness, principally on Members of Parliament, but infinitely worse on the public and on all parts of the profession.

Part I, dealing with charities, is verbose and complex. Scotland has been lucky, in that charities can merely apply for their various purposes to the Inland Revenue and, if that is proved, that is that. We do not have charity commissioners, although we may have been happy to shelter under their umbrella to a certain extent. However, to take 18 pages and 13 clauses to do almost nothing would be a remarkable legislative achievement if it were to get through.

I am in doubt as to the necessity or purpose of part I, but our system works. If a charity holds itself out to be something that it is not, the Lord Advocate has an automatic remit to exercise the powers that are now taken in the Bill. If there is a prima facie criminal offence, he can investigate and prosecute. Why do we have to take statutory provisions, at such length, to do the same? If the Lord Advocate cannot do that, the Inland Revenue, which probably knows no rules, will do it for itself.

Many of the powers that the Bill will introduce are superfluous. The Government had a great opportunity to make a register of charities with their purposes, so that those who give can know to whom they wish to give and others may know from whom they might seek help. There is not a week in my life in which people do not write to me or ring me up to ask me, "Can you tell me of a charity that might help me with my problem?" *The Scots Magazine* used to publish such a list, but alas, it does so no longer. If we are to have these vast and bureaucratic regulations, such a list is the least that the public can expect to have included.

Great burdens of administration are newly put upon charities but every penny spent on administration is lost to them. We already know how easily those who run a charity can exhaust its income by so doing. All the administrative requirements to be put on charities as a result of the Bill are likely to absorb a great deal of the money given in good will for purposes which are not administrative.

Clause 5 gives cause for great caution. The Lord Advocate is granted powers of investigation, demand and scrutiny that go beyond the powers of natural justice and any powers that could or should be used or granted to others. I welcome clauses 8 and 9, which seek, however clumsily, to simplify the winding up or the change to a small trust or charity. I doubt whether any of their trustees will comprehend the legislation, assuming that they know where to find it or can read it. They can, I suppose, consult a solicitor, if there are any left, and exhaust the funds of their trust or charity to avoid the necessity to change its purpose.

I am sure that even my severest critic would not suggest that I was an establishment man. No one has been a more consistent critic of the various weaknesses of all branches of the profession—or, I trust, a better sustainer of its strengths. Therefore, I speak with conviction. I am not speaking about part II because I am a lawyer. I am not a lawyer to serve myself. I have spent my life serving the client, and the purpose of the legal profession is to serve

the client. I am appalled by the proposals in part II because I believe that they will seriously damage those who seek the help of the legal profession.

Part II encompasses clauses 14 to 17, and takes up five pages of the Bill. It proposes to set up a new quango with grants from public funds to enable banks, building societies and other financial institutions, many of which will have their headquarters and certainly the bulk of their capital and finance forth of Scotland, to act as conveyancers.

The hon. Member for Garscadden was right to say that part II deals with an important matter. I believe that it is extraordinary that we are setting up a quango to qualify people as conveyancers who are not even qualified as lawyers, far less as conveyancers. We are setting up a quango to qualify the unqualified, for the purposes of the great institutions. We are therefore disfranchising 1,100 firms of solicitors to give the great institutions an opportunity. I asked the Secretary of State why the Bill does not mention hairdressers, do-it-yourself shops or others who might care to take on conveyancing. The answer is that they do not have a financial interest in doing so. The fact that the banks and the building societies are the institutions that will undertake the conveyancing means, ipso facto, that the playing field will be one on which no team could beat Costa Rica.

Let us be clear about this. We are to have qualified surveyors who will undertake conveyancing or the legal work involved with the buying and selling of a house in vacuo. Those people will not be asked whether they can tell Mrs. Snodgrass about the implications of putting that house in joint names. That is not a conveyancing matter, but a matrimonial one. Those people will be unable to tell Mr. Snodgrass what happens if he puts the house in his wife's name and she leaves him. They will be unable to say what will happen if, by the slightest chance, the property is split or is subject to independent planning permission. They will be unable to say what happens to a residual feu right. They will not know the answers. They will know none of the general law which affects the purchase and sale of a house. It is not good enough to say that one is a qualified conveyancer.

Do the Government intend to set up qualified divorcers? Will a fellow put a postcard through the sheriff court, or whatever one does nowadays, without knowing the law of succession? Will we have qualified criminal people who know about the criminal law only and nothing about the law of evidence and procedure? It is a most extraordinary concept that people should be trained as qualified conveyancers—I regret that the term QC is thereby debased, as it shares the same initials—to do a tiny scrap of work that is vital to solicitors, but just another bit of the roast for the great institutions.

The most important effect of the Bill is that it will give the institutions the power to buy and sell one's house, survey it, insure it and insure one's life and those of one's children. Such is the power that the institutions will combine. No statute, no interest and no power will prevent that irresistible path. We already know that many building societies say, "If you don't use our surveyor, you don't get your mortgage." Similarly, they say that, if a person does not allow them to sell his house, he will not get a mortgage to buy the next one. No provision thought up by the Lord Chancellor in another place, now in a Bill, will prevent that. No doubt the regulations will say that one must be faced with a lawyer if one wants one. The regulations will say that people must have that right. How many people have the right to have a lawyer in a police station when it is in their interests to have one, and how many just happen to sign a form saying that they do not want one? No provision under the Financial Services Act 1986 can prevent what will be a considerable advantage to the institutions. The Government say that it is all about choice, but it is a crocodile choice, snake choice—we will lick you first and eat you later.

Clause 22 concerns rights of audience. My comments on it are made, I hope, without prejudice, as an advocate who has been in practice for many years and has had the benefit of hon. Members on both sides of the House assisting him as his junior or, in some cases, very junior. Even the Secretary of State has been my junior, but I will not comment on how useful he was on those occasions.

Dr. Godman: And the Lord Advocate.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: Yes, the Lord Advocate has been my junior as well.

One of the most important parts of the law, as of the medical profession, is to have an independent body of experts who have nothing to do with the client except during the case in which they are concerned. A solicitor has frequently told me to call a policeman a liar—to do what the client wants, so that he will be pleased with the solicitor. That is bad agency, but it happens. The advocate will never see the client again. I used to, because I used to get them off.

Mr. Foulkes: But they were all guilty.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: There is a presumption of innocence in the case of my clients, but perhaps not in those of the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, (Mr. Foulkes).

It is essential and it is shown in the difference between the pleading in the sheriff court and the High Court, that the person who presents the case is not involved in a contractual relationship with the client whom he hopes to keep for all other purposes. It is also essential that, in small towns and small places—even in places as big as Inverness—a solicitor can protect himself by obtaining the opinion and services of counsel.

A solicitor is often busy. People come in and out. One may want to buy a house, one may want to divorce his wife, one may want to make a will and one may have fallen over the pavement. A solicitor may have a hundred things on his mind. To be able to obtain somebody who has only one problem on his mind is an important service. If solicitors and advocates are linked so that advocates are part of practices in Glasgow or Edinburgh, how does one obtain the services of Mr. X? How does one obtain my services? The only way to obtain my services is to instruct the firm of solicitors of which I am a partner, and once a local firm does that, it has lost all that person's business for good. Or a local firm may say that my services are not necessary because it has a frightfully good chap, Mr. McSnod, a marvellous court practitioner. In doing so, it gives a bad service and the public will lose out.

The serious point about interference in the solicitors' profession and the rights of representation is that the client will not have a solicitor service in the countryside, and in the towns the smaller firms will be compromised and the multi-disciplinary practices will pervade. Anyone who knows the differences between their charges will be fearful

[Sir Nicholas Fairbairn]

of the effect. The destruction of the solicitors' profession will remove a considerable prop and structure of rural life and one of the great characteristics of the structure of the legal profession in Scotland.

If we are to change our conveyancing profession, which we say is so much better than that in England, we should do something about the one bad thing in it, which is blind bidding. It is ridiculous that a young couple may bid for 20 houses without knowing whether one has been lost by a penny or whether £20,000 too much has been spent. Each time, they have to obtain a survey and a solicitor. I propose to table a new clause so that all bids for the purchase of a property must be disclosed to all bidders.

I come briefly to divorce. It is a difficult problem but, as the hon. Member for Garscadden said, it is outrageous that the financial benefits of holding out on somebody else for five years should be available. The hon. Gentleman said that he would like the period reduced a little, but I do not see that reducing it to three years would remove the blackmail. Where the parties are separated, a person should be allowed to go to the court and satisfy it that the parties will never live together again. In some cases the court may say that it thinks that the marriage has a chance and the partners must try again for a year. But I do not see why there should be a statutory period of five, three, 10 or two years. Admittedly, the laws of legitimacy have been changed, but if a separated woman is approaching the end of her puerperal capabilities, during that time she cannot give rise to other than an illegitimate child. Therefore, it is wrong to have a statutory time in which one partner can, for whatever reason, hold out on the other.

I have no doubt talked for far too long, but I wish to raise one other matter in the schedules—the appointment of judges to the Inner House or the Appeal Court. Scotland has a collegiate court. Its members eat and drink together every day. They all know one another intimately. They meet one another every day. It is absurd that the Lord President and the Lord Justice Clerk should be able to pack their court as they would like it packed. I will not mention names—nisi nil bonum de mortuis—but many of those who are asleep before whom I have pled from time to time would have made it on merit in the days when they could stay awake.

This is not an improvement. It is also contrary to the terms of appointment of those judges. For instance, it suggests that they have been allowed to be judges when they were not good enough to be judges. We have a Lord President who had never judged anything in his life until he became a judge. He has never been a sheriff principal. That measure is unpopular with all the judges, except, presumably, the Lord President and the Lord Justice Clerk. But let us also be careful about this. All the judges —the Lords Ordinary—sit in the division, civil and criminal, and it is extraordinary for the House to say that people who, according to the Lord President and the Lord Justice Clerk, are disqualified from promotion should sit in the division. That is what it means. That is an unacceptable change in the collegiality of the College of Justice in Scotland.

I am sorry to say that there are so many things about the Bill which I find unacceptable that I would spend the rest of the night if I were to mention a quarter of them. But I hope that that I have given the Government warning that, in almost every part of the Bill, I shall be opposed to their purpose.

6.49 pm

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): I am honoured to follow the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn), who made such a valuable contribution to our debate and made me aware of why I would never make a good member of a jury. The hon. and learned Gentleman has persuaded me against the provisions in the Bill which change various aspects of the legal profession. But I am equally sure that, in 10 minutes' time, I could listen to another advocate who would persuade me of the opposite view. That is one of the major dilemmas for laymen and laywomen when dealing with this legislation.

I know the hon. and learned Gentleman well enough to say that, if anyone appreciates that he has spent his life representing his clients, it is me. I know him well enough to tell the famous anecdote from when Duncan Mackenzie was the governor at Barlinnie. He was walking through the grounds one morning in the company of the hon. and learned Gentleman. Several prisoners on exercise said, "Good morning, Mr. Fairbairn." Big Duncan turned to the hon. and learned Gentleman and said, "You haven't been doing so well lately, have you?"

I was interested in the comparison that the hon. and learned Gentleman made with hairdressers undertaking conveyancing. As a house purchaser, I would certainly never dream of asking a barber to do the conveyancing on my house. But to be fair to the hairdressing profession, nor would I dream of asking the hon. and learned Gentleman to cut my hair—although the last haircut that I had might suggest that he had cut it.

I begin with a word of caution to the Minister who will reply to the debate. Where he sits now, I once sat. I recognise some well-known faces assisting him in the Box. When I was a Minister, I dealt with precisely the same kind of legislation with which the Minister is dealing tonight and will steer through Committee. I was responsible for the Licensing (Scotland) Bill in 1976 and the Divorce (Scotland) Bill in 1976. I was assisted by some of those who are assisting the Minister. The word of caution is this. At the subesquent election, the Government were defeated, so I suggest to the Minister that he start looking for another job. I am not saying that those who are assisting him had that effect on me as a Minister, but there is some connection between the two things that I mention.

I speak as a layman. As such, I am not sure that the changes in conveyancing are as draconian as the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross or even my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) sought to persuade us. I appreciate that one of the most important things, particularly for a young couple, that people do in their life is to purchase their first house. With house prices as they are now, it is commonplace for a young couple starting out in life to pay £30,000, £35,000 or £40,000 for their first house. As I look around the Chamber, I can see no hon. Members who were in that position when they first started out on married life.

It is absolutely crucial that the financial and legal details of the important transaction of buying a house are absolutely right as far as we can ensure. As we know, consequences on resale and all that goes with it, problems

arising from the breakdown of marriage—I shall come to that matter later—and all sorts of other things may flow from the initial transaction. I shall be persuaded to support the Bill during progress through its various stages if I can be convinced that what we are doing as elected Members of Parliament is in the best interests of people, particularly young couples, who make that vital decision.

Hon. Members on both sides of the House will agree that the same risk does not arise when elderly people or people who have had more experience of buying and selling houses purchase a home. Some people move from house to house at regular intervals, so the same risk does not occur. My abiding concern is for a young couple starting out in life buying that expensive item called a house. It is essential that the financial and legal conditions under which that transaction is conducted are as right as we can make them.

With great respect to estate agents, if making the legal conditions of conveyancing right means that it must remain in the hands of the legal profession, I support that. I am here to be convinced. I have an open mind at present. Equally, if I can be convinced that estate agents could handle conveyancing with the proper training and registration, I should consider that possibility too. I hope that that is the way in which all hon. Members will consider this important legislation.

I was pleased to hear my hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden say that many of the issues raised by the Bill will be decided, at least on the Opposition side, by a free vote. This is not a party political issue. The best way to get these matters right is to decide them as we did in the Licensing (Scotland) Bill and the Divorce (Scotland) Bill. Except on two specific issues in the Licensing (Scotland) Bill, which I shall deal with later, matters were decided on a free vote in order to obtain a consensus of opinion.

My hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden referred to the timetable for consideration of the Bill in Committee. There will be no filibustering in Committee, of that I am convinced. For that reason, it would be a great pity—I say this with great respect to the Minister, whom I know to be a fair man—if discussion were curtailed in Committee, as a result not of filibustering but of the date of the summer recess and the formal date for the opening of the next session of Parliament. The summer recess and the date for the opening of Parliament are not good reasons for curtailing discussion in Committee on an important Bill such as this.

I have an open mind on the legal and conveyancing provisions in the Bill. I shall now move on from parts I and II to parts III and IV. Part III deals with licensing and part IV deals with divorce law reform. I intervened during the speech of the Secretary of State and he kindly gave way on police powers to enter clubs either without an invitation or without a warrant. I said to the Secretary of State, as I say again to the House, that the 1976 Bill contained such a provision. Although it was carried in Committee, it was heavily defeated on the Floor of the House and the Secretary of State and the Minister both voted against the proposal to allow the police the right of entry into licensed clubs without a warrant.

The arguments were clear and sound. The argument was led by the late Michael Clark Hutchison, who represented Edinburgh, South. He argued that a club was an extension of a person's residence because there are residential clubs which are licensed. There are such clubs in Edinburgh. Just as the police do not have the right to enter a person's residence without either an invitation or a warrant, neither should they have the right to enter an extension of that person's residence in the form of a club. I agree with those who say that any extension of police powers must be considered much more seriously than is provided for in this Bill.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) may read into the record the statement issued by the Law Society some 60 minutes ago. It is concerned about the proposal in the Bill to allow the police right of entry into licensed clubs. It will permit a constable to enter a club without a warrant or an invitation, full stop. He does not need to suspect that a crime is being committed, that there is unruly behaviour, or that anything untoward is happening. That is not the case with a public house. A police officer cannot enter a public house unless he suspects that some offence is being committed. If this provision is enacted, private clubs will not be on a par with public houses. The most serious consideration must be given to that proposal. I hope that the Minister will take a good long hard look at it in Committee.

Mr. Buchan: A similar provision was included in the Broadcasting Bill, in the notorious clause 145, to allow police entry to studios on suspicion—but that was withdrawn by the Government on a United Kingdom basis. At the same time, they are attempting to introduce a similar draconian provision in a Scottish Bill to allow police entry without a warrant.

Mr. Ewing: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing that to my attention. He makes an important comparison that should be taken into account.

I am aware that the police in Scotland have long wanted such a power. There is no greater supporter of the police than me, but the mere fact that the police want such powers is not a good reason for giving them. We must consider the interests of the individual who will be affected by the granting of them. I should have thought that, at present, the police, certainly in Scotland, are under sufficient pressure without imposing an additional burden to the duties they are already asked to undertake on behalf of the public.

As to the change in licensing hours, I accept that the regular extension has been abused. I remember the discussions we had with the Scottish Licensed Trade Association, when no one anticipated the consequences for a moment. For the first time, I publicly pay tribute to the late Jimmy Ross from Dundee, president of the association at that time, who did tremendous work in guiding us with that legislation. We were open to discussion with anyone and everyone who wanted to talk to us during its formulation. The association did not anticipate that the regular extension would be used in the way that it has been used under the 1976 Act.

There are residential areas in my own constituency, as there are in those of other right hon. and hon. Members, where regular extensions have caused untold trouble. I have no complaint about additional powers being given to the licensing boards in that respect.

Where I part company with the Bill and, I suspect, with the Minister, is in relation to the dangerous decision to allow off-sales premises to open from 10.30 am to 10 pm on Sunday. I fail to understand the reason for that provision. The Secretary of State said that it was the result of a survey. When, in 1976, I was the Minister with

[Mr. Ewing]

responsibility for reforming licensing laws in Scotland, there was a knock at the door of my home in Leven. On the doorstep was a student from St. Andrews university earning an honest crumb by undertaking a survey on behalf of the Scottish Office on licensing law reforms.

Her first question was to me, "Do you know that the Government are reforming the licensing laws?"—to which I replied that I had read about it somewhere. She then went through about 20 pages of questions about my drinking habits. I will not go into either the questions or answers because you, Madam Deputy Speaker, would not be interested in hearing them. She ended with this gem. She said, "I should tell you that we are not supposed to mention the Government really, because they are unpopular at the minute." She could have told me that again. She explained, "We do not want their unpopularity to rub off on the reforms of the licensing laws." That was the basis upon which that survey was undertaken.

Surveys are notorious for eliciting popular answers to the questions they pose—not accurate or meaningful answers, but popular answers. There is a difference. If the Minister went into Asda in Kirkaldy on a Sunday and asked Mrs. Brown there, "As you have been able to buy your magazine, sugar, jam and pizza, do you think it's fair that you can't buy a bottle of wine?", Mrs. Brown would be bound to reply, "No, it's no fair." We can be certain that Asda would make sure that Mrs. Brown would say it was unfair. I am never convinced by surveys, but I am convinced of the dangers created by the opening of off-sales premises on Sunday.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) said, Scotland has the most serious under-age drinking problem of any western European country, so it is the height of irresponsibility for the Government to introduce such changes at this time. It has been proven beyond doubt that the source of the alcohol purchased by under-age drinkers is invariably off-licences. That is because of the ease with which youngsters can buy alcohol from them, and, even worse, because of the irresponsible adults who are prepared to buy liquor from off-licence stores and give it to the youngsters outside the shop.

An added feature that I bitterly regret not taking care of in the 1976 legislation is the open selection of alcohol. No one should be able to enter a store and take a bottle of whisky from the shelf and go to a check-out where the cashier sees a queue half a mile long waiting to pay. She is not concerned whether or not the person with that bottle of whisky is 16 or 60. She is more concerned with taking the money for that item. One cannot blame her, because she is under pressure to get that queue down. The open selection of alcohol in the off-licence sections of supermarkets adds to the problem of under-age drinking.

The Minister has no defence. Off-licences are open from 8 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night—not from 11 am to 11 pm as in other places. They are open that long six days a week, and there is no need to add Sunday opening from 12.30 pm until 10 o'clock at night.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that we would very much welcome him on the Committee, where he could use his experience in tabling amendments? Is he aware also that clause 45 attempts to deal with that specific problem? It states:

"any off-sale premises . . . or any employee or agent . . . who causes or permits a person under 18 to sell on these premises alcoholic liquor without that sale having been specifically approved by the licence holder or by a person of or over 18 . . . shall be guilty of an offence."

If the hon. Gentleman has further suggestions, we will welcome them in Committee.

Mr. Ewing: That does not deal with the problem of the pre-selection of wines and spirits in supermarkets. We should ensure that wine, spirits and alcohol of any description is treated in the same way as cigarettes and served by an assistant. We cannot go into a supermarket and take cigarettes off the shelf. We have to go right round the supermarket, do all the shopping and then go to a counter and get an assistant to serve us with cigarettes. We should do the same for alcohol. That is one of the things that I hope to suggest at a later stage of the Bill.

Before I leave the subject, the Secretary of State said that the legislation will bring Scotland in line with England. Goodness me, what a thing to say to the House of Commons. The position in England is exactly the opposite, because people can buy liquor on Sunday but they cannot buy groceries, whereas in Scotland people can buy groceries but not liquor. That seemed to be a stupid remark from the Secretary of State in defence of a proposal to open off-sales on a Sunday.

I know what has happened, because it also happened when we put the licensing legislation together. The large multiples have been to the Government and asked them to make such a change. They have said, "We tried to persuade the Labour Government to do it and they wouldn't do it," and the Government have given in. It is as simple as that, and it is not a result of surveys or anything else.

I want the Minister to think carefully about the effects of the legislation. The *Daily Record* in Scotland has highlighted month after month the issue of under-age drinking and the serious problems that that causes.

I end my speech on the subject of divorce law reform. Once again I pay tribute to a former Member of Parliament who sat on the Scottish National party bench. The Divorce (Scotland) Bill was not a Government Bill, but a private Member's Bill introduced by George Reid —[HON. MEMBERS: "No, it was Ian MacCormack."] I thank hon. Members for that reply in unison. That is the only time that I have heard two Members of the Scottish National party agree. If I have achieved nothing else, I have achieved agreement on the SNP benches. It was not George Reid—it was Ian MacCormack. The Labour Government took the Bill over, because we wanted to ensure that the new divorce law reform was a meaningful measure.

I do not take the view that my hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden took, and I certainly do not take the same view as the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross. I am not happy about the proposal to reduce the time in which one of the parties in a defended action does not agree on a divorce, from five years to two. I am even less happy about reducing to one year the two-year limit which proves the irretrievable breakdown of a marriage.

In such a serious situation, especially where children are involved, there has to be time for second thoughts and for reconciliation. I remember when the Divorce (Scotland)

Act proceeded through its stages. One of the favourite songs in Scotland at the time was the "Church, the Courthouse and then Goodbye" by Sidney Devine. If we reduce the time limits as proof of irretrievable breakdown of marriage from two years to one year and the limit when one of the parties does not agree to a divorce from five years to two years, we are moving rapidly towards the church, the courthouse and then goodbye. That is no basis on which to build a stable society.

Dr. Godman: Do my hon. Friend's most serious reservations about that issue hold true for childless couples?

Mr. Ewing: I take the view that there has to be time for second thoughts and reconciliation. Yes, I still take the view that I have explained.

In Committee, I hope to move an amendment to the Army Act 1955. Recently, I have been involved in a case in which Falkirk sheriff court made a maintenance order against a staff sergeant in the Army, but his commanding officer, under the terms of the Army Act 1955, has set it aside. Hon. Members may not be aware of this, as I was not until it was brought to my attention. As a result, one of my constituents and her two children get no maintenance because the staff sergeant's commanding officer considers that he should not be paying it. Falkirk sheriff court took the decision that he should, and set the level of maintenance. It sent the order to the commanding officer. He insisted that it was delivered to him personally by a court officer, who was sent down from Falkirk to the barracks in Manchester to deliver it.

I have taken the matter up with the Secretary of State for Defence—who is a member of a family Government, we are told—only to be told in a reply today that the Government are upholding the commanding officer's decision to set aside the court maintenance order. That is an absolute disgrace, and I hope that we can deal with the matter in Committee.

As the House will gather, I have some serious reservations about the Bill and I hope that we can effect changes as it goes through its various stages.

7.15 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): After the debate so far, one thing is certain—we shall have an interesting Committee stage. I agree with the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) that this is not, in the main, a party political Bill, and there are probably no political runs in it. That is why in some ways it is a pity that the House is not consulted before legislation. Would it not be much better to discuss some of the issues in the Bill in the Scottish Grand Committee rather than to consult interested parties who give predictable answers, we should then get a general view from hon. Members representing constituents who probably have a much less biased view than those people who were consulted officially.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: Forgetting about the Scottish Grand Committee, there is a perfectly good procedure, which was used on the Family Law Reform Act 1969, in which evidence is given about the desirability or otherwise of every clause of the Bill. That procedure was used only once, for that Act, and it ought to be used for this Bill.

Sir Hector Monro: I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend for his knowledge of that procedure. However, we are debating a broad-reaching Bill which covers a whole host of topics. It is difficult to give a coherent Second Reading speech with a theme. One has to jump about almost as though one were in Committee.

I share the view of all hon. Members that we are setting out a remarkably tight schedule for the Committee stage. It would be a pity if we had to have debates through the night when they should be taken at a reasonable pace and hour so that the general public can follow them as well as Members of the Committee.

I am also concerned, although it is too late to do anything about it now, that the title of the Bill is as wide and as long as it is. One could discuss almost any subject to do with the law under that title, and that will not help to achieve a concise ending in Committee.

I agree in general with many of the provisions of part I and give general support to it. However, I have many doubts about the legal services provision. So far as I recall, I have had no constituency correspondence in recent years in favour of change, whether on the issue of solicitors and advocates or on conveyancing. The general public are much less concerned about the legal profession in Scotland than the Bill gives us to understand. They are not expecting such dramatic changes to the profession. I wonder, therefore, whether the heartache is worth the eventual gain.

Conveyancing is vital to the legal profession. I listened with great interest and concern to the views of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn), who speaks with exceptional experience of the law in Scotland. There is competition now in conveyancing. Solicitors say that clients ring up and ask, "What fee will you charge to convey this house?" The scale fees are virtually disregarded. Competition comes in the form of the solicitor's response—what he will charge to carry out a conveyance. That competition is important. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross and even my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State referred to the conflict of interest which is highlighted in many of the admirable papers that we have received from the Law Society.

Solicitors give advice on conveyancing, over and above the legal requirement. They give first-time buyers advice on setting up house—whether it should be done in partnership. They give clear and independent advice on insurance. Naturally, insurance commission is important to the insurance company. One has to ask whether institutions will use conveyancing as a loss leader. The package deal which may be offered does not necessarily include the important legal advice that a father, if he were legally qualified, might give his son. The family solicitor's advice to his client is all-important.

The provisions may require there to be a face-to-face relationship with the client. That face, however, will have removed itself to Edinburgh or Glasgow, 50 or 100 miles away, when the chips are down and the removal van arrives. Who, then, will deal with the problem about electrical fittings and the fact that the fireplace has been removed? And what about the porch at the back? All the problems concerning a property can, however, be resolved at relatively short notice by the solicitor, who is within a mile or so of his client. One may go to a building society or chartered surveyor and sign a form because it looks like a simple and complete package deal, but these matters

[Sir Hector Monro]

ought to be dealt with slowly and carefully, with the advice and help of a solicitor. We should take great care when legislating to deal with this problem.

The hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) highlighted the fact that if solicitors do not have an important part to play in Scottish conveyancing they will lose between 60 and 80 per cent. of their income. If they do not have that income, they will be unable to subsidise other aspects of their practice. They give advice on community matters, which is absolutely crucial. We shall be removing a stable and important aspect of professional advice that has often been given free to the community. That help will not be there if the bread-and-butter income from conveyancing disappears.

The Government must examine that aspect particularly in the rural context. It will be difficult legally to define what is meant by the rural aspect. What is rural and what is urban? Would one describe Inverness as a rural town? I believe that it is, but others might say that it was too large to be considered a rural town. The same might be said of Dumfries. Would one have to consider only solicitors in small towns, with populations of between 5,000 and 8,000? My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will have to consider carefully all the aspects surrounding conveyancing. It may be a major stumbling block in Committee. I am unhappy about the proposals, and I shall expect substantial changes to be made upstairs.

We are told to wait for the regulations that will govern the new conveyancing body. The regulations are not contained in the Bill. Will they be put before the Committee? I am not inclined to give a blank cheque in the hope that the regulations and the guidance will be all right. We ought to have before us in Committee a draft of the regulations so that they may be considered with the clause.

I do not believe that the building societies will be particularly enthusiastic about conveyancing. That may be so in the cities, but it will be less so in rural areas. We should not be prepared to take the risk. Building societies are responsible institutions, but Scottish solicitors are infinitely more important when it comes to conveyancing. We must bear that point in mind when we deal in Committee with conveyancing.

I note that a legal services ombudsman will replace the lay observer. That person must be provided with a great deal more power than the lay observer enjoys. The lay observer was outstandingly good, but invariably she ended up saying, "You are absolutely right and I am absolutely right, but I have no power to go any further." The ombudsman must be able to give advice and then ensure that the particular aspect of the legal profession's failure which has been submitted to him or her, as ombudsman, is rectified. The ombudsman must be an effective trouble-shooter.

I share the disquiet of the hon. Member for Falkirk, East and other hon. Members about the licensing laws. I served on the Committee that considered the 1976 Bill. Dr. Clayson is one of my constituents. He is an exceptional personality who has not received the recognition that he deserves for the changes that he brought about in the Scottish licensing laws. We must proceed cautiously in Committee. Many of us have received petitions and correspondence from the Kirk Sessions.

There is great concern about the off-licence issue as it relates to supermarkets. How right the hon. Member for Falkirk, East was to say that it is the easiest thing in the world to dodge the age rule in a supermarket. When a lot of people are waiting to be checked out, no one is going to haggle about whether someone is 16, 17, 18 or 19 years old. I welcome the idea that a voluntary identification card should be carried by people who are on the borderline. That would prove their age, but we ought not to encourage young people to drink. The provision allowing alcohol to be available at off-licences on Sundays will make control that much harder. We must watch that closely. I welcome the measure on late night drinking as virtually all of us have dealt with constituency cases in which a great deal of noise near hotels and pubs has caused dissatisfaction to neighbours. I am glad that the Bill take that into account.

However, I approach clause 46 with strong reservations, indeed opposition. It involves the powers of entry into private clubs. Reference has been made to what the Home Secretary said in 1961. That seems to hold as soundly now as it did then. Private clubs have held the cherished position of being an extension of one's home, as the hon. Member for Falkirk, East said. However strongly I support the police, as a past chairman of the police committee in my area, I believe that those powers are unnecessary and go too far. If the police are suspicious, they can get a warrant. As has been said, the legislation would put the clubs in a more restricted position than the pubs. Surely that cannot be right. We shall have to examine the clause extremely carefully. All the signs are that there is united opposition to clause 46, it is unlikely to have a very successful passage through the Committee.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: Under that part of the clause, the police would have the right to enter my hon. Friend's home to see whether he had sold me a drink rather than offered me one, even if neither was likely.

Sir Hector Monro: My dear hon. and learned Friend pushes me to the limit at times. He knows that there is a standing invitation and a bottle of Laphroig waiting for him whenever he wishes to come to my home—and what a delight it is when he and his dear wife visit.

Somewhat inappropriately, I now move on to divorce. Here again, we have to make haste very carefully. I am concerned that the proposed legislation gives a general impression that divorce will be easier. If the limit is down to a year, some people will say, "Why the hell should we get married? Let us wait a year and see how it goes and we may save the bother of getting a divorce." The sanctity of marriage is so important. I should like there to be a tremendous lead from the Church on divorce, but we do not seem to be getting one. I am most concerned that children will be put in a more serious position than they are now when their parents break up.

I agree that sometimes marriages are irretrievable, but that should be judged by the courts and not decided on a time scale set out in legislation. Everything should always be considered on balance by people with mature judgment. Instead of saying that the Bill states three years, two years or one year, they should consider how best to achieve, first, a reconciliation, secondly, responsibility to the children who will be left in the worst position of all and, thirdly, whether anything can be done to stop the marriage breaking up. The Bill makes it apparently easier to get a divorce, and that is the last thing that we should be doing.

Divorce should be the last point of no return and not the first means to break up a marriage and forget all about it. Obviously there will be detailed debate on that in Committee.

There is much to do, and so that my hon. Friend the Minister knows where I stand before we reach Committee, it is no use expecting my support for implementing the war crimes legislation in any form, as I share the view of the House of Lords that it is inappropriate in 1990. I accept that it will have to be reconsidered in the next Session, but we must not have any paving legislation in the Bill, which might enhance the chances of war crimes legislation succeeding in the future.

There are good things in the Bill, although I had to look rather hard to find them, but by and large my hon. Friend the Minister must have gathered from both sides of the House that the proceedings in Committee will cause a great deal of interest in Scotland.

7.34 pm

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): Like the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn), because of the nature of the Bill, I have a number of interests to declare. First, I am a trustee of a trust that will require to give information if part I of the Bill is enacted. Secondly, I am a member of the Faculty of Advocates, whose interests may be thought in some respect to be affected by part II of the Bill. Thirdly, in regard to the provisions on licensing, I was a member of the Clayson committee whose report formed the basis of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 to which reference has already been made. Since then I have acted for and advised individuals and companies that might be thought to profit if the provisions of part III are carried into effect.

When the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross was discussing issues which, although not directly related to conveyancing, might inevitably have some significance for people who are buying and selling houses, he put his finger on one of the central weakenesses of the proposed legislation. I do not wish to add to what he said, save one more example.

One of the issues that concerns people more than any other is how their property should be disposed of after their death. If the terms of a disposition of inheritable property are drawn in a particular way between a husband and a wife, the effect of the disposition may be to create a contract between them that prevents either of them from disposing of his or her share of the house. That is a complicated matter. The terms of the clauses of disposition require to be drawn extremely carefully. I find it difficult to conceive of how someone who has achieved the ungiddy heights of a licensed conveyancer will know precisely in what language to couch the disposition so as to preserve, if the parties so wish, the right to dispose of their own property as they please upon death.

As speeches so far have demonstrated, most hon. Members find the Bill profoundly disappointing. I share that disappointment with its form, because issues of such substantial principle should not be dealt with in a Bill that has as its centrepiece the notion that it deals with miscellaneous provisions. I am disappointed in the content of the Bill because, in spite of the very effective promptings of the noble and learned Lord Morton of Shuna, who now sits on the Cross-Benches in another place, the Government have still not realised that they are proceeding in part I in a way that is quite inimical to the law on charity in Scotland.

A consequence of the provisions, which the Secretary of State did not deal with when I intervened, is that, if the trustees with responsibility for a village hall—heaven knows, there are many village halls up and down the length and breadth of Scotland—try to run an event that they describe as being for charity because it is for the purpose of replacing the roof of a village hall, they may be the subject of prosecution and ultimately conviction because they are holding themselves out to be a charity, although they are not a recognised body. If that is the abuse to which the Government are directing the provisions, they have a most peculiar idea of what constitutes abuse.

I am also profoundly disappointed in what is omitted from the Bill. Nothing in the Bill will extend real and effective access to legal services to members of the public who do not at present enjoy that access. The Bill is a miscellany, as its name demonstrates. It has all the appearance of an overfilled net brought to the surface after a trawl through the filing cabinets of long-resigned Scottish Office officials. Cowperthwaite and Sharp may have gone from the Scottish Office, but their names live on for ever.

I suppose, perversely, that one might welcome the Bill because it shows the inadequacy of Westminster as a forum for the proper scrutiny of Scottish legislation. In some quarters, the Bill may be regarded as an eloquent argument in favour of a Scottish Parliament, not least for the following reasons. A provision such as clause 53—which makes a radical change in divorce provisions in Scotland and is a distinctive change from divorce provisions south of the border—should not be embarked upon without careful scrutiny. The Secretary of State told us that he was relying to a large extent on public opinion in making some of the provisions in the Bill. I challenge him to test public opinion on whether any divorce should be possible with consent after the expiry of a period of 12 months. I challenge him to test public opinion on whether divorce should be possible after two years without consent. I suspect that the public would be antagonistic towards the Government's proposals.

Mr. Dewar: Although I have some sympathy with the hon. and learned Gentleman's view, I think that the Government would rely on the public opinion poll in the Law Commission's report which took a sample of nearly 1,000 people and found a good deal of support for their proposals, in that sample at least.

Mr. Campbell: As has been pointed out, much depends on the terms of a survey and the way in which it is carried out. I suspect that the majority view of the people of Scotland is that, after 12 months, it should be possible for the two parties to say that they are satisfied that their marriage has irretrievably broken down and that, consequently, they are entitled to go to court and have a rubber stamp put on the dissolution of that marriage. No doubt we shall all wish to return to that matter in Committee.

The liquor licensing provisions may be among the most controversial. I welcome the procedural improvements, but the main issue principle is whether off-sales premises should have an automatic right to open on Sundays. Why

[Mr. Campbell]

do the Government think that that is appropriate when the Bill preserves the situation whereby public houses are required to make a special case for opening on Sunday? If it is necessary for a public house to satisfy a local licensing board that it is desirable that its premises should be open on a Sunday, why not leave to the local licensing board the issue whether an off-sales premises should be open on a Sunday?

There would be a great range of circumstances throughout Scotland, but there would also be a great range of circumstances throughout the jurisdiction of particular boards. There may be compelling reasons why off-sales premises should not be open on a Sunday in Glasgow, Garscadden. However, there may be good reasons why such premises should be open in Renfield street in the centre of Glasgow. That should be left to the discretion of the local boards.

Mr. Harry Ewing: That is a dangerous approach. With respect to the hon. and learned Gentleman, one of the attractions bringing big supermarkets to the massive retail parks throughout Scotland and making them decide to build in Dunfermline rather than Kirkcaldy would be advance information that their licensed section could open on a Sunday. The hon. and learned Gentleman's approach is not responsible.

Mr. Campbell: With the greatest respect, it seems to me that the hon. Gentleman's approach is to deny the discretion of local licensing boards. As he was the architect of the legislation that forms the centrepiece of the liquor licensing legislation in Scotland—in which licensing boards were given enhanced powers over the licensing courts that they replaced—I should have thought that he would be happy for discretion to rest with those who are, after all, the locally elected representatives. A licensing board is not a creature of the district council, but it is composed of district councillors. In those matters, one is far better employed in relying on the good sense of those who have been given that responsibility, rather than endeavouring to lay down blanket provisions throughout Scotland.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell: I should like to continue because I am conscious that others wish to take part.

As I pointed out to the Secretary of State in an intervention, I was in the minority on the Clayson committee on the issue of the police right of entry into clubs. The Clayson committee's report bears re-reading because it sets out the arguments in favour and against with great clarity. This provision—the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) would perhaps agree on this matter if we cannot on others—was originally in the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976, but the House of Commons, in its wisdom, voted against it. If there is to be a change in the legislation, we are entitled to know the objective circumstances that give rise to the need for it. The fact that 70 or 80 organisations may have expressed a view that the law should be changed in this way is no justification for doing it, unless what they claim is capable of objective assessment.

We are entitled to ask the Government the number of occasions on which it can be claimed that the proper administration and supervision of clubs have been prejudiced by the failure of officers of the rank of police constable to enter such clubs at will, especially as a warrant can be obtained and, in my professional experience, is usually capable of being obtained on not very substantial information. Such a warrant can be obtained and be effected at short notice. Thus far, we have heard no justification that is sufficient to make us give sympathetic consideration to extending police powers in a matter where so far it has not been demonstrated to be required.

One clause will allow the chief constable to make "observations" and requires him to intimate and give notice of those observations in a particular way, but it gives him a fallback if he fails to do so and allows a licensing board to take account of those observations. I have never understood why police authorities, which have licensing departments, should have placed upon them an obligation in terms of the form of notice and information required, but they are given a ready-made excuse. That matter arises in relation to objections under section 16 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976, and I hope to return to it in Committee.

I do not oppose the extension of rights of audience, but in this matter access for the public to legal services is much more important than whether solicitors should have access to the supreme court. The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross touched on a matter that the Government have not yet properly addressed. The legal relationship between a client and an advocate is that of a mandate and is separate and distinct from the legal relationship between a client and a solicitor. A solicitor is bound by contract to his client; an advocate—by that I mean a member of the Faculty of Advocates—has a mandate. Until the time it is recalled, a mandate entitles the person in whose favour it has been given to do as he thinks fit in the context of the legal case in which he is engaged. It entitles an advocate to settle a case even against the wishes of his client. That right is rarely exercised, but it demonstrates the fact that the essential relationship between client and advocate is different from the relationship between client and solicitor. That matter may have consequences beyond those to which the Government have given consideration in the Bill so far, and I hope to return to it in due course.

The point should be made in relation to Scotland that we are dealing with a relatively small scale. There are about 250 practising advocates at the Scottish Bar. In recent years, as many as 80 per cent. called in any one year have qualified as solicitors before coming to the Bar. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands East (Mr. Smith) did that, as I did myself. The former shadow Lord Advocate, now the noble and learned Lord Morton of Shuna, who sits on the Cross-Benches in the other place, also qualified as a solicitor. There has been an easy movement between the solicitors' and the advocates' branches of the profession in Scotland. Although I do not oppose the extension of the rights of audience, I have some concern and reservations about just how effective that apparently radical change will prove to be.

It may be a result of my inability rather than the draftsman's, but I cannot understand the provision on partnerships for advocates, which seems to be put in the most convoluted way. I believe that there is no justification in a country the size of Scotland for there to be

partnerships between advocates at the Bar. For that reason, it is essential to maintain the largest number of wholly independent practitioners. That is why, on occasion, I have appeared on behalf of the Secretary of State one week and against the Secretary of State the next. If I were locked into a partnership, it might be difficult for such independence to be exercised. I welcome the assurance of the Secretary of State in relation to legally aided persons. He will know that that matter has caused some concern. It is a considerable relief to know that the right of a legally aided person to be represented in the way that he or she chooses will not be prejudiced by the proposals.

I am very suspicious of the proposals in clause 23, which could be construed as giving rights of audience to professional or other bodies to practise in every court in Scotland and as giving them immunity from liability for negligence. In Committee, I hope that we can test at some length the justification for that outwith legal services and those who are legally qualified.

Most significant for those of us who represent rural areas is the provision of legal services in such areas. The reservations have already been expressed, so I need do no more than associate myself with them. There is real apprehension that the overall provision of legal services will—not immediately, but inevitably—be affected if the proposals on executries and conveyancing are carried through. There is real apprehension about the strength of the financial institutions, and of nationally based and organised estate agents. There is also real apprehension about the possibility of conflicts of interest. When people, especially young people, make their first important purchase and legal transaction, it is right that they should have the most independent advice available. The Secretary of State must by now have realised that these matters will be brought to his attention time and again. They will be the touchstone against which every line of the Bill will be tested.

It is not understood that in rural areas, conveyancing is often used as a form of cross-subsidy. It is not frequently understood that in rural areas, solicitors often perform for honoraria of £250 the responsibility of secretary of this institution or of trustee of that, or that they may run something else or factor at levels that can hardly be described as economic. They do that because they take their service and their fee income in the round. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) suggested that that part of the fee income may be as high as 80 per cent. If a substantial part of that income is at risk, the provision of such service pro bono publico will be put at risk and the quality of life in rural areas may be severely prejudiced.

Mr. Rifkind: Does the hon. and learned Gentleman appreciate what he has said? I do not necessarily disagree with his point. He began by saying that it was important to protect the interests of young married couples in their most important purchase, but he has just told us—and this may be accurate—that young married couples pay a conveyancing fee that is used to subsidise other legal services provided by solicitors. Does not that suggest, if the hon. and learned Gentleman is correct, that the level of conveyancing fee is higher than it should be to provide the service to those of his constituents whom the hon. and learned Gentleman is trying to help?

Mr. Campbell: As the Secretary of State knows, there is now competition among solicitors in those matters. It must be well known to him that in many cases, solicitors offer and give discounted fees, especially to people who are starting out, for the very reason that they hope that if they do so, they will continue to have their business throughout their lives. They hope that they will draft their wills and that in due course, if they survive long enough——

Mr. Harry Ewing: And their divorces.

Mr. Campbell: Yes, solicitors may even do their divorces and wind up their estates. As I said a moment or two ago, the truth is that solicitors take their fee income and their obligations in the round. If we enter on this new course, we may find circumstances in which the services provided by solicitors—often at uneconomic rates in rural areas—are withdrawn.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does not the hon. and learned Gentleman agree that all people in business take their services in the round and that, if the core of their business is the most profitable part, it could be said to be subsidising other parts of the business? It is the fact that the business is an entity that brings people to it in the first place.

Mr. Campbell: I do not for a moment dissent from that point.

Looking at the Bill as a whole and especially at the measures that deal with the provision of legal services, one is driven to the conclusion that it is neither a considered nor a spontaneous response to the needs of the public identified in Scotland. One feels entitled to make the judgment that, in many respects, it seems to be a slavish response to events in England. It is frequently forgotten that part of the provocation for a change in the provision of legal services in England and Wales arose not from the structure of the legal profession, but from the different structure of the courts.

As the Secretary of State told us, in the sheriff court, in its civil jurisdiction in Scotland, one can sue for any sum of money. One may sue for £20 million if one chooses to do so. In its criminal jurisdiction, an accused person, if convicted, may be sentenced for up to three years. The consequence has been that solicitors in Scotland have done a substantial range of work that was denied to them by the nature of the court structure in England and Wales. That is why I believe that the Bill is a slavish response that could not be regarded as either considered or spontaneous.

Access to a lawyer for the public in Scotland should be not simply to any lawyer, but to a proficient lawyer. The Bill does not do sufficient—indeed anything—to widen that access. I am driven to the conclusion that in this matter, the Government have no feeling for the law in Scotland. That is why I and my hon. Friends will decline to give the Bill a Second Reading.

7.58 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Unlike the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell), who declared an interest, I declare a lack of interest. I have no legal interests or training. I am not a trustee of any charity. I have no intention at present of buying or selling a home. I do not drink alcohol and I have no intention of taking up the drinking of alcohol, although there are times when I feel that some things could drive one to drink. I find

[Mr. Bill Walker]

that I have little enthusiasm for the Bill, and in that sense, too, I declare my lack of interest. Yet this is a Government-sponsored Bill, and I am a loyal supporter of the Government.

Mr. Canavan: Toady.

Mr. Walker: I have never been called that before.

I am aware of the politically sensitive nature of some of the matters dealt with in the Bill, and I realise that the Committee stage will be followed closely in Scotland. The Conservative members of the Committee—at least those of us who represent Scottish constituencies—will therefore expect Ministers to take on board the views that we express in Committee. We shall expect any changes in the Bill adequately to take account of Scottish views. I caution the Government that the limited time available for the Committee stage is likely to highlight the need for them to be sensitive to the views expressed. In my view, it would be most unwise to attempt to steamroller the Bill through its Committee and Report stages.

I welcome some of the changes proposed with regard to charities. Some changes are necessary, although I wonder whether the Government have not gone overboard with what they have attempted in the Bill. We shall discover whether that is so during our detailed study of the Bill in Committee. Nevertheless, some aspects of charity operations in Scotland certainly needed to be looked at, and the Government were right to recognise that.

On part II, I should first make it clear that I believe that it is right that the public should have choices and options. But it is also right to examine the present state of affairs before determining whether simply to free up the arrangements. We are not dealing with the high street here. I am a great supporter of what happens in the high street, and a great supporter of the marketplace, but when it comes to legal advice and legal services we must be very careful.

After all, if one makes a mistake while shopping in the high street, the consequences are not likely to be all that severe, even if one is temporarily inconvenienced, but if one makes a mistake during the purchase of one's home, or if one is given detrimental advice, one can end up with a problem which remains throughout one's life. That is one of the awful problems that we face. I look upon the provision of legal services as I look upon people's ability to fly aircraft. We must provide a regulatory framework properly to protect the interests of customers. There is no question but that we shall have some interesting debates in Committee on part II. I accept that the Government are determined to provide a level playing field, and our debates will show whether they have succeeded.

Whatever the outcome in Committee, I make no apology for saying now that I want to ensure that my constituents in North Tayside have access to solicitors within an acceptable distance. People living in Aberfeldy or Blair Atholl should not have to travel to Perth or Edinburgh to obtain the advice that they require when buying a house. In one of the most interesting and stimulating speeches that he has made for a long time, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn) dealt with the legal matters in considerable depth, and his contribution was later enhanced by those of other hon. Members. I repeat that I have no legal training. My only experience has been as a customer—as one of those making use of the services.

I think that every hon. Member will acknowledge that the profession about which we receive the most complaints is the solicitors' profession and we must all welcome the fact that the Bill will establish an ombudsman. I hope that the ombudsman will have teeth, because there is no doubt that, when things go wrong or when solicitors behave improperly, the consequences for individuals can be enormous.

On part III, I repeat that I have no interest in the consumption of alcohol, although I make no apologies for having a great interest in the well-being of the whisky industry. I hope that the Minister will be able to assure me that, under the Bill as drafted, our splendid whisky distilleries, open for the benefit of the tourist trade, will at long last be able to sell their products at times and on days when they cannot sell them at present. I hope that the Bill will change that.

Like other hon. Members, I am concerned about supermarkets and off-licences and I hope that we can deal in detail with them in Committee. There are obviously differences, and public houses in rural areas should not be disadvantaged. It is nonsense that, in a small village or town with five hotels and one pub, the pub should have to close while all the hotels can remain open. That never struck me as sensible. We should try to introduce some sense into those arrangements, which particularly affect the tourist areas of Scotland.

With regard to the ability of the police to enter clubs, I am concerned about and I hope that we shall be able to deal with it in more detail in Committee. I cannot claim to be happy with the provision as it stands and I look forward to hearing why the Government think that it is necessary.

Clause 53 makes certain changes in respect of divorce. There is no way that I can support what is proposed. That is one provision on which I have already reached a decision. It may be said that my prejudices are already showing, but I believe that marriage is far too important an institution for us to create a climate in which people think that they can get divorce on demand. It is not just important for children—it is important to the fabric of society.

One of the great tragedies of recent times is the way in which we have encouraged people to get married and divorced as though it were of little or no consequence. The family unit is the basis for our society and we should be looking for ways and means of sustaining it. I hope that I am not oversimplifying by saying that, like all things which matter, marriage has to be worked at. There is no easy way for two people to live together for a long period, and concessions have to be made.

We surely cannot think it sensible for people to bring something as important as a marriage to an end after just one year. I am also not happy with the reduction from five years to two. Such matters should be dealt with in the courts. I hope that in Committee we shall arrive at an answer which will satisfy those of us who have grave doubts about the clause.

On video evidence, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said that he might find himself in some difficulty because he might agree with me. I hope that narrow political prejudices will not influence the way in

which we view the matters with which the Bill deals. I hope that we will consider video evidence in connection with offences against children and rape.

I hope that I have not spoken for too long, and I know that other hon. Members wish to speak. However, I believe that this Bill will be one of the most interesting to come before the House for the past three or four Parliaments. It is interesting because it is a miscellaneous provisions Bill. It ranges widely and we shall also consider additional clauses and amendments.

I hope that we shall keep in mind the fact that we have a unique legal system in Scotland. As Scots, we want as far as possible to maintain all that is good about our legal system. We do not want to be the same as other people simply for the sake of being the same. We want to improve our legal system. When we consider the various clauses and the amendments, I hope that we shall consider the Bill in the best interests of our constituents, because that is what we want to do at the end of the day. More importantly, I hope that we shall recognise that we shall be creating a new political environment—because the Bill covers many areas—in which people in Scotland will face substantial changes. I hope that we shall get it right.

8.11 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): It seems that my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) has volunteered me as a member of the Standing Committee to consider this Bill. I served on the Committee which considered a previous Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, and some of my memories of that Committee are not particularly happy. I remember trying to give added legal protection to complainers in rape cases and having my case demolished by an odd trio of legal minds: the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn), the then right hon. Peter Fraser QC and my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). However, like as not, I will have another go with that issue.

I am also unhappy about the introduction of the Bill at this stage in the Session. A number of clauses of particular interest to me are well down the batting order. I hope that their consideration will not be skimped as a result. The Under-Secretary of State for Scotland is listening with his usual rapt attention to the speeches of Back Benchers. With regard to part I of the Bill, can he tell us what will happen to new charities that are often set up in the aftermath of a huge tragedy elsewhere in the world? Some of those new charities are entirely legitimate and honourable. However, there are odd occasions when unscrupulous individuals try to milk the kindness of ordinary people who respond to requests for help. I hope that those villains will be dealt with, if only indirectly, by part I.

I do not want to repeat some of the arguments about part II. However, I am pleased to say that I agree with the creation of the office of legal services ombudsman, although I should have thought that such an official requires a substantial staff to deal with complaints brought against solicitors who provide their clients with a slovenly, careless and thoughtless service. It is not for me to defend the profession, which is remarkably conservative, full of Conservatives. Ministers should consider some of the serious reservations expressed earlier in the debate.

The overwhelming majority of solicitors in small communities—and not only in small communities—provide a fine and honourable service to their clients. It is absolutely essential that that service is not diminished by some of the clauses in part II of this hotch-potch of a Bill.

I also have serious reservations about part III, particularly in light of clause 37, which will allow the opening of off-sales premises on Sundays. Last week I presented a petition to the House protesting against that measure on behalf of the Rev. Ernie Scott, minister of St. Andrew's church in Port Glasgow, and over 300 members of the members or adherents of his church. I have received similar expressions of concern from Mount Kirk in Greenock and the Welpark Church in Greenock. Only today I received a letter from John Lindsay, the session clerk of Finnart St. Paul's church in Greenock, who wrote:

"The Kirk Session of the above Congregation, part of whose parish lies within your constituency, have asked me to advise you that at their last regular meeting on 15 May they expressed their unanimous opposition to any extension of the existing opening hours which would involve the opening of off-licensed premises on Sundays."

In this House, we occasionally discuss the serious problems of drug addiction in Scotland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. I believe that the most prevalent form of drug addiction and misuse involves alcohol abuse and misuse. Clause 37 enables smoother and wider access to that kind of drug. I will be voting against such a so-called liberalisation of the licensing law.

Part IV relates to miscellaneous reforms. I want to ask the Minister several questions to enable me to be better equipped to serve on the Standing Committee. My service on that Committee seems likely, thanks to the efforts of my hon. Friend the Member for Pollok.

Clause 48 offers a full refund to local authorities for approved expenditure in providing probation and parole supervision and social inquiry reports. In that regard, will there be financial compensation for any additional training that social workers, who presumably will be the probation officers under the terms of clause 48 for the regional and island councils, if they have to introduce extra training?

Why, in clause 54, in addition to the proposed change to section 15 of the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981, have the Government decided against introducing a provision which would enable the police to remove from the matrimonial home the alleged perpetrator of an act of sexual or physical abuse? I believe that it is established social work procedure throughout Scotland—it is certainly the case in Strathclyde—that in such cases, all the children aged under 16 in such a home are removed. Why should only the children be removed from a home in which such dreadful abuse has occurred? Why should the alleged perpetrator not be removed? He or she could be given financial provision for lodgings, and I give notice that I shall be tabling an amendment to deal with that issue.

In terms of balance, I agree with the sentiments in clause 55, which will give added protection particularly to women who have suffered what is called domestic violence. I am not sure how such a person will be classified under that provision. How will she prove her case to the local housing department and regional social work department?

Clause 56 deals with the use of live television links as evidence in certain criminal proceedings. Why does the Bill contain no provision for the use of televised interviews or

[Dr. Norman A. Godman]

examinations in child and sex abuse cases? It is allowed in England by the Criminal Justice Act 1988, section 32 of which states:

"A person other than the accused may give evidence through a live television link on a trial on indictment or an appeal to the criminal division of the Court of Appeal or the hearing of a reference under section 17 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 if—(a) the witness is outside the United Kingdom; or"—

as is the case with clause 56—

"(b) the witness is under the age of 14 and the offence charged is one to which subsection (2) below applies",

a part of which deals with offences under the Sexual Offences Act 1956, the Indecency with Children Act 1960, the Sexual Offences Act 1967 and the Protection of Children Act 1978.

If children in England and Wales receive that protection, why not children in Scotland? I have argued before that children in such cases should give their evidence in as informal a place as possible. They should not be in, say, the sheriff court within 10 to 15 ft of the accused. That happens in one of the most modern court buildings in Scotland, the sheriff court in Glasgow: a child giving evidence in such a case in one of those court rooms is situated within 15 ft of the accused. That is a scandalous state of affairs, particularly bearing in mind the English legislation that we passed about three years ago.

I should like in such cases to see the judge with defending and prosecuting counsel seated at a table in, say, dark lounge suits—divested of their ceremonial outfits—with a child sitting at the table with them, perhaps in the friendly presence of a social worker or some other befriender.

If we introduced a new clause in line with the English legislation, we might see a lowering of the stress inflicted on children by the ordeal of giving evidence in the presence of the accused. More cases might also be reported to the police.

The Government should be providing all our major hospitals with suites of rooms equipped with video equipment for the interviewing and examination of children involved in such cases. Those video recordings should be allowed in evidence, although I appreciate that all manner of problems surround the use of such recordings, including their care and security. But at least hospitals should be equipped with such facilities.

I know of only three suites of rooms in Scotland. One, the Fred Stone suite, was opened in the Yorkhill children's hospital in Glasgow two weeks ago. It comprises four rooms with video equipment. The cost was about £70,000. It is named after the famous and estimable Professor Fred Stone, one of our foremost experts in the treatment of such cases and until recently professor of child psychiatry at Yorkhill hospital.

Another suite of rooms has been established at the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children centre at Anfield place in Glasgow. That was jointly funded by the RSSPCC and Strathclyde regional council. A third has been set up by the social work department of Strathclyde regional council in the offices of the Drumchapel area social work team, and video equipment is about to be installed in that unit.

I am pleased to say that a similar unit is being set up in the Inverclyde Royal hospital in Greenock. With my wife, I visited that unit recently. I told John Ryan, chairman of the Argyll and Clyde health board, that I welcomed the innovation but regretted the absence of video equipment. I believe that Mr. Ryan's view is that, if the provision of such equipment became law, he would have it installed the following day.

That is the direction in which we should be moving in the treatment of child and sexual abuse cases. As I have explained, there are major omissions from the Bill. I shall seek to correct that state of affairs, I hope with the support of other members of the Committee, but I do not want our discussion of those vital issues to be hasty.

8.28 pm

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): I shall follow the example set by other hon. Members and declare those of my interests which are affected by the Bill. I am an unpaid adviser to the Scottish Law Agents Society and I am married to the junior partner of a small legal firm called Ewing company, based in Glasgow. I stress, however, that I earn my own income independently. I felt it important to put those details on record because I want to speak mainly about the Bill's implications for the legal profession. I wish to speak essentially as a consumer—although I prefer the term "client"—and as a constituency Member of Parliament.

The laws of our land need to have the confidence of the populace and this Bill is not just about the implications for the legal profession; it is about the delivery of legal services to the population. A great deal of concern has been expressed to me about the implications of this legislation for the delivery of those services.

First, can the Minister tell the House whence the demand first came for this piece of legislation and why these measures have been included in a Bill that is essentially a hotch-potch of other matters? If the Minister maintains that there was a clear demand for reform of the legal profession in Scotland, surely that reform merited a separate Bill, which could have been discussed in detail and less hurriedly than we shall have to deal with this one. I remind the Minister of the comments of Professor T. B. Smith, whom I am sure he studied at length in his training. Professor Smith once said that the law was rather like a drainage system to which no one paid any attention unless something went wrong. The people of Scotland have given no clear sign that they have lost confidence in the legal profession or in the delivery of services, so it seems strange that we are faced with these proposals.

Scotland is the only country in the world that has its own legal system but which lacks a legislature. We are also in the unique position of having two parliament buildings but no Government. That conundrum underpins many of the proposals in the Bill. As far as I can see, there has been no demand from the public for the proposed changes; the Government have undertaken no research; and the consultation process was largely a sham because most of the responses that came back to the Government were highly critical of the proposals in the Green Paper and in subsequent documents.

What is the rationale behind these proposals? We must look at what the Secretary of State said in paragraph 1.3 of the consultation paper:

"The independence of Scots Law and the distinctive Scottish Legal System are important corner stones in the preservation of a Scottish identity. The Scottish Legal System has its own historical origin and has developed in its own way. The organisation of the Legal Profession is, in part, a reflection of the distinctive Scottish Legal System",

and of the distinctive Scottish way of life.

These may have been fine words but little in the proposals received the approval of the Scottish legal profession or of the public at large. Most lawyers see the proposals as an attack on the legal profession, which is one of the last bastions of the Scottish nation. Teachers, doctors and social workers in Scotland have already been on the receiving end of Tory reforms, and now it seems that the Government are determined to undermine the last of the independent professions in Scotland. Lawyers are to be sacrificed on the altar of the false gods of consumerism and competition which are so ruthlessly pursued by the Government in their legislative programme.

In their letter to me dealing with this legislation, the Scottish law agents said:

"The Scottish Bill mirrors the terms of the English Courts and Legal Services Bill. Our members deplore the assimilation of treatment for the two distinct jurisdictions."

That speaks volumes for the attitude of the legal profession in Scotland.

Secondly, does the Minister believe that this legislation deals with the real needs of society for the delivery of legal services? We are debating it without having any debate on the legal aid system of Scotland. If we are to discuss consumerism and freedom of choice we must first discuss access. Without access to the law, there is no choice. People who can afford it have the luxury of a choice of solicitor, but consumers' choice becomes irrelevant when legal aid is denied them. I think, for instance, of areas such as personal injury, legal aid for tribunals—especially industrial tribunals—the delays in the determination of applications for legal aid civil cases, and the determination of the Scottish Legal Aid Board to operate a system of economies under which it refuses to increase the permitted levels of advice and assistance cover and regularly refuses to backdate assistance when new evidence become available.

The Government are determined to cut legal aid even further. I remind the Minister from his own statistics that bankruptcy cases now place a projected demand of £50 million by 1996 on the public purse whereas legal court aid costs only £11 million, which seems to reflect a strange set of priorities.

I refer the Minister to an article which appeared in *The Times*—*The Times* of London, not the *Glasgow Evening Times* which is held in such affection by many hon. Members—by Anthony Thornton QC, who writes of amendments to the Courts and Legal Services Bill

"which may erode the rights of legally aided litigants . . . the government has maintained, until now, that the bill does not affect the structure of legal aid. Many fear the Government has now decided to use the bill to enable it to cut back expenditure on legal aid."

Does the Minister intend to bring in similar amendments to this Bill to reflect those tabled to the English legislation in another place? If such amendments are carried, the erosion of legal aid could become institutionalised, which none of us would want. It is despicable that we have not dealt with legal aid before embarking on reforms of the legal profession.

In several earlier interventions, I touched on some aspects of the Bill. The idea that there will be a level playing field in conveyancing as between law practices and building societies and banks is misleading. The Minister will recall that the Building Societies Act 1986 specifically excluded Scotland, so what has changed since then to convince Ministers that building societies, estate agents and banks should be brought into conveyancing?

Many hon. Members referred to rural practices—the small town practices which are so vital to our communities. I do not like the expression "cross-subsidy" being used in this context. Conveyancing is the bread and butter of many of those small practices. If they did not perform conveyancing in their communities, they would go out of business. By being based in small communities, solicitors build up expertise in technical areas of law. In my constituency, that can mean land tenure, tenancy, fishing law, agricultural law—all specialised areas which are fundamental to the well-being of the communities that we represent. There is a danger that those practices will not be able to compete with the larger conglommerates or with the multi-disciplinary practices, so the expertise provided in our communities will disappear. It is all very well paying lip service to the continuation of our rural economy—Ministers spout it often enough from the Dispatch Box—but if we do not take action now to ensure the survival of our small legal practices we shall be driving another nail into the coffin of our rural economies.

I have a great deal of confidence in the solicitors who work in my constituency, and I have spoken to many of them about the implications of the Bill. In return, I have received many letters and good ideas. They say that they will not be able to compete. It was rude of the Secretary of State to say that I do not have confidence in my local solicitors when I put in a plea that we should guarantee the survival of small practices. I do not understand what the Secretary of State meant by "monitoring" over the next few years. What happens in the interim? What happens if these practices disappear? Will all my skippers have to go to Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Glasgow to find someone who will understand the fishing laws and to assist them in any cases in which they might be involved?

It will be difficult for any of us to assess the implications of the Bill for the building societies and the banks if the code of conduct is not published in the primary legislation. It is not good enough to talk about such a code being set out in regulations because there is no guarantee that Members of Parliament will be afforded enough time to examine the regulations. A fundamental right is at stake.

I cannot understand why the Secretary of State and his Ministers have so rigidly set their faces against publishing a code of conduct. What do they have to hide? What is their reason for not doing so? If the Government wish to allay fears and suspicions among solicitors, the best way forward would be to publish the code of conduct before the Committee sits, so that those right hon. and hon. Members who serve on the Committee can look at it in detail and receive comments from the various organisations involved and from members of the profession and work out whether the regulations are appropriate for the quasi-legal individuals who will be able to do conveyancing in other organisations.

I say this against a background of a declaration by one of the major building societies, Nationwide Anglia, that it made a £90 million loss on estate agency work last year. It can hide such a loss in other aspects of its work, and consistently undercut those who are fully legally qualified to undertake conveyancing, rather than facing the consequences of such a loss. We need much more detail from the Scottish Office about what the code of conduct and the requirements will be.

[Mrs. Margaret Ewing]

The Government are adding to the cost of conveyancing, first by refusing to provide sufficient resources to the Registers of Scotland, or the central deeds office. This means that, while the whole of Scotland was to benefit by the registration of title process, only one ninth of Scotland will be helped. For example, according to a recent *Glasgow Herald* survey, conveyancing costs in Edinburgh are more than they are in Glasgow. That is partly because, under the new system, there is less work to do and the fees are cheaper.

Secondly, as from 6 April, the Government introduced agency status for the Registers of Scotland as part of their continuing privatisation programme so it will be essential for the agency to show a profit. The Government, for their own purposes, will want it to be profitable, because otherwise it will be seen as a failed experiment. I have it on excellent authority that the Government will be increasing the sums paid by the public for registration and recording of deeds, so that the agency will show a profit. I should like some straight comments from the Minister about that, because the Government are increasing the cost of a legal service.

The Bill covers many other aspects, on which I should like to touch, but I am conscious that other hon. Members have been waiting so I do not want to take too much time from them. Suffice it to say that, if I serve on the Committee, I shall move many amendments and new clauses. We face a difficult situation in that in June or July Scottish Members are being asked to spend lengthy days and probably nights considering a complex Bill covering a wide variety of subjects, from criminal evidence proceedings through conveyancing to amendment of the licensing laws, all of which are controversial and in need of detailed examination. Moreover, we shall have to deal with all of them within four or five weeks. That will put an incredible burden on those serving on the Committee and on outside organisations wishing to see changes made to the Bill.

The Government would be well advised to take the Bill away, separate the parts dealing specifically with legal provisions and make one Bill on that, leaving the other miscellaneous provisions to be dealt with in a correct miscellaneous provisions Bill. When I table my amendments and new clauses, I shall not withdraw them, as was done with amendments and new clauses in another place. That will be especially true of those on subjects which are dear to my heart, such as warrant sales, which I have raised previously in a private Member's Bill.

I am determined that we shall use the opportunities available to us, as the Government are determined to pursue their course, to raise other aspects of what needs to be done within the law of Scotland. May aspects are in much greater need of reform than those dealt with in the Bill. I find it insulting to the legal profession that it has been drawn into this hotch-potch of a Bill. The Government should take the Bill away, think about it and bring it back another day to be dealt with in another and more effective way.

8.46 pm

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): The hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) rightly described the Bill as a hotch-potch. It is a motley collection of unrelated measures. It consists of over 100 pages, and almost the whole of the first page is taken up by the long title. It could be subdivided into at least four separate Bills, but the Government have not done that—for the self-evident reason that they do not have enough Tory Scottish Back Benchers to man one Scottish Standing Committee, never mind four. This reinforces the need for a Scottish Parliament, so that adequate scrutiny can be given to Scottish legislation.

Part I deals with charities. It is not often that I agree with the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn) but I agreed with much of what he said about the need for a national register of charities, so that people who want to give money for a specific charitable purpose can find out which is the most appropriate charity. It is also a pity that the Bill misses the opportunity for a stricter definition of charity. It is anomalous that an amateur sporting organisation would not normally qualify for recognition as a charity, while an organisation like the Adam Smith Institute, which is heavily involved in political activities, does qualify for charitable status and therefore for tax relief. I hope that, at a later stage in the Bill, we shall have an opportunity to look at this and other anomalies.

Part 2 deals with the proposed changes in legal services. I am not legally qualified, but I have a fairly open mind and I listen to the arguments put by both sides, although I have been critical of the lawyers' closed shop, or the legal mafia as it is often known. When I make up my mind how to vote on the proposals, the main criterion for me, as it should be for all hon. Members, whether or not they are lawyers, is whether the proposed changes, or amendments to them, are in the interests of the consumer or the client.

It is all very well for the Secretary of State to talk about level playing fields, but they are no use if they are covered in ice or broken glass. It is the poor consumer who may suffer from the possible effects of the deficiencies in some of the proposals.

Part III relates to liquor licensing. That always has been and always will be a controversial subject in Scotland and we shall never please everyone when amending licensing legislation. I remember the passage of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976, which contained some fiercely controversial measures. In the light of the experience of 14 years, however, many of the Clayson proposals, which have been enacted, are generally excepted as having introduced a more liberalised and civilised attitude towards the consumption of alcohol in Scotland.

Draconian or restrictive legislation does not necessarily eradicate or minimise alcoholic abuse—it may well have the opposite effect. As a consistent decentraliser, I also believe that some discretion should be given to the licensing boards so that they can take into account local circumstances before final decisions are reached. I hope that the eventual legislation will give those boards the opportunity to exercise some discretion in such matters.

Earlier, I raised with the Secretary of State his proposal to allow the police entry into registered clubs without a warrant. The Secretary of State referred to a survey that had been undertaken and I hope that the questions put, the organisations and individuals questioned and the results of it will be published in due course and given to all hon. Members, particularly those who are selected to serve on the Committee.

Perhaps I should declare an interest, as I am a member of the Camelon Labour club and the Bannockburn miners'

welfare club. I believe that my membership of the latter entitles me to reciprocal membership of virtually every miners' welfare club in the country. It is important to remember that a club is not equivalent to a public house. Originally, the club was considered to be an extention of the home.

Clubs must keep a register of members and anybody who is not a member must be signed in for entry. Most club members would consider it a gross invasion of privacy if the police were allowed entry into clubs without a warrant. Most clubs operate a successful system of self-discipline and I do not know of any widespread abuse. If there is trouble in a club, even under the existing system the police can get a warrant to deal with the situation. In the final analysis, clubs are accountable not to the licensing board, but to the sheriff. The sheriff may refuse to renew a club's licence if there has been any misbehaviour, evidence of which has been given him by the police.

It is not just Labour Members who have expressed grave reservations about, not to say downright opposition to, the proposal. There are many types of social clubs—working people's clubs, ex-servicemen's clubs, British Legion clubs, sporting clubs, Labour clubs, miners' welfare clubs and even Conservative clubs. I appeal to the Minister to consult those in the House who speak on behalf of the Conservative clubs north and south of the border. He should ask them what they would think if they were sitting in their club having a private meeting when, suddenly, in burst the police without a warrant. That is a gross and unjustified intrusion.

Way back in 1976, the late Willie Ross was persuaded to withdraw a similar clause. He had a great deal of common sense and he listened to the views expressed by the public and by hon. Members. When the clause was considered on Report, my recollection is that it was withdrawn without being forced to a vote. In that connection, I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) who, as the Minister responsible for piloting the legislation through in 1976, listened to the views expressed by hon. Members.

Although the Minister may think that he has good intentions and that those who support the clause are similarly minded, it would have a damaging effect on police-community relations in many parts of Scotland. There is also an understandable fear that, if the measure reaches the statute book, it is only a matter of time before clubs in England and Wales face the same threat.

Part IV deals with miscellaneous reforms, including penal reform. Recently I had occasion to visit the young offenders institution at Polmont, in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East. I was invited by the governor primarily to witness a great sporting event held to raise money to send youngsters from the Central Region to the special olympics. In my following remarks, I have no criticism of the governor or the staff at Polmont, but I am critical of the system that they are obliged to operate.

After the sporting event, I took the opportunity, at the governor's invitation, to look at some of the facilities available and speak to some of the inmates, I understand that Polmont was originally a borstal, with a fairly open regime. Recently, it has been surrounded with a perimeter fence and additional security arrangements have been introduced. The Minister will be aware from a parliamentary reply to me that that cost the taxpayer no less than £1·25 million.

Given the increased security, I thought that all the inmates at Polmont were high-risk young offenders who had committed grevious offences. However, I must tell the Minister of a conversation I had with a young 16-year-old inmate who, for obvious reasons, shall remain nameless. I asked him how long he was in for and he said four weeks. When I asked him what he was in for, he said that it was for not paying a fine of £100. I asked him why he could not pay it and he said that he had no job and received only £22 a week on social security, of which £15 went to his mother for his keep. Yet the sheriff ordered him to pay the fine at £7 a week. Understandably, he fell behind in his payments and, as a consequence, he found himself in that high-security detention centre.

Does it make sense in terms of penal or economic policy to spend more than £1·25 million to surround such young people with a high-security fence and all the rest? Surely they would be better on a community service order or some other alternative to custodial punishment. Something could and should be done about such a situation. I am sure that that young man's case is not unique.

There is a lot fundamentally wrong with Scotland's penal system in general. I must make it clear that I am not talking about Polmont when I say that, if people in our prisons are treated like animals, there will be a tendency for them to behave like animals. Long before the riots started in Strangeways, the track record of the penal system in Scotland under this Secretary of State for Scotland left a lot to be desired, with prisoners taking to the rooftops and prisoners and prison staff being subjected to violence and threats of violence. If inmates are treated in a barbaric fashion—it is not surprising that some of them sometimes behave in a barbaric fashion—and I am not justifying their actions by saying that.

I hope that the Bill gives us the opportunity to discuss such matters. It would be a great pity if we were to miss the opportunity to bring about a radical reform of Scotland's penal system.

There is not much that is good about the Bill, but today's Second Reading debate is encouraging in that, much more than in any other piece of Scottish legislation in this Parliament, valid points have been made in a conscientious manner from both sides of the House, sometimes with cross-party agreement. Therefore, I hope that, at a later stage, we will be able to have a positive and constructive debate, so that the Bill which emerges from the Standing Committee will be much improved on Report and Third Reading.

9.1 pm

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Because of the time, I shall truncate my speech. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) for giving some of his time to me. The lack of time only serves to illustrate the most important conclusion that many of us have drawn from the legislation—that the case for a Scottish Parliament has been made out.

It is well known that I was a doubter in 1979 but, for the record, I voted yes in the referendum for devolution for Scotland. Every day that we consider Scottish legislation in the House, I am more and more convinced that it is inappropriate to do so in this sort of environment, in this truncated time, with not a soul on the Conservative

[Mr. Alistair Darling]

Benches other than the Ministers on the Front Bench. The case for these matters being discussed in Scotland by people who know the conditions there is overwhelming.

I must declare an interest as a member of the Faculty of Advocates. Because of lack of time, I do not intend to address myself to many of the measures that affect rights of audience. I should like to do so, but I cannot, because I am duty bound to raise matters that affect my constituents, particularly on licensing.

I am concerned about one aspect in particular—clause 39, which requires licensing boards to have regard to what is called the need in "the locality." What is the locality in central Edinburgh? Is it the immediate locality—for example, Stockbridge or Tollcross—the city centre, Edinburgh or the Lothians? What is the licensing board supposed to consider?

The problem in Edinburgh at present is that there are a large number of licensed premises in the comparatively small area of the city centre, and they are open for long periods. That causes those who live near them considerable inconvenience and irritation, particularly at night. As I said in an intervention to the Secretary of State, many of those premises are well run and cause no problem, but it is simply the presence of a large number of licensed permises open late at night, disgorging many people into the streets, which causes the problem. That is a problem that the Bill should address, but does not do so.

In the time available, I wish to describe a few things that could be done. The first will cost money. It is to allocate more money for police overtime. I have long believed that policemen on the beat on the streets late at night reduce both the number of general disturbances and the incidence of serious crime. They deter problems before they arise. Secondly, licensing boards should be given additional powers to close premises that cause problems on a temporary basis. That immediate deterrent would make many landlords who keep unruly houses—for want of a better word—keep their customers in order.

There is also a clear need to make it easier for ordinary people to object to late licences. At present, the odds are stacked in favour of the brewers and licensees. A simplified procedure under which it was not necessary to follow the exact statutory terms of the objection would make it much easier for not only those who live nearby but community councils and residents' associations to make their voices heard. Why not give them a right of appeal? The licensee can appeal to the sheriff court, so why cannot those who live near the nuisance? Some flexibility would be greatly welcomed by many of my constituents.

I cannot say any more about licensing because of the time, but I wish to mention several minor points which arose in the debate and about which I feel strongly, both as a Member of the House and as someone who has practised law.

Several comments have been made tonight about divorce. No one wants to make divorce easier, but that is not the question before us. Hon. Members might like to bear in mind the fact that, if one commits adultery the night after one gets married, one can get divorced immediately. The idea that somehow there is a two-year period before divorce can take place when there is consent and a five-year period when there is not, is nonsense. When we consider the nature of the institution of marriage, we should be in no doubt that, if one wants to, one can get divorced easily. I have never understood why it is necessary to shackle people in an unhappy domestic situation and an unhappy marriage when it is obvious that the partnership has broken down. I hope that the members of the Standing Committee will consider the practical effects on the individuals involved rather than worship an institution that may be worthless in the individual case.

I should have liked to mention several other matters in the Bill, but because of the time available it is not possible to do so. I conclude by saying that the two fundamental problems that people face in the provision of legal services are cost and often delay, particularly in the courts. The Bill does nothing to address either problem. It simply extends monopolies in certain cases. It does not get around the obvious problems of conflict of interests. It does not get round the problem that choice is not extended simply by increasing the number of people involved in providing legal services. Choice includes the quality and impartiality of the advice. It includes many things by which the Government do not seem to set any store.

In short, the Bill seems to monkey around with the present system, and at the end of the day, the consumers of legal services will not find the service greatly improved. Many other areas have not been considered, including no-fault liability or putting the resoluton of more disputes out of the legal environment.

I am grateful for this brief opportunity to touch on matters which are important to all of us who live in Scotland. I conclude where I started: it is a tragedy that the whole matter has been discussed here in a rush and in such circumstances, when it could and should be discussed 450 miles away to the benefit not only of people who live in the United Kingdom as a whole.

9.8 pm

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): I too am grateful for the opportunity to speak on the Bill. I have a great deal to say about the inadequacies of the conveyancing system and about the appointment and preservation of judges on the Bench, but I shall save it for the Committee. On licensing, I do not see why people should be entitled to peace and quiet only on a Sunday. If local pensioners or mothers with young children are being annoyed by hooligans with carry-outs on any day of the week, they should expect the licensing boards to crack down on the supplier. In Committee, I shall be concerned to make it easier for the public to complain. Why should people have to take unpaid leave from work, wait outside the court for several hours, and then find that the case is not even to be heard? The licensing procedure is in a shambles, and something ought to be done about it.

I want to draw particular attention to clause 34. For a five-year period to operate in the case of a contested divorce puts the non-consenting party in a very strong bargaining position. If that party has possession of the family home, the other partner is forced to find whatever accommodation they can. Not every local authority is particularly helpful, and it usually means a worsening by far of the housing standards that the individual must endure, possibly together with the children of the marriage. He or she might have to live on benefits or part-time earnings, while his or her share of the value of

the marital home remains tied up until the divorce is finalised many years later. That places enormous pressure on that individual to settle and to accept an unfair deal.

If the other party wishes to remarry, an enforced wait of five years is far too long. It would often prevent the new couple from having children of their own for that considerable length of time. If the woman is close to an age when she knows that pregnancy could result in serious foetal abnormality, it may even prevent the couple from starting a family. What is the point of a five-year wait? Is it likely that many spouses who have refused to have anything to do with each other for two years will have a change of heart between the third and fifth year? I am likely to support the change in the Bill, but I will bring my remarks to a close, so that my hon. Friend on the Frong Bench can make his speech.

9.11 pm

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): For the first time since I entered the House, I can say with entire sincerity at the conclusion of a Scottish debate that we have had an excellent and real debate, with people speaking from the heart and from the head rather than along party lines. I am delighted that that happened because the issues that we are confronting are extremely important, not only in parliamentary terms but to the social ethos of Scotland. The issues that we have debated have a real effect on the lives of many of our fellow citizens, and they have been approached with the seriousness that they justify.

As the Secretary of State for Scotland has only just rejoined us, I am sure that he will receive reports of the debate. He should be aware that probably the most scathing criticism of the Bill, with which I should not seek to compete, came from his own side of the House. The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn) described it as

"a bad Bill. It is a sandwich of stale bread and poisoned meat."

I should not seek to improve on that short title. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) said that it was a pity that the House was not consulted before the Bill was brought before it. The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) was, as befits of a man of his station, more cautious in his criticisms, but he too showed serious disagreement with many of the Bill's aspects.

We reiterate our anger at the way in which the Bill has been presented and the time scale that we have been offered. It is a major piece of legislation. As every hon. Member who has spoken recognised, its provisions should not be contained within a single Bill. Perhaps Professor Wilson of Edinburgh, who specialises in Scottish law, was exaggerating when he described it as the Scottish Law (Abolition) Bill. But, with the common consent of the House, it might be termed the Small Town Solicitor (Scotland) (Abolition) Bill.

The Bill embodies what should be a major piece of licensing legislation in its own right. It incorporates as an afterthought significant changes to Scotland's divorce laws that will crucially affect the lives and future happiness of hundreds and, in time, thousands of our fellow citizens. As a throwaway, it contains also charities law, without an iota of party politics in it, but involving significant reforms. Its miscellaneous provisions cover such matters as court proceedings and matrimonial homes. That is a huge gamut of extremely important measures.

A Bill having the title of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill should conspicuously and unmistakably extend and strengthen the rights of the citizen. To win the approval of the House, it should enhance the availability and likelihood of justice, irrespective of the individual's ability to pay. By the common consent of the House, there is little in the Bill that readily suggests that it meets those criteria. There is no reference to the extension of legal aid and to what is probably the greatest legal controversy in Scotland at present, the use of warrant sales. Many large areas of Scottish law that are in need of reform are not addressed by the legislation.

I shall deal briefly with charities, because in the short time available I have no wish to reiterate issues that have already been dealt with in some detail. I support the concept of greater disclosure about the identity of charities, and the purposes for which they exist. I also believe, along with my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr, Canavan), that there is a good case for including in the Bill provisions to examine the criteria and the basis upon which charities exist, and the charitable purposes of some organisations that are quite wrongly designated as charities.

I have no doubt that in Committee one organisation that we shall be interested to inquire into is the Atlantic Salmon Trust. For the life of me, I cannot imagine how an organisation that is in the business of buying up salmon net fishings in Scotland to protect the vested financial interests of riparian owners there can possibly qualify as a charity. If that trust can be defined as a charity, I suspect that many other organisations are masquerading as charities when they should not be, and we shall certainly explore that in Committee.

A small matter—almost a personal hobby horse—is local charities or voluntary groups that have fallen by the wayside and become defunct. The knowledge of their past existence, perhaps stretching back for several decades, exists only in local folk memories. Perhaps they were never registered or formally wound up. There may be some confusion about whether they had any money and who is responsible for it. The information has disappeared into the mists of time. As things stand, the only beneficiaries of such confusion are the banks, where the money rests for ever and a day. I hope that so that their charitable funds may be merged or so that the bodies may be redefined in their purposes, as the Bill rightly proposes, there will be an onus on banks to declare the existence of dormant accounts belonging to all voluntary or charitable bodies registered or unregistered. Further steps can then be taken.

The largest area of contention in the Bill is legal services. I am the only hon. Member at either Dispatch Box who does not declare a vested interest, and who does not need to be addressed as learned. Personally, I think that that has more to do with the inadequacies of terminology in the House than with anything else.

It is crucial that legal services are subjected to the critical scrutiny not only of lawyers—we have heard plenty from them tonight—but of the consumers, the people who use such services. The consumer has a strong interest in distinguishing between genuine choice and the illusion of it. Simply because the Government refer to choice does not mean that it exists. The route to all the proposed reforms seems to be the part of the Bill that deals with conveyancing practitioners. The Secretary of State referred to the very high standard of service that is at

[Mr. Brian Wilson]

present provided by solicitors in the sphere of conveyancing. I should have thought that a reasonable maxim for the Government is: if it is not broken, do not fix it. Yet we have this legislative basis for the introduction of conveyancing practitioners. The terminology suggests a new breed of person who will deal with conveyancing as if it were a separate compartment of the law, apart from all others. It is like a heart surgeon not being required to know anything about what happens in the arms and legs.

If he is to fulfil his conveyancing responsibilities, the conveyancing practitioner—whether he is a solicitor or not—will need to have a real understanding of the law of contract, property law, company law, bankruptcy law, the law of succession, taxation law, the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981, and doubtless many more Acts. If that person does not hold the required professional knowledge of all those branches of the law, how can his performance compare with that of the solicitor who is regarded as competent in them all? The public should not have foisted upon them, in the name of choice, a conveyancing practitioner who is less well qualified than those who are already available to them.

The theory is that choice will be extended. Choice, however, will not be extended if all that is available is a lesser breed of practitioner. Choice will certainly not be extended if solicitors lose the essential income that allows them to practise conveyancing, thereby forcing the consumer into the hands of a diminishing number of practices. That problem ties straight in with the question of multi-disciplinary practices.

The hon. Member for Dumfries made an interesting point when he referred to difficulties over the legal definition of a rural area and an urban area. Solicitors in small towns may disappear and be replaced by a multi-disciplinary practice, which could be in Dumfries, Perth and Inverness. I do not accept that a few glossy, one-door practices in the larger towns and cities of Scotland are any substitute for the large network of solicitors that can be found in virtually every town, and sometimes in the villages of Scotland. That, however, is a real possibility if the Bill is enacted in its present form. It will push people towards the bigger practices, towards the one-door approach. Many of those professional services will be offered by only a few larger business organisations instead of by a large number of small organisations at local level.

Reference has been made to first-time buyers. I should like to give my personal experience under the existing system, not under the system that is envisaged in the legislation. When I bought my first flat in the west end of Glasgow I went, in all innocence, to an estate agent in Byres road. I apologise if I am revealing disturbing middle-class tendencies, but my first priority was to secure that flat. I was much more worried about that than about shopping around.

From the time I entered that estate agency I was carried along inexorably on a magical mystery tour. It took me first to a back room in the office where I was "advised" about mortgage facilities. I was then carried, even more mysteriously, to a solicitor's practice in an upstairs attic in Hamilton. Eventually I ended up in a bank in Busby. That was the result of taking the first basic step of going through an estate agent's door in Byres road, Glasgow. There may have been—although I would not have noticed them—many funny handshakes during that magical mystery tour, but the point is that, even as matters stand now, there is not a one-door approach but an interlinked approach.

I know that there is considerable concern in the Law Society and elsewhere about such operations. If anything, the Bill should be trying to put a stop to such practices rather than formalising and legitimising them through multi-disciplinary practices that will extend the principle far beyond the experience that I described. Multi-disciplinary practices might mean that an inexperienced person buying a house will find it difficult to resist the pressure to go from one stop to the next in the way in which I described, and will provide a greater deterrent to the person saying, "I do not want to go to the professional associate just up the corridor to whom you are trying to direct me." If we are trying to establish choice and if we want people to consider their options independently—that is exactly what they should be able to do—putting all the disciplines under one roof with all the pressures that will then be incumbent upon people is the antithesis of choice.

In small and medium-sized towns in Scotland, enterprising solicitors might decide to fight back against the development of multi-disciplinary practices and might say, "A multi-disciplinary practice in Perth is taking our business away; we shall try to extend the same facilities to our clients in Blairgowries. We shall try to give them the same package on the spot." But under the Bill such a solicitor is prevented from doing so because of the incomprehensible distinction that it draws between those firms that have court practices and those that do not. So solicitors who are partly dependent upon court practices will have to either give that up or abandon the idea of becoming a small multi-disciplinary practice. Once again I cannot see how that in any way extends choice.

My great fear is that there will be an erosion of legal services. I shall not go over the ground again about the dependency on conveyancing work in small solicitors' firms. If we take that away from them, undoubtedly we shall diminish access to the other legal services that they provide.

On the subject of the Scottish Conveyancing and Executry Services Board that is proposed in the Bill, the English equivalent has been legislated for in such a way to provide a balance of interest between providers and consumers. That is the least that we would expect in Scotland. We welcome unreservedly the creation of the ombudsman post, but we should also welcome some sanction. I understand that the English legislation introduced the concept of £1,000 maximum compensation at the behest of the Law Society, and I believe that such a sanction should apply to Scotland. Again, many constituency cases involve people who have been through the entire process of the Law Society, the ombudsman and so on but achieve no satisfaction.

I give notice that Labour Members and, I believe, the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) will table an amendment in Committee to allow the cost of a survey in a conveyancing transaction to be borne by the seller. That idea might put a few cats among the pigeons.

I shall not go over the same ground again on rights of audience. I speak as a non-lawyer, but the issue may be seen by some people as a matter of internal dispute among lawyers. It will not be discussed in that way in Committee,

as at the end of the day it is the consumer or the person consulting the lawyer who matters and we want to ensure that they have access to the best available people. I found the points made by the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross fairly powerful.

I wish to move on quickly to the licensing provisions. We could spend the night regretting the rushed and confused way in which the whole matter has been presented to us. I have no doubt that the Scottish licensing laws need serious reform and review. Some of the aims of Dr. Clayson and of the subsequent legislation have been fulfilled. There have been some improvements in Scotland's licensing laws and licensing provision, but no one who knows anything about the nuts and bolts of Scottish society can be in any doubt that there is much to be done in terms of licensing and alcohol. I do not say that in an unco' guid or patronising way—far from it. If we are to seek serious improvements in Scottish society, licensing laws should not be the subject of a subsection but should be a matter of serious review. Whatever our generation may have seen, we do not see anything much better in the attitudes of young people towards drink. They are subjected to advertising pressure by breweries pouring money into campaigns to make drink seem an essential adjunct of every activity. We want a different approach to drink in Scotland.

If people were to be asked in a survey on licensing laws in Scotland how to get a better attitude towards drink, I suspect that the last proposal of 99 per cent. would be to open the off-licences on a Sunday afternoon. That does not seem to be a social reform that is much in demand. Many, but by no means all, off-sales premises in Scotland, especially in inner-city areas, are part of the problem rather than of the potential solution. When one walks into the shops that are selling from behind high wire fences an extremely limited selection of extremely potent beverages, I do not think that one can see any part of what Dr. Christopher Clayson had in mind for the liberalising reform of Scottish licensing laws. Opening on a Sunday will do no one any favours, other than the people who own those shops.

In the context of pub opening hours, the Secretary of State spoke of Sunday as a time for peace and quiet. Why should not it also be a time of peace and quiet for people who live next door to an off-sales premises and who often suffer at least as much discomfort and environmental intrusion as those living next door to public houses? As my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said, these will be matters for a free vote among Labour Members, so I am stating what is largely a personal view.

On club licences and police access, it is essential to note that there has been no demand for the measure from those clubs. We heard from the Secretary of State that 18 community councils in Scotland—a small proportion—are in favour of such a measure. Perhaps more significantly, we heard that four licensed trade organisations favour giving the police access to social clubs. With respect, of course four licensed trade organisations are in favour, because that is a device which they see for eventually getting rid of competition and the different kind of establishment that social clubs offer.

The issue is of interest not only north of the border —which it would immediately affect—but in the south. I note from a letter from the Committee of Registered Clubs Associations that, if the Secretary of State goes ahead with the proposal, he will have not only the opposition of his Back Benchers but the unremitting opposition of the Royal British Legion clubs, the Royal Naval Association clubs, the Royal Air Force Association clubs, the National Union of Labour and Socialist Clubs, the National Union of Liberal Clubs and the Working Men's Club and Institute Union Ltd. Perhaps most ominously for the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the letter added:

"We are also of one accord with a similar view held by the Association of Conservative Clubs on this issue."

I should like to place on record the views of the Law Society of Scotland, because it was ungracious of the Secretary of State not to allow my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) to provide a point of information. As the right hon. and learned Gentleman did not give way, I must provide that information. The Law Society of Scotland states:

"Clause 46 provides that a police constable may enter a club at any reasonable time. He does not need a warrant or reasonable suspicion of a crime to be able to exercise his right of entry. This does not put clubs on an equal footing with pubs.

This clause was in the Bill when introduced by the Lord Advocate in the Lords and its exact terms were only known then. In view of its terms the Law Society considers that it requires amendment in order to prevent undue restriction of the liberty of the individual and to preserve, in a manner consistent with good public order, the privacy of the individual."

I am glad that the record can be set straight.

We are all members of clubs. I note from "Who's Who" that both the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State are members of the New club in Edinburgh. The Under-Secretary of State is also a member of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers. If the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State were having a small refreshment in the New club, they would not be terribly pleased if the police exercised their right to enter every hour on the hour because of a little local upset, such as members misbehaving in the street.

However, that is not the reality. The clubs that would be far more likely to be affected are those to which ordinary folk go to have a relaxed social evening. If the Secretary of State goes ahead with the proposal, he will introduce more problems than such a measure is likely to resolve.

The mere fact that it takes so long to go through the Bill illustrates the rag bag of measures with which we are dealing tonight under the title of one Bill. Few of the measures, as has been ably demonstrated tonight, have many friends among Conservative or Opposition Members. I assure the Secretary of State that we shall contribute to the process of healthy debate and that every time we defeat one of the measures in the Bill with Conservative Members, we hope to be invited by the hon. Member for Dumfries to join him in a large Laphroaig.

9.36 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): This has been an especially good debate. It has been useful to have the evidence of the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing), who piloted the Licensing (Scotland) Bill through in 1976. My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) also expressed strong views at that time. Five of those who took part today are lawyers. However, I am glad to say that the majority of those who contributed were not. Three of those who are lawyers have had the

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

distinction of being the junior counsel to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn) and are still here to talk about it.

I want to give an example of an issue on which we should like to reflect. I was asked by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and by the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) why a provision for evidence by television link for children in sexual offences cases was not included in the Bill. The Scottish Law Commission published its report on the evidence of children and other potentially vulnerable witnesses in February this year. The report makes a number of recommendations on the giving of evidence by children and by other vulnerable witnesses. The recommendations are now being considered. I want to reflect on the points made by hon. Members and we shall return to the matter later in Committee.

Dr. Godman: I have listened carefully to the Minister on this important matter. Will he give the House an assurance that his officials will give careful attention to the experiences gained by English courts vis-a-vis the Criminal Justice Act 1988 and, in particular, clause 23?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I will certainly make a point of looking with particular care at that. I do not mean only my officials, but Ministers, as we are responsible. I would not come forward with proposals unless I felt that I could satisfy the House on them.

There have been substantial criticisms of the Bill on the ground that it covers too wide an area. We belive that it is better to take the opportunity presented by such a Bill rather than to wait for two or three individual Bills, which would necessitate many Second Reading debates and subsequent Committees. I stress to the House that we shall approach the Committee in a constructive spirit and that we shall accede to amendments when they contain reasonable and well-thought-out proposals. Even when they do not, if they have well-thought-out principles, we shall act on them. We shall listen with the utmost care to what is said.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) raised the point about what the Law Society had said. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State correctly recorded its representations during consultation that year. However, in the past two days, the Law Society has sent in written representations expressing concern, as the hon. Member for Linlithgow said, and we shall look at those with particular concern.

Mr. Dalyell: I accept that there was a genuine misunderstanding: the Secretary of State did not have in his hands the letter that the rest of us had.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The matter will be looked at with great care. In the other place, more than 800 amendments were tabled in Committee and on Report and nearly 300 were carried. Although many of those 300 were Government amendments, many of them represented a response to arguments advanced during our debates. I have every confidence that the hon. Members who serve on the Standing Committee will rise to the challenge and that the outcome will be a measure of significant and lasting benefit to Scotland.

I am particularly aware of the concerns expressed about conveyancing and about rural solicitors. I have been employed by rural solicitors in the past, and I assure the House that we shall look at the matter carefully.

Each of the Bill's four constituent parts is intended to confer significant benefits on Scotland. Part I deals with charities. Given the important role that charities play in Scottish life, they must have the confidence and respect of the public. The obvious way of preserving the good will that they enjoy is to ensure that all charities are accountable for the way in which they conduct their operations and the way in which they employ the resources that they have in their care. The Bill is important because it gives the public the right to be informed of the bodies that have received recognition as charities.

Shortly after my appointment as a junior Minister, I visited UK 2000, which said that Scottish charities were at a disadvantage in relation to their English counterparts because the necessary access-to-information arrangements were not in place. The Bill requires a charity to provide on request a copy of its explanatory documents—for example, a trust deed or other document setting out its aims and objectives. It is especially relevant that members of the public will now be able to acquire the necessary information.

Some hon. Members are concerned that there is nothing in the Bill to require the Inland Revenue to maintain a register or index of charities to which the public has access. Although the point is not made explicit in the Bill, I am happy to assure hon. Members that the Inland Revenue will maintain a microfiche index of the Scottish bodies that they have recognised as charitable. Members of the public will be able to call in person to consult the index or to write or telephone for information about specific charities. The Inland Revenue will be able to tell members of the public the names and addresses of the bodies that it has recognised. Armed with that information, members of the public will be able, as of right, to obtain copies of the charity's accounts, together with reports of their recent activities and, if required, a copy of the founding deed.

Part II of the Bill seeks to achieve our overriding aim of providing reforms to improve the provision of legal services to the consumer. We intend to do that by increasing the choice of legal services and, where possible, improving consumer protection mechanisms. The measures in part II have been prepared fully to reflect the distinctive characteristics of Scottish law. In another place, we had the benefit of the views of members of the Scottish judiciary, and many amendments were made as a result.

In putting together the licensing package, our general approach was to heed the majority view. We aimed to achieve three objectives: first, to enhance the more civilised regime that has been in place since 1976; secondly, wherever possible, to remove red tape from the procedures; and, thirdly, to tighten up the law where practical experience of the operation of the existing provisions suggested that that was needed. I have no doubt that we shall devote a good deal of time in Committee to the details of the provisions.

The Government will be willing to consider whether the objectives to which I have referred can be achieved more easily if adjustments are made. We intend to move carefully, as it is clear to us, from the many representations that we have received, that there is widespread and strong feeling in Scotland concerning the details of the licensing

regime. Our intention must be to ensure changes which confer clear practical benefits on Scotland and which are seen to secure such benefits.

Part IV of the Bill contains an important package of miscellaneous reforms. A number of the provisions are intended to improve and expand social work services in respect of the criminal justice system in Scotland and have the objective of increasing the range of alternatives to imprisonment.

For example, the measures on fines are intended to make the fines system operate more effectively in practice and to reduce the incidence of imprisonment for fine default among those less able to pay. I will look into the point raised by the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) about Polmont, although some of the issues involved in that may be beyond the scope of the Bill. I will write to the hon. Gentleman in due course.

It comes as no surprise that very diverging views have been expressed about divorce in the debate. The Scottish Law Commission discovered from its public opinion survey about the desirability of changing the law that no reform of the divorce laws will please everyone. However, one of the main reasons for trying to reduce unnecessary use of the behaviour ground is to minimise unnecessary hostility in the interests of the children in the marriage.

In nearly 50 per cent. of divorce actions, the grounds for divorce are based on the behaviour of the defender. Although of course there are instances in which the behaviour of the defender is indeed the real cause of the breakdown of the marriage, there is reason to believe that many actions are raised on behavioural grounds simply because of the length of the separation periods. No doubt the pursuer would prefer not to make allegations against his or her spouse, but is advised that, unless behaviour is used, there will be a delay of at least two years from the date of separation.

Reducing the periods should make it easier for parties to focus on the welfare of the children, because they will not need to resort to recriminations about each other's behaviour. That is the moral justification for the measure. However, I appreciate that there are strong views on that subject which no doubt will be dealt with fully in Committee.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) that divorce is a last resort, and we are not touching the provisions on reconciliation. While separation periods should be long enough to substantiate a breakdown, it would be wrong for them to be even longer. Having no statutory period would encourage parties to manufacture evidence about each other rather than to focus on the welfare of their children.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: If the argument is correct that reducing the period would make people concentrate on the welfare of their children, presumably a statutory period of separation of seven days would benefit the children.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Those are matters of judgment and balance. I suggest that my hon. and learned Friend is going a little too far.

I could say an awful lot about charities, but many hon. Members referred to the legal services, so I will deal with some of the important amendments that will be tabled in that regard. A Government amendment will be tabled in Committee to make regulations under clauses 15 and 17 subject to the affirmative resolution procedure in both Houses of Parliament. Regulations under clause 15 will deal with the registration criteria for conveyancing practitioners and the codes of conduct and practice that will govern such practitioners once they are registered. Regulations under clause 70 will cover the conduct and practice of executry practitioners and the educational qualifications and practical training that will be required of those undertaking executry business.

There is also considerable merit in the proposition that bodies applying for rights of audience or rights to conduct litigation under clause 23 should make their application available for public inspection, and that the Lord President and the Secretary of State should have regard to objections received when considering whether to grant such an application. Therefore, amendments will be tabled requiring those making the application to advertise that fact and to make copies of the draft scheme for regulating their members' exercise of any practising rights available for public inspection. The Lord President and the Secretary of State will then be required to consider any representations made about any application by outside bodies before reaching a final decision.

Mr. Wilson: Does the Minister agree that the list of Government amendments of which he is giving notice at the Dispatch Box, in addition to the fact that we will have at most five weeks to consider the Bill, contributes to the feeling that we are facing a period of chaos in an attempt to pass this important legislation? Will he respond to the point which is supported by Members on both sides of the House: that the Government should take the Bill away and reconsider it or we should extend its consideration beyond the summer?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have no doubt that, just as the hon. Member for Falkirk, East was able to persuade hon. Members to rise to the occasion when he took his Bill through the House, so we shall rise to the occasion and be capable of serving our constituents well enough to sit long enough to do justice to this measure.

We also believe that there is need for a review procedure for rules, and we shall introduce proposals on that subject.

The ombudsman will certainly have teeth, as hon. Members have requested. We propose to extend the list of exclusions from eligibility for the post of Scottish legal services ombudsman to members and officers of the Scottish Conveyancing and Executry Services Board and conveyancing and executry practitioners and their employers.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I will not give way because I am anxious in the short time available to deal with the whole issue of conveyancing.

It is important that solicitors should be fairly treated. A vital point is that conveyancing practitioners must offer prospective clients an interview close to home or to the property being conveyed before any instructions are accepted. It must be with a qualified person—that is, a solicitor or, in time, a qualified conveyancer—and that will be dealt with by way of regulations.

Similarly, each service must be priced separately so that clients can see if cheap conveyancing is being paid for from elsewhere. Also, each transaction must be supervised by a qualified person with whom the client will be able to deal

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

on a personal level. Agency arrangements will be possible, with conveyancing practitioners employing local solicitors to do conveyancing work, including interviews, for them.

The hon. Member for Garscadden asked whether banks and building societies would do conveyancing. Hon. Members will have noted from the briefing circulated by the Council of Mortgage Lenders that it is unlikely that large institutions will wish to operate as conveyancers outside large population centres. That is a further reassurance that the viability of legal practices in rural areas will not be compromised.

It has been argued that rural solicitors will see a large proportion of their fee income removed by competition. The argument is that such solicitors are able to stay in business only because of the fees they receive. In such circumstances, it could be suggested that conveyancing fees are higher than they need be to provide a fair return on the provision of conveyancing services in isolation. Neither the Secretary of State nor I accept that the imposition of what may be high conveyancing fees is necessarily the best way of maintaining the existing network of rural solicitors' offices.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: No hon. Member has suggested at any stage in the debate that higher fees are being charged for conveyancing in rural practices. We have pointed out that as much as 80 per cent. of the income of those practices is dependent on conveyancing fees. That is the bread and butter of those offices. If they lose that, they will not be able to provide the other vital services.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I understood that the suggestion was that there had been cross-subsidisation—the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) used that expression—although I accept that the hon. Lady did not say that.

We have undertaken research to establish the present accessability of the people of Scotland to solicitors' offices. The results of that exercise are now available and I am placing copies of the report in the Library. Using the most recent available data, we see that 98 per cent. of the population of Scotland live within five miles of a solicitor's office in urban areas and within 10 miles in rural areas. [HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] It is not rubbish. We have conducted a survey. Furthermore, we will repeat the survey, probably in 1993, to monitor the situation and compare the position, recognising that any change will be the product of a number of factors.

The argument that rural solicitors will suffer substantially also implies that the location and structure of solicitors' practices will be unchanging over time were it not for the effects of the Bill. That is not so. The solicitors' profession is far from static: it is continually changing in response to factors such as clients' needs, population shifts and trends in practice. There has been a trend towards larger practices, reflecting increasing complexity in the law and of clients' needs. We believe that this dynamic process is bound to lead to a shifting geographical pattern of outlets and to amalgamations and regroupings.

One important feature of the conveyancing code of practice to be made in regulations will be the free interview with a solicitor or qualified conveyancer, which all practitioners will be obliged to offer——

Mr. Menzies Campbell: If the legislation will lead to amalgamations and regroupings, how will that increase choice, given that the client will have fewer firms of solicitors from which to choose?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. and learned Gentleman will find, I think, that many rural solicitors will be used on an agency basis, a system which will grow. Years ago, advocates put the same argument, saying that they were very much against solicitors taking on divorces in the sheriff courts since it was argued that that would be taking away their bread and butter work. The Bar has doubled since then, and its work has increased out of all recognition.

It will be a function of the board to monitor the interview and personal contact obligations that I have outlined to ensure that prospective and actual plans received the degree of individual attention that they require. We shall look with particular care at these provisions. I am aware of the misgivings that have been expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House, so we shall be especially careful when we scrutinise this part of the Bill.

As for Sunday opening of off-sales premises and public houses: religious organisations have expressed regret about the permitting of off licences on Sundays. I have received more than 50 letters on behalf of Kirk Sessions and other religious bodies expressing concern. Other bodies have welcomed the provisions in the Bill, which reflect the majority view of those who responded to the consultation document——

Mr. Wilson *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have only a few moments left.

There is a clear demand for off-licence premises to be opened on Sundays, and the Scottish Office's view is that the period of 12.30 pm to 10 pm strikes the right balance. The Bill proposes no addition to present Sunday opening of pubs, because the overwhelming majority of response were strongly against that, on the grounds that the traditional Scottish Sunday is a time of peace and quiet.

Mr. Wilson *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) asked what was meant by "locality" in clause 39 (1)(b).

That is a matter for the judgment of the licensing board in the circumstances of the particular case. The board must take full view of whether the locality can be drawn narrowly or widely and must set the benefits to the community of the extension applied for against any detriment to the locality——

Mr. Darling: If the board will have that much discretion, it will be able to drive a coach and horses through the provisions which the Minister tells us will improve matters. He will really have to do better than that next time around.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I believe that the tightening up of late-night licensing will be warmly welcomed by the hon. Gentleman's constituents and by many others in city centres. Children's certificates will also be welcomed, as they will help with tourists.

The part of the Bill that might be referred to as having been called for by the hon. Member for Clydesdale (Mr.

Hood) has already been mentioned. On this matter, we have taken the acton required. The main objective is to make certain that we have a regime that minimises the scope for sales of alcohol in off-licences to under-aged persons——

Mr. Canavan: What about the police?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The overwhelming majority of responses on that have gone against what the hon. Gentleman has said, but we shall examine the matter with care in Committee.

Hon. Members have raised many issues, and it has not been possible to answer all of them in the brief time available. I have no doubt that we shall return to every one of the issues of concern. The Scottish Office will listen to what is said with the utmost care and will respond accordingly to all the issues that are pursued. We believe that the Bill as a whole will, if enacted, confer significant benefits on the people of Scotland. It will make the regulatory regime for charities more transparent and effective. It will provide practical benefits in terms of wider choice for the users of legal services. It will provide useful reforms of the liquor licensing regime and other important improvements. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 154, Noes 207.

Division No. 228] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carr, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Maria
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hill, James
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*

Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

Question accordingly negatived.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

LAW REFORM (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) (SCOTLAND) BILL *[Lords]*
[Money]

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill *[Lords]*, it is expedient to authorise—

(1) the payment out of money provided by Parliament of—

(a) the expenses of the Lord Advocate in carrying out his functions under the Act;

(b) sums required by the Secretary of State for the payment of—

(i) grant to the Scottish Conveyancing and Executry Services board;

(ii) amounts payable by him under the Act in respect of the Scottish legal services ombudsman and of any staff appointed for the ombudsman;

(iii) the remuneration of temporary judges appointed under the Act; and

(c) any increase attributable to the provisions of the Act in the sums payable under any other Act out of money provided by Parliament; and

(2) payments into the Consolidated Fund.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

EC Railway Policy

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

10.13 pm

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Roger Freeman): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 4478/90, relating to Community railway policy; and broadly welcomes proposals aimed at improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the European railways.

The proposals on Community railway policy set out in the Commission documents which the House has before it are, in the Government's view, a useful and important contribution to preparing for and exploiting the benefits of the single market.

The heart of the Commission's approach is that the European railways need to become more competitive. Indeed, the whole approach of the Commission is against encouraging any nation to continue to subsidise railways or, as in the past in some countries, to have railways which are production-led and do not cater sensitively and flexibly for the interests of their consumers, the passengers. The Commission wants commercial and autonomous organisations which are sensitive to the needs of the customer. The Government welcome the approach of the Commission in that regard.

That approach is in marked contrast to that of Her Majesty's Opposition in the past. Undoubtedly, we shall hear from the Opposition spokesman whether the Opposition welcome the refreshing approach of the Commission in favour of a profitable European railway industry. That is the approach that the Government have pursued. We now have a railway that is more vigorous, profitable and responsive than when the Opposition party was in office. The changes that have occurred in our railway system in the 10 years of this Government are a great credit to British Rail and to this Administration, who supported British Rail in some of their sensible investment decisions and provided the cash from the taxpayers for those ends.

The Government want to see a thriving United Kingdom and European railway system. We want to ensure that that is done fairly, sensibly and profitably. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said earlier in the House today, we believe that there should be no subsidy to international traffic, passenger traffic or freight traffic. That is enshrined in the Channel Tunnel Act 1987. The Government have no intention of changing that principle or repealing section 42 of the Act—unlike the Opposition, who voted for the Channel Tunnel Bill but have now changed their tune and want section 42 repealed to permit subsidy of international traffic.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): Can my hon. Friend confirm that, under this Government, the ferries of Dover are safe from unfair, subsidised competition and that, if a Labour Government were elected, public money would go into unfair competition that would do down the ferry industry of Dover and make many ferry workers unemployed?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. One can extend the argument. Why should subsidised international freight and passenger traffic have to compete with the unsubsidised air and ferry traffic between the United Kingdom and the continent? I agree with my hon. Friend.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Can my hon. Friend confirm that, when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister this afternoon used the word "international" when referring to the provision of public funds for rail links, she chose her word carefully? Can he confirm that there is nothing whatever in what she said that would preclude British Rail from approaching the Government and the Government acceding to its request to provide assistance for railway investment to cope with the inevitable congestion on the existing railway system caused by channel tunnel traffic?

Mr. Freeman: I can confirm my hon. Friend's interpretation of what my right hon. Friend the Prime Miniter said. There are three principles involved in my hon. Friend's question. First, the Government have ensured that there are substantial public funds for sensible British Rail investments. Some £3·7 billion has been earmarked by British Rail for investment over the next three years. As the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) will know, that will in part be paid for by the taxpayers. The second principle is that there is an understanding of and recognition by the Government that in the case of domestic services, there may be a case for grant aid, as is the case in respect of Network SouthEast and provincial railways. That is perfectly consistent with the principle of no subsidy to international traffic.

The third principle is that British Rail should be encouraged to exploit the environmental advantages of rail traffic in terms of lack of congestion, speed, and convenience. Those are great advantages for any rail network, and British Rail, like other European railways, should be encouraged to exploit them.

The fourth principle is that we believe strongly that the customer should pay his or her fair share of the cost of railway journeys. It is understood that, particularly in the south-east, heavy expenses are incurred in providing a peak-hour service. That involves for Network SouthEast what amounts to running an unprofitable service. Therefore, the Government recognise, through the public service obligation grant, the need to contribute to British Rail in providing those services.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Will the Minister explain therefore why Network SouthEast will have much less money next year than this year, in terms of its PSO grant?

Mr. Freeman: The reason is that Network SouthEast is running its services better and more efficiently, so the public service obligation grant can be a little less next year than it has been in the past. That is to the credit of British Rail. As the hon. Lady knows, British Rail has great difficulty in providing services in the south-east, but those offered to the commuter this year will be better than last year. Because of the £3·7 billion British Rail investment programme, a portion of which will go to Network SouthEast, services will improve further over the next two to three years.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): As to clause 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987, can my hon. Friend tell the House by what means the massive infrastructure improvements in the Pas de Calais are being carried out? A major country is undertaking those improvements in competition with us. As my hon. Friend knows, I am

[Mr. Nicholas Winterton]

deeply concerned that the North-West region should be able to take advantage of the Channel Tunnel Bill, which I fully supported when it went through this House.

Mr. Freeman: I am not responsible either for the French Government or for SNCF. However, I can tell my hon. Friend that the Government recognise that the north-east and the north-west, and all regions outside London, must benefit from the opening of the channel tunnel. That is why British Rail will, by the opening of the tunnel in 1993, have invested more than £1 billion in making sure that both freight and passenger services in all regions of the country can capitalise on the opening of the tunnel.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): Will the Minister ensure that British Rail finalises its decisions not next week but this week, so that local authorities having an interest can clearly plan for the future? British Rail and the Government have been waffling about the benefits that will go north, but will the Minister ensure that speedy decisions are made, so that any local authorities that are affected can make good plans for the future?

Mr. Freeman: I hope that I can give the hon. Gentleman that assurance. We expect an announcement shortly—I hope in the next week or so—on the first freight terminal in the north. British Rail will make announcements before the end of this year on all the regional freight terminals that will be available to capitalise on the channel tunnel.

The Commission proposals before the House tonight fall into three parts, and I shall deal briefly with each. First, the Commission recognises that certain services may need specific grant assistance, especially urban commuter services. That is largely due to the problem of peaking, and the need for rolling stock, which cannot be used at an even load throughout the day. The Commission wants that grant assistance to be properly indentified and paid for by the Government or local authorities, possibly as a contract, as opposed to the grant procedure that we have at present. That is simply a difference between revenue and expenses. We will consider that proposal. It is certainly an interesting idea. It will not affect the amount of financial assistance that the taxpayer has to provide, but it is an interesting idea for the form that the assistance takes.

Sir David Mitchell (Hampshire, North-West): Does my hon. Friend agree that grants of that sort ought not to be designed to benefit railway users—who in many cases, in the commuter belts, are some of the most well-off users —but should be designed to help reduce congestion on the roads for others who do not use the railways and are much affected by the congestion that they would otherwise have to face?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He is my predecessor bar one and was a distinguished Minister in the Department of Transport. In evaluating British Rail's investment proposals, we recognise implicitly the benefits of relieving congestion. My hon. Friend knows that, in certain investment appraisals undertaken by British Rail and reviewed by ourselves, we take that into account. He is right to draw attention to the advantages of rail as opposed to road transport, and of bringing commuters on to the new light rail schemes.

Recently, I inaugurated the Manchester metrolink scheme, which will bring great advantage to the citizens of Manchester. I hope that that will be a means of avoiding having to bring cars into the centre of our big cities.

The second proposal from the Commission argues for separating the infrastructure, and by definition one supposes its financing, from competing railway operations, which the Commission says should be run on a profitable basis. Presumably the railway operations would pay, through some form of leasing or franchising arrangements, for the use of the infrastructure.

The Government are not convinced by those arguments. It is an interesting approach, and we agree with the Commission that there should be transparency—the true costs of the infrastructure, track, signalling and stations, should be fairly allocated to the different railway business sectors which operate over the track. That is the path down which British Rail is going: the allocation of infrastructure costs to each of the five separate business sections of British Rail. It is interesting to note from recent reorganisations at SNCF that it appears to be heading down the same route.

Mr. Peter Fry (Wellingborough): Does my hon. Friend agree that the proposal by the Commission would provide an answer to those who often claim that road transport runs on an environment which is paid for by the taxpayer, whereas the railways have to run on tracks that they have paid for. The removal of that sort of argument would ensure that there was fair competition between rail and road.

Mr. Freeman: I understand my hon. Friend's point. I am not convinced at the moment that we need to separate the finances of the infrastructure from railway operations to achieve what my hon. Friend is seeking: some recognition in investment appraisals of the benefits of relieving congestion and the related social benefits. My hon. Friend and I are at one in seeking to achieve those benefits. I do not believe that the Commission's proposals are necessarily the only solution.

Thirdly, as regards combined transport—when loads are carried by road and then transported for part of the journey by rail—the Commission has made certain recommendations about reduction or reimbursement of vehicle taxes. We do not accept those, and in any case, that is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and not for Transport Ministers. We do not accept its arguments. The House has the proposals. Our reaction is set out in the explanatory memorandum that we have provided.

The draft Council directive on the development of the Community railways and the draft Council regulation amending regulation No.1/91/69, which established the public services obligation regime, set out the proposed organisational and other objectives to which I have referred. These proposals together represent the latest thinking of the Commission and supersede earlier proposals—in particular, the contents of departmental documents Nos. 4901/80, 4351/84 and 7343/85.

Discussions within the Council on the two proposed Council directives and the proposed Council regulation have so far been limited. Therefore, it is too early to give the House an idea of how the discussions are likely to

proceed and when they are likely to be concluded. The Government hope that it will be possible to make reasonable progress on these important matters.

Mr. Roger Moate (Faversham): Is it not the case that a number of the proposals in the draft directive have already been rejected by a number of the railway undertakings on the Continent and are therefore likely to be opposed by a number of member Governments? How much importance should be attached to the draft directive? Is it likely to be given a fair wind and to form the basis of serious intergovernmental discussions? If so, when may it emerge as a directive?

Mr. Freeman: My hon. Friend anticipates the last of the Commission's recommendations dealing with the high-speed rail network. I anticipate that it may occupy the House's attention first and foremost. In December 1989 the Council of Transport Ministers invited the Commission to consider the priorities for developing a European high-speed rail network. I expect that report, from officials of the various countries involved, to be completed by the end of the year. It is important that it should be received in good time. I have already referred to the Government's response to the three previous proposals. A Community response to the other three is likely to take longer than the time scale for considering the high-speed rail network.

We want high-speed rail network systems to be developed, but they must be developed on a sensible basis. We want such networks to permit the through running of trains. The existing tracks for TGV trains are not compatible with the TGV Atlantique trains. The latter cannot run on the track currently laid to Lyons. When we refer to ensuring that high-speed trains can run on the whole European network, we must remember that the French already have a problem with running those two types of train.

The House ought to give credit for the fact that British Rail operates more services at 100 mph and above than any other continental country except France. *[Laughter.]* The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) may laugh, but he should not run down British Rail's services. I shall deal with the geographic and demographic advantages that the French enjoy in planning their high-speed rail networks, but British Rail operates more services at these very high speeds than any other continental railway except SNCF.

High-speed train services in this country are excellent. Recently I had the opportunity to inaugurate the electrified line between London and Leeds. I have ridden on the track. That new service, using class 91 locos, will benefit many of my hon. Friends who use the east coast line. It is an excellent service. It has cost the taxpayer £450 million. In due course, it will be extended to Edinburgh. The French have made excellent progress. We give credit where it is due. Their high-speed trains are suitable for their terrain and demography. The French do not have the problem of London as a capital city, where tunnelling under part of the capital is inevitable for the construction of new rail links.

Those on the Opposition Front Bench probably have not appreciated that the international high-speed services operating through the tunnel after 1993 from Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow will be able to travel as far as Paris, but there passengers will have to change. The French do not provide through services for British passengers beyond Paris.

In debates about high-speed rail links, there is a danger of forgetting the importance of making sure that we improve our domestic services, particularly commuter services. My hon. Friends who represent north Kent constituencies are rightly concerned——

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East) *rose*——

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South) *rose*——

Mr. Freeman: I shall finish my point; then I shall happily give way, first to the hon. Gentleman and then to my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce).

I recognise the problems faced by my hon. Friends who represent constituencies in Kent, particularly with the north Kent line. I have visited London Bridge station and seen for myself the rolling stock, which is some 30 years old, and the overcrowding on those trains, but I can tell my hon. Friends that relief is at hand. Part of British Rail's £3·7 billion investment plan over the next three years is allocated to improving the quality of services on the north Kent line. That involves not only new rolling stock, which will begin to appear next October or November, but also the lengthening of the station platforms so that larger train capacity will be able to run on those lines.

Mr. Snape: Can I take the Minister back to Paris, away from the realms of fantasy in which he is now becoming involved? The French do not want to take through passengers through Paris; they want to take them round Paris. That is exactly what the Opposition want to do with through passengers travelling through London.

Mr. Freeman: I repeat the assertion that I made earlier. Passengers from Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow travelling through the tunnel after 1993 will have to change in Paris if they want to travel further on the French railway system.

Finally, I turn to the three points of misrepresentation and misunderstanding by Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): How will the subsidies to the railway system in France, including the subsidies that undoubtedly will be necessary for the high-speed train, be shown and reflected in fares in France and Germany, so that there is a level playing field in terms of competition between the European countries? How will that be demonstrated in the prices?

Mr. Freeman: I am not responsible for the way in which the French and Germans run their railway systems. However, I draw my right hon. Friend's attention to the document before the House, containing the recommendations of the Commission, which state that each of the European nations' railway companies should be profitable, independent and autonomous. We accept those principles, as we hope our European partners do.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Will my hon. Friend confirm that, in many continental countries, the use of a high-speed link is regulated by a higher fare for that service? In other words, they use the market to determine whether people are willing to pay more money to use that service. In my constituency, British Rail abandoned and ripped up a

[Mr. Ian Bruce]

track between Wareham and Swanage, having decided that it was uneconomic, and a group of enthusiasts are now relaying that track. Instead of using it for a fun railway, they are now demonstrating that people would like to use that line again. Private enterprise and the market are showing that railways can be built at an economic price. Surely that is what the Government are saying to those in Kent who oppose the high-speed link.

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his observations.

At least three points of misunderstanding have been expressed by the Opposition about international rail link services. First, there seems to be an assumption—certainly by the media, and perhaps also on the Opposition Front Bench—that we are unprepared for the opening of the channel tunnel in 1993. British Rail has spent £1 billion on railway infrastructure to ensure that we have passenger and freight services to exploit the benefits of the channel tunnel in 1993. Coupled with that, by 1993, £600 million will have been spent on our road systems. Those sums are significant, and they show that we are prepared for the opening of the channel tunnel.

The traffic forecasts show that, by the turn of the century, extra capacity may be needed not only to carry international traffic through the tunnel but to provide for commuter services. I am well aware of those forecasts, as are my hon. Friends. As for a high-speed rail link between Folkestone and London, at the turn of the century—not 1993—proposals have been put to us and a statement will be made shortly. The business aspects must stand up in terms of international traffic and be viable, but we understand that, as regards domestic Kent commuters, different financing principles will apply.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Will my hon. Friend confirm British Rail's present assessment that the traffic carried on its commuter lines is at a level that would make the provision of extra capacity unnecessary? Would my hon. Friend like to consider whether changes in working patterns, because of the massive increase in the use of fax, computer networks and so on, may throw out the traffic forecasts, and whether this expensive project may be unnecessary?

Mr. Freeman: Those who have made traffic forecasts would not share my hon. Friend's judgment. The forecasts which the Department has seen and which were made by a number of promoters of alternative links, and British Rail's figures, show that, perhaps by the turn of the century or a bit later, depending on the forecast made, extra capacity will be needed. That will mean not just using the infrastructure better but having additional lines.

The second misunderstanding has been expressed by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East. It has been said that Government money is not involved in either the preparations for 1993 or thereafter. I have already made our position plain on section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act, but it is important to delve a little deeper into the Opposition's claim that private sector finance is available in great quantities and on competitive terms to help finance——

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): Knocking on the door.

Mr. Freeman: Let me just analyse the hon. Gentleman's statements a little further. He asserts that this money is not disguised gilt-edged borrowing—in other words, it is not guaranteed or procured by the Government, which would count as public sector borrowing. Any private sector finance brought in to finance any part of British Rail's plans, including a high-speed link, will cost more than gilt-edged borrowing. The private sector rightly demands a higher rate of return, because the private sector wishes to minimise or hedge its risk. Private sector finance is not an easy option.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East wishes to bring in substantial private sector money to finance his grandiose plans for the railway networks of the next century. He will find that the private sector will demand far higher rates of return. By definition, public sector finance, which looks for an 8 per cent. real rate of return, will often be a better way of financing railway expenditure. I appreciate, of course, that the involvement of the private sector, in terms of engineering and route design, can sometimes bring economies and savings about which British Rail and the public sector have not thought. Private sector involvement can often be a better mechanism to ensure that money is not overspent and that projects are controlled properly.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): Has my hon. Friend noticed something else odd about the private-public mix? The Opposition are keen to see public money go into British Rail as it is organised at present as a nationalised industry. As and when it is privatised, as most Conservative Members hope, if such a proposition were put to the House, the Opposition would be screaming blue murder and saying that we were subsidising our friends.

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. There is something inconsistent about the Opposition's argument that somehow private sector money is knocking on the door for railway investment. We have asked British Rail, together with its partner Eurorail, to consider carefully the financing of a high-speed rail link. That is private sector involvement. We are appraising that proposal at present to see whether it makes sense and whether it stacks up against the criteria that. we have outlined.

Mr. Gerald Bowden (Dulwich) *rose*——

Mr. Freeman: I think that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East will find that private sector money is not available in great quantities on the terms that his right hon. and learned Friend the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer or his hon. Friend the shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury is prepared to accept.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Does the Minister accept that the only section of the directive that refers to Community funds being established to finance the network is the section on the high-speed trains? Will the Minister tell the House—this is terribly important—whether, if Community funds are established, as proposed in that section of the directive, that would be a way of getting round the financial restrictions of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987? Is he aware that hon. Members would feel cheated if, having passed a Bill that said that no public funds would be available, we found a Community fund

being established to finance gaps and to finance high-speed trains, which would simply be a way of tearing up all the assurances given in this place?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, and I will finish on that point. My hon Friend has put his finger——

Mr. Gerald Bowden: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Freeman: I will give way before I conclude, because I am aware of my hon. Friend's close interest in the rail link.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) has put his finger on the third and biggest misunderstanding and misrepresentation by the Opposition Front Bench. The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East talks grandly about European Community financing. In a recent radio broadcast, he talked about the opposition's plans for a high-speed rail link from Folkestone to Scotland costing £15 billion, and he argued that a great proportion of that sum would come from a European infrastructure fund. That is pure fantasy.

Mr. Prescott: That is not true.

Mr. Freeman: I have read the transcript of the broadcast.

That argument is wholly unrealistic, for two reasons. First, the European budget contains only 60 million ecu at present, which is £40 million. That is equivalent to the cost of buying two trains to run through the channel tunnel. Secondly, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East has argued that, somehow, our European partners can be conned into financing an enormous European infrastructure fund and that we should be net beneficiaries on a substantial scale. That is wholly unrealistic. Let him talk to the French and the Germans to try to persuade them to finance further British Rail investment. Before I conclude, I shall give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden).

Mr. Gerald Bowden: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way—especially so because I know that he will agree with me. No amount of public money can make a bad scheme a good scheme, and British Rail's present scheme is a bad scheme. Alternative schemes command commercial support.

Mr. Adley: Developer-led.

Mr. Bowden: I hear a sedentary voice say, "Spiv-led."

Mr. Adley: No: developer-led.

Mr. Bowden: If ever a scheme was developer-led, it is the British Rail King's Cross scheme, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) for making that point.

Let us look at the alternatives calmly: they are economically viable and they would go through a part of the country which is not made up of prime farm land or heritage landscape, which does not house communities, which is not inner London and which is not my constituency. I make no apology for defending my constituency, or, for that matter, for advancing a view that would benefit the whole of the United Kingdom. I urge my hon. Friend to consider the alternatives, which are economically viable and environmentally acceptable, which command widespread commercial support and which would be operationally effective.

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I gave him assurances on those very points in the debate that he initiated a short time ago. He referred to King's Cross and the Stratford alternatives. Even the proponents of those alternatives believe and accept that the services must eventually run through to King's Cross and the other major London terminals, so I suggest that having King's Cross as a terminal centre—a second terminal—is not entirely inconsistent with those proposals.

I commend the motion to the House. We believe in a profitable railway system. We are pragmatic, sensible and realistic, and we will deliver the goods.

[Mr. Freeman]

EC Railway Policy

10.51 pm

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): I beg to move, to leave out from "policy" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"and welcomes the proposals to upgrade to European standards Britain's inadequate railway system by filling in the missing links, and especially welcomes the establishment of a high speed rail network to include a dedicated high speed rail route from the Channel Tunnel to Scotland which requires the recommended changes in the present financial controls over nationalised industries, notably British Rail, in order to take into account the general needs of the community.".

I hope that the House will understand that if I am to allow other hon. Members the opportunity to speak, I shall not be able to give way as often as the Minister did.

In view of the statements made by the Prime Minister this afternoon and in the past by the Secretary of State for Transport, to the effect that no subsidy would be available for a high-speed international rail link, no debate could be more apposite than this debate on the Community's rail policy. If that is true—we shall have to await the contents of the statement that may be made to the House on Thursday to find out—Britain will remain committed to its existing 19th-century railway system while Europe develops the railway system of the 21st century.

That will be bad news for the tunnel that will connect the two systems and it will make it much more difficult to raise the finances for that tunnel. It will be bad news for the already congested south-east railway network, which will have to carry an additional 16 billion passengers. It will cause considerable environmental damage. It will be bad news for the northern parts of Britain, which will not have the fast access to Europe so necessary to their economies. It will prevent the relief of major congestion in Britain and the limitation of environmental damage, which could both be achieved were we to develop fast links such as those provided by the TGV in France. Britain will pay a high price for such a decision.

The Opposition amendment is based on those aspects of policy which, as the Government made clear in their evidence to the Committee—and as the Minister made clear tonight—they do not accept. The Government do not welcome the idea that a railway system should be developed to meet the community's needs, that is, that there should be a fast high-speed network throughout the Community. If that were the case, people could travel from Scotland to Portugal, into the south of France or to Italy on a fast rail system. It is somewhat contemptible for southern hon. Members to say that such a system might save only 10 minutes on a journey in the south. A high-speed network is vital to the northern parts of Britain and that should be accepted whether hon. Members live in the north or the south.

Apparently the Government do not accept the need to co-ordinate. They accept that we need to harmonise some of the technical provisions, but they are not prepared to plan to ensure that we have a high-speed system similar to that in the rest of the Community and to fill in what the document and the Community refer to as the missing links in such a system.

The proposed plan for the European high-speed network extends only as far as London—according to the definition of a high-speed link. The European definition of high speed is 180 mph and there are test trains on the TGV system capable of 300 mph. It is all very well for the Minister to refer to the Leeds line. I travel on that line regularly. It is a good quality train, but trains on that line travel at two thirds the speed of trains in Europe. The problem is that the ride on the line is most uncomfortable because the track is not suitable for high-speed traffic. The Minister said that he has travelled on that line. I defy him to keep his coffee in a cup, if he can get it on a table, when the train is travelling at 120 mph. If he doubts what I say, he need only ask any hon. Member who uses that line.

Mr. Teddy Taylor *rose*——

Mr. Prescott: I invite hon. Members to travel on that line and to see for themselves. A fortnight ago I travelled on a TGV at 190 mph and I could have stood a pencil on its end. That is the difference in the quality of the high-speed lines.

The Government reject the idea that there should be any subsidy for international passenger services or for freight services. The Government would not offer a financial incentive for combined road-rail services to move traffic off the roads on to rail. The Commission believes that someone using road and rail is being charged twice for the track costs—for the freight carriage and on the road. Therefore, there should be an entitlement to a reduction in the road tax. That is a reasonable argument and one that I should have thought would appeal to the marketeer arguments that we hear from Conservative Members. The Community's desire to see more freight transferred from road to rail and the use of subsidy should be an objective. That might not be achieved as a result of market forces, but it is recognised as desperately necessary in the south-east and in east Kent, where people do not want hundreds of thousands more lorries on their roads.

We disagree with the Minister about freight. The Government want a policy that reduces the public subsidy, leaving the issue to the market and to competition and hang the consequences. I am afraid that the Opposition do not accept that. Our amendment seeks to highlight the differences between us and the Government over the development of a Community rail policy.

Our system is inadequate and has missing links in that some lines still require electrification. I should have thought that the east midlands point might strike home with the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie), who no doubt campaigns for it. We need a high-speed link from the channel tunnel to Scotland. It should go not simply to London; it should go to the north. The Government must also change the financial framework to allow a high-speed network to be built. Those are the possibilities to be found in the document with which we agree.

Mrs. Currie: If the Labour party is so keen to develop rail links in the way that the hon. Gentleman describes, why has Labour-controlled Derbyshire county council refused to help to fund a feasibility study into the development of the Ivanhoe line, to improve passenger rail services in my constituency?

Mr. Prescott: If the hon. Lady visited Europe and looked at the railways there, she would discover the European rail systems are paid for by the state, which plans the development and finances the investment and

does not constantly impose increasing charges on the local authorities to carry the rail burden, which is what the Conservatives in Britain have been doing. They have been transferring the cost from national to regional and local expenditure, with all the difficulties that that is bound to create.

Mr. David Shaw: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Prescott: Never to the hon. Gentleman. [HON. MEMBERS: "Windy."] Windy? The man is an idiot.

Our railway system is inadequate, and hon. Members need not take my word for that. They heard the groans that accompanied the comments about the Kent railway system. We have a passenger consumer body that has made it clear that the quality of the service has been deteriorating in punctuality, cleanliness and quality of service because of the reduction in the public service obligation grant. The grant in Britain is a fraction of what is given in Europe, and the result is bound to have an effect on the quality of the service.

There is no need for us to argue about whether our rail system is inadequate. It clearly is, on the basis of speed, quality and comprehensiveness of the network. On all scores the British rail system does not measure up to the best in Europe, and we should not have anything but the best.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Prescott: No.

If the argument is that our railway system is under-resourced, with a reduction in grant and investment levels, one need only examine a CBI report on the subject that was issued recently. That showed how much we spend on the infrastructure compared with our competitors. They are spending four or five times more than us, including on the railways. Presumably the CBI's arguments are accepted by Conservative Members.

Sir David Mitchell *rose*——

Mr. Moate *rose*——

Mr. Prescott: No.

The same applies to the amount of passenger journeys by electrified lines—56 per cent. compared with an average of 70 per cent. in Europe generally. On all fronts our system is inadequate and we must fill in the missing links if we are to achieve the improvement that we need.

On the freight side, we have a clapped-out engine system. We have been supplied with only half the engines that we need. Whereas, in 1975, 15 per cent. of products went by rail in this country, only 9 per cent. now go by rail. In Europe the figure is 15 per cent.

What do the Tories think section 8 grants are when they talk about no subsidies being given for freight? About £50 million has been given by the Government in section 8 grants since 1980, and that is called a subsidy. I agree. It is a subsidy designed expressly to achieve a transfer from road to rail. But it has been announced, with the collapse of Speedlink, that those who were encouraged to invest will no longer have the wagon facilities because the financial burden placed on the freight side of British Rail —now further increased in view of the greater rate of return requirement—has forced a cut in wagon loads.

It is always claimed when a cut in Speedlink is mentioned that it will represent only 2 per cent. of the tonnage. But that percentage represents about 100,000 lorries on our roads. Can our roads bear that additional number of lorries, considering our present congestion and environmental problems?

Incentives must be made available if we are to achieve improvements in the rail system. Conservative Members have much to say when we discuss subsidies and incentives. What happens when there is talk of reducing company car allowances? Those, too, are subsidies.

The Minister is apparently opposed to the idea of the Community having some influence on the nature of our rail system. The Government made it clear in evidence to the Select Committee that, in their view, they do not feel that what is required in Europe should necessarily have relevance to our railway system. I disagree. The British people would like to see a TGV fast railway link. That would give them choice. Conservative Members should favour choice, enabling us to compete against the aeroplane, thereby reducing congestion at our airports, and against other forms of transport. If time permitted, I should say a lot about the problems of congestion at our airports. It is no longer a matter of competition with the ferries. They will look after themselves very well; they are now bigger and faster. The tunnel will cost twice as much as they will, so price sensitivity is no longer such a concern for them.

Mr. David Shaw *rose*——

Mr. Prescott: I have no time; other hon. Members want to speak.

The aviation industry is congested and we should relieve that congestion, just as the French have done. All those matters are relevant to our rail system.

Mr. Moate *rose*——

Mr. Prescott: I appeal to you, Madam Deputy Speaker——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Do I understand that the hon. Gentleman does not want to give way?

Mr. Prescott: I do not, in order to allow other hon. Members to speak.

Mr. Moate *rose*——

Mr. Prescott: The hon. Gentleman is just a yobbo. The Minister took 40 minutes——

Mr. Moate: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Can we establish that endeavouring to persuade a spokesman to give way does not make an hon. Member a yobbo? I hope that we can, as the Minister was courteous enough to give way several times.

Madam Deputy Speaker: That was one of the most genuine points of order ever put to me. That can indeed be established.

Mr. Prescott: To show how impertinent I am, I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Moate: The hon. Gentleman is displaying great courtesy——

Mr. Wells: And his usual charm.

Mr. Moate: The hon. Gentleman is telling the House that a future Labour Government would put massive new resources into the rail system. Will he confirm that one of

[Mr. Moate]

the first actions of the previous Labour Government was to cancel the Channel tunnel project? They went on to make major cuts in the railway investment programme, an action of which the hon. Member for Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) was a regular critic. Why on earth should the House or the country believe that any future Labour Government would carry out any of the promises that the hon. Gentleman is making?

Mr. Prescott: The hon. Gentleman knows that I adopted a position similar to his on the channel tunnel at that time. It is now partly completed and it will be an important part of our transport network. The question now is how to connect the link to it.

I come from the shipping industry and I know its sensitivities. I still advocate the need for a tunnel and rail connection, because the shipping industry will look after itself.

Mr. Shaw *rose*——

Mr. Prescott: I need no lectures about the transport system from an idiot like you——

Mr. Shaw *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sure that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) does not want to waste the time of the House with such phrases, and that he will now withdraw it.

Mr. Prescott: I am sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I directed the remark to you. I did not intend that, although I may have intended it in other directions. I withdraw any insinuation against you, Madam Deputy——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Just to put the record straight, it was not a reflection on me. I clearly heard what the hon. Gentleman said, and I take it that he has now withdrawn the remark so that we can proceed in good order in what little time we have left for the debate.

Mr. Prescott: In the little time I have left I shall not give way to anyone else. I want to finish my speech.

I have been asked to quantify the money involved, and I do not want to evade the question. I do not want to be like the Secretary of State, who runs away from every argument. I take every opportunity to deploy my arguments, and the Secretary of State should do the same.

The Government's position on these matters is: leave it to the market; everything must pay its own way; the needs of the community are irrelevant. As our amendment makes clear, we reject that point of view. I should have thought that even those with an A-level in economics would know that transport costs are an essential part of any economic development—*[Interruption.]* I think I was right before about the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw), but I must not spoil my image and keep laughing.

Mr. David Shaw: Every clown has his day.

Mr. Prescott: There is an hon. Lady who might reflect on that comment.

A European high-speed rail system of the TGV type is essential for this country, and it is necessary for us to secure it. It is possible to do so, and we must, to reduce congestion, improve the environment and build an economy to aid Britain's development in the European Community. Britain cannot have less than is available abroad, particularly when she is on the periphery of the Community, and needs a high-speed connection into that system. Therefore, the argument about the different routes is tragic.

The Prime Minister has said that there will be no subsidy for international links. Presumably, that means that costs are too high, and are greater than those on which one can except a rate of return from the projects. Those costs were inflated by a rumoured £1 billion by the Prime Minister saying, during the campaign for the Kent county elections, that people in Kent should not worry about their environment, because the route would be tunnelled. British Rail then had to come up with a plan to meet the evironmental requirements. I support the need to meet the requirements, but it is the worst of all worlds to impose such a social cost on a railway system and then, when one finds that it does not pay, to cancel it.

The argument is about whether we need the system, and, if so, how to pay for it. I do not know how much it will cost because we do not even know what the Eurorail preferred route is, because the Government do not give us any information. Nobody knows what the costs are, but we have heard that there is a difference of about £400 million. With a project costing £3 billion, it seems a good deal for the Government to put in £400 million to complete a high-speed rail link. With other projects—for example, in the London docklands—the Government's argument is that one puts in a little bit of public money to generate an awful lot of private capital. What is so different about a high-speed rail link?

Mr. Bob Dunn (Dartford): Advancing public money would be fine if the payment of £400 million were one off. What would the hon. Gentleman say if developers came along and asked for another £400 million, and then another?

Mr. Prescott: What has happened with the building of the tunnel, by another private enterprise flagship, has made me aware of that tendency. This is a problem, and one on which we have to concentrate our minds. However, if it not unique for such systems to be financed with private capital. I shall come to that, because it is relevant.

When I hear the hon. Member for Dover saying that he does not want subsidies for the ferries, I wonder whether he advocates the subsidy of £100 million-plus that goes to Network SouthEast. Does he want that removed, so that fares will be set in fair competition? Presumably they will have to rise to meet what is already a declared Government policy of reducing the public service obligation for Network SouthEast. He may think that that is good, but I think that if one forces up the fares, one will force more people into cars, which will have the worst possible consequences in an already congested area. That is not good sense. I only hope that it will dawn on the hon. Member for Dover, as we get near the election, that it might not be a good deal, because an awful lot more people travel on the trains than go on the ferries. He might rethink his order of priorities. It will not matter, because he will be out anyway.

The provisions of section 42 are an important element in the debate about public money. As I have said before, both sides of the House agreed with that section. The aviation and shipping industries were concerned and put

on pressure then, but things have changed since 1986. For example, it was said that the south-east could handle all channel tunnel traffic, but since then it has increased by 25 to 30 per cent. The ferries are now faster and bigger and able to cope with the traffic. The cost of the tunnel has doubled, and the price factors make a difference in competition. Much the same has happened in aviation. Therefore, the Government could repeal the section, and I offer them the opportunity to do so.

The argument is: what is the combination of private and public money? The reputable Connect organisation surveyed 100 Tory Members, and 50 per cent. of them said that public investment should be made in the project and that section 42 should be repealed. We must wait to see what happens about that.

The central issue is whether the public sector can use private money to develop the channel tunnel and the high-speed link that should go up to Scotland and not end in London. That link becomes all the more important the further one travels from the tunnel.

We must change the rule that governs the nationalised industries in this country, which has been deployed by the Treasury under Labour and Conservative Governments. The document published by the Commission makes it clear that the financial framework should be changed in such a way to encourage private investment. A week ago Commissioner van Miert came here and suggested that projects such as the tunnel cannot always be made profitable and that the Euro-infrastructure fund should make up the difference in costs. That fund can offer only a small sum of money because of the Government have set their face against a larger such fund. But for the inadequacies of our system, Britain would be in a similar position to that of France regarding the common agricultural policy. We would be a net recipient of money from the Euro-infrastructure fund and we would be building up our communications system. Instead we are paying out on the CAP and paying higher costs for the project.

The nationalised industries of France and Germany have borrowed varying amounts from the private sector to cover three quarters of the cost. I have read the pamphlet from the 100 group about public utility financing. All the top private companies brought their auditors together and they recommended that it is time that we changed the rules in the Treasury concerning nationalised industries, to enable them to borrow on the private market. One could bring in equity financing and change the debt structure if desired, but it is not beyond our imagination to change the financial framework so that the major burden is not totally on the taxpayer, but balanced by the fare payer. That burden could also be reduced by development contributions and infrastructure money. At least that would mean that we had a rail system adequate to the needs of the 21st century.

We need such a system, but that needs imagination from the politicians. They must rethink some of their views so that Britain is given the transport system that she fully deserves.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. There is less than 30 minutes for the remainder of the debate. It will not be possible for me to squeeze a litre into a half pint, but I shall do my best with the co-operation of hon. Members.

11.17 pm

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): I am not sure whether I am a litre or a half-pint. The fact that more than 50 hon. Members are present, many of whom wish to take part, shows the political interest in transport matters and in railway policy particularly.

I make no complaint that the two Front-Bench spokesmen have taken up an hour of the one and a half hours available, but if any of the Government business managers are listening I hope that more time will be made available for such important debates.

I thank my hon. Friend the Minister for the courteous and thoughtful way in which he introduced the European document. I was glad to hear that my hon. Friend, in his new position, intends to listen well, as there is a lot to learn about the railway industry. I suggest that my hon. Friend should check how much of what we call the subsidy to British Rail has, in the past 10 years, come from subsidies from the public loans fund board and how much from British Rail via its funds and from fares from its customers. I believe that my hon. Friend will discover that the claims that the Government make about the amount of subsidy given to British Rail for investment are a long way from reality.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce), my near neighbour, referred to the Swanage railway, which is run by volunteers and acquired old irons to make one of its signal boxes from a sale in my garden a few years ago. That that railway should be compared with the investment requirements for the TGV leaves a little bit to the imagination.

The Opposition's amendment would be all very well had we not rather longer memories of what happened under the last Labour Government, as my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate) pointed out. They have never yet shown an ability to match their ambitions with the reality of the economic policies that they have pursued. Perhaps that is why there is a reference to "missing links" in their amendment. Some of us remember that it was Barbara Castle who closed the Somerset and Dorset joint railway, the Great Central railway, et alia.

Conservative Members are entitled to say that the problems that we are facing now in our debates about the railways are caused by the congestion created by a successful economy generating a great deal of prosperity for millions of our fellow citizens which has been manifested in more cars on our roads. That is the political reality that we face today.

The document that we are debating contains a number of interesting proposals. It considers the role that the railways can play. One particular paragraph in the draft directive on the development of Community railways says:

"the manner in which road users currently pay for roads and the historical anomalies concerning inland waterways makes the achievement of equality of treatment between competing transport modes difficult."

That lies at the heart of this debate and all our debates. It is the debate that we had in the House a few Fridays ago. It is the debate about the double standards adopted by the Department of Transport since time immemorial towards investment in our roads as opposed to investment in our railways. That is the key to all this.

The document also says:

"The role of governments should rather be to provide a competitive framework within which railways and other modes of transport can compete on equal terms."

[Mr. Robert Adley]

Unless and until we have equal terms, there will be no sensible debate. There is all the difference in the world between the way in which the ferry operators and the airlines, for example, get their passengers to airports and ferry ports, and the way in which British Rail gets its passengers to the channel tunnel.

As far as I know—my hon. Friend the Minister will tell me if I am wrong—the Department of Transport is not proposing to form a company next week called British Roads plc and it is not proposing to have a scheme whereby those who use the roads are required to pay for them. The taxpayer will provide all the money for all the roads for all the passengers to get to the airports and ferries. But British Rail must provide its own track costs out of its own funds. That is what many of us mean about the inequality of investment criteria.

Mr. David Mitchell: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Adley: If my hon. Friend will forgive me, I want to abide by strictures, Madam Deputy Speaker, so I shall not give way.

The perceived role of the railway in a modern industrial society on a small, crowded island such as Britain leaves us living on a different planet from the perceived role of the railways in various other EC countries.

We have all heard about the French railway system and I do not propose to discuss it this evening. But will my hon. Friend take every opportunity to study what goes on not in France but in West Germany? Most people would accept that the West German Christian Democrat Government are far from being a socialist Government. But the way in which the West German Government provide funds and assistance for their railway system can only cause one to gasp in anticipation and at the same time to groan with despair when we realise what a different attitude Britain has to our railway system.

The Deutsche Bundesbahn receives three types of funding from the West German federal Government. First, it receives compensation for public transportation services. The railway receives funds to help offset the costs of services which are not meant to be profitable, particularly in relation to urban transit or to regional transport in rural areas.

Secondly, subsidies are aimed at eliminating competitive distortions. In its attempts to compete with alternative modes of transportation, the federal railway is hampered by the fact that it is a Government entity. The Government provide funds to reduce some of the company's imbalances, particularly the extraordinarily high financial costs incurred for civil service training, retirement and welfare expenses. No such thoughts have ever crossed the minds of successive Governments in this country.

Thirdly, Deutsche Bundesbahn receives grants to ensure a stable capital base and maintain a healthy level of investment in the firm's railway infrastructure. As the owner of the federal railway, the West German Government are obliged to support the railway in that area. My hon. Friend the Minister and his predecessors have told me that they are uncertain of the West German Government's assistance to their railway. I spent time recently with the West German ambassador, with the transport attaché and with the head of Deutsche Bundesbahn in London. I should be happy to impart to my hon. Friend such information as I have received.

In West Germany, the modern railway is a national asset and part of the country's economy. It is an essential factor in both economic growth and environmental protection. I give only one illustration of environmental protection, which my hon. Friend the Minister mentioned in his speech. Recently, I supported the Government in their decision on the Winchester bypass. It was explained quite properly that, to alleviate environmental damage, the Government would provide millions of pounds to overcome the environmental objections to the bypass. Yet when British Rail makes proposals and, quite properly, is told that it must provide environmental protection, it has to find the money out of its own funds. There is an inconsistency in the treatment of British Rail. Until we have the level of playing field to which the document refers, we shall never have an honest and straightforward debate.

I shall end on the following point. I am sorry if I weary the House, because I have made it many times before. Public transport policy and party political dogma are uneasy bedfellows. Congestion and concern for the environment are national problems which will grow worse and worse over the years. I know that some of my hon. Friends wince if I dare to use the word consensus, but we must find a consensus across the political divide in the House. We must come up with a transport policy which operates in the interests of our nation. Inevitably, that will require far greater public investment in our railway system. There is no alternative if we are to continue to provide an environmentally acceptable and pollution-free opportunity for our citizens to enjoy a reasonable means of travelling in comfort and safety.

11.27 pm

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): It says little for the House of Commons that a major debate on transport is jammed into one and a half hours when we are endeavouring to take major decisions about the future of a railway system. I do not object to the length of the speeches from Front Bench Government and Opposition Members. It is important that we learn from the Government whether they have a transport policy at all. They make it clear that to them the transport system should be treated rather in the manner that some doctors used to be said to treat their patients—with masterly inactivity. They believe that, if they do nothing, with any luck something will happen. The difficulty is that in those circumstances the patient frequently dies.

We now face a major decision about a major transport link, the channel tunnel, which will affect not only the south-east of England but the economies and futures of the north-west and north-east, not to mention the state of Scotland, as well as Northern Ireland. Married to the plan for developing a high-speed link must inevitably be a clear view of where the freight depots will lie, how the passengers and freight will get around a major conurbation such as London and how we can plan, with the addition of local authority money not only for a land bridge to Northern Ireland but for the development of stations and traffic which will make a major and important

contribution to the transport system of the next century. Those factors have not been made clear by the Government.

We know that the Government have one policy, which is to squeeze the rail system of as much finance as they possibly can, by setting increasingly difficult targets and demanding that the investment should come almost entirely from passengers or those who use freight services. Neither the environmental costs nor the development costs are important to the Government so long as they can cut subsidies. It has been made clear today that that is an unequal policy, because the Government happily choose to subsidise alternative forms of transport, although they are anxious that that should not be seen to be done.

The directive is a major departure. It suggests that rail systems will, in all probability, be split in two and that in financial terms the infrastructure will be divided from rolling stock and other services. It says nothing about how that will be planned or financed, and nothing about how we can achieve transparency in the financial system. While every other European country with the exception of Greece subsidises its rail system to an enormous extent, we are at the bottom of the table.

What do the Government intend to do to ensure that British Rail is not required to play off one local authority against another all across Britain due to the Government's attempts to have local ratepayers meet the cost of the sites to be developed as freight depots? What are the Government prepared to do about planning those systems so that they are economically viable and logical for the future development of this country's industry? That has not been made clear, for the simple reason that the Government are determined that such decisions should be made by British Rail. They will then put an enormous financial squeeze on the rail system so that decisions will be take by default which will have far-reaching consequences and will be impossible to alter when we are no longer competing.

It is the height of hypocrisy for the Government to argue that the Confederation of British Industry is concerned about congestion and the cost to British industry of not having an adequate infrastructure, and then not to make a single clear decision in relation to London, the movement of freight, or the development of high-speed trains.

Every other European nation has spent at least five years and probably 10 years planning to link its transport systems into HGVs, not just into their own future system but into those of other countries throughout the continent. We are the only nation to have left that aspect to be decided by default, on the back of an envelope, when it happens to be politically useful to make a statement in the House, like a bone being thrown to a little dog.

It is the height of irresponsibility for the Minister to come to the House today and still not make it clear how the Government envisage the future not only of the high-speed link but of the freight depots and of investment throughout the country. In the north, we need a clear statement of how passengers and freight will be transhipped around London and connect to a high-speed system. We need to know where electrification will come and why the Government will not encourage proper transport planning. None of those questions has been answered. It says very little for the Minister and nothing for the Government that they have such a weird set of priorities.

11.33 pm

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): You may be amazed to hear, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I listened intently to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott). I was appalled to hear him call for a high-speed railway running at 190 mph. That would smash through Kent with scant regard for its environment.

In the short time available to me, I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to get on with the job of scrapping the current high-speed rail link proposal. It is a botched job, which takes no account of the environment of Kent. It is inadequate for the purpose, as it carries only passengers. It would overload railway lines into south-east London—God alone knows that our constituents suffer that bad railway journey into London every day in the south-east—and to finance it, British Rail is asking for a blank cheque from the taxpayer. The Bill needed to achieve that would be a hybrid Bill, reliant upon whipping on Conservative Benches, which certainly would not be the way to get the legislation through.

The whole proposal is typical of a nationalised industry, with its traditional enthusiasm for white elephants. I do not see why the taxpayer should subsidise jet setters from London going to Paris or Brussels, or business men on their journeys to the continent. We do not want a rush job, which makes a fundamentally wrong decision about such a long-term project as a high-speed railway network.

I also listened intently to the Minister and he quite clearly said that when the channel tunnel opens there will be a railway network that provides a framework for freight and passengers to get through this country, and that £1 billion of British Rail money has been invested to ensure that that happens.

Tonight we are discussing a European document. Now is the time for us to calmly put our efforts into the working party of the European Commission, which will weigh up the priorities for high-speed links throughout Europe. However, when we consider a rail link passing through Kent, we should think of the environment and we should also consider a link that will carry both freight and passengers.

I represent one of the north-west Kent constituencies and that area has nothing to gain from a high-speed rail link. Our people will pay the price in terms of its effect upon their environment. If we are to have such a link, investment by the rail users must be used to protect people in north-west Kent who would otherwise pay the environmental price.

11.37 pm

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): I am almost reluctant to speak, because obviously, at this time of night, with another speech coming up and with the Front Bench spokesmen having already taken up one hour of the debate, it is impossible to say what one really wants to say.

However, it would be useful to establish the principles upon which I base my argument. As a Liberal Democrat I am committed to one Europe. As a country, we should be playing a positive role within Europe and not, as is often the case with the Government, dragging our feet and setting up obstacles. Narrow-minded nationalism and remarks such as "This is our railway," which the Minister,

[Mr. Ronnie Fearn]

the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman), made on television last night, are hardly the spirit in which we should approach European unity and the single market.

Even if the Government are not committed to an integrated Europe, surely they can see that any delay in grasping the advantages for commerce and trade that the single market and the opening of the channel tunnel offer can spell only doom and gloom for Britain's economy. Those countries with advanced transport systems, including rail, which can transport passengers and goods in a fast, safe and efficient fashion, will corner the market. By the time we have stopped burying our heads in the sand, the rest of Europe will have established itself in the market and will be reaping the economic and social benefits.

If we are not going to try to compete on equal terms with our partners, the channel tunnel will be nothing more than an eyesore—and an expensive eyesore at that. Whether or not, as individuals, we want it in place, the fact is that it will be there—or it may be there; we are not quite sure, and I have my doubts about the project ever being finished as costs are spiralling and have already almost doubled. Do the Government know more than we do about that, and is that the true reason for their reluctance to invest in a high-speed network? Without an efficient rail link, our existing freight and passenger lines will not cope with the increased capacity. All major roads in the country will be jammed with lorries and cars making their way to Dover. The damage to our environment will be immense. The roads in Kent will be unbearable.

To resolve the congestion, we build more roads and damage the environment even further. If we do not resolve the problem of congestion, people and goods will eventually stop coming to Britain. Tourists will find it easier to travel in other parts of Europe, European companies will find other markets more profitable and British companies will find it increasingly difficult to justify the cost of transporting goods to Europe.

If that is the scenario for the future, it is not one that should be advocated in this Chamber. Railways have been proved to be far more environmentally friendly in terms of landscape and capacity, and the new technology means that they are also becoming noise-friendly. A high-speed rail link to benefit the whole of the United Kingdom—including the west and south-west coasts and not just the south-east and the route to Scotland, as the Labour party's amendment seems to advocate—will open up so many frontiers to us that we cannot help but benefit from it.

The claim that section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 prevents the Government from providing the funds is hogwash. The Government know very well that they could fund some of the high-speed rail link by means of the public service obligation to Network SouthEast. All that prevents them from doing so is the fact that it goes against the grain of their policy of making Network SouthEast self-sufficient.

I suppose that if we hold out long enough we may qualify for a grant from the proposed Community fund for the missing links of the European network. The Secretary of State is fond of saying that he has a balanced policy for transport. I suggest that he should put it into practice in this instance. These are not the policies that we require. We want policies which make for a fast and effective transport system.

11.41 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Many hon. Members are in the House tonight because we all like railway debates. Whenever we hold a debate on railway policy, there are always some hon. Members who have a lot to say about the investment that should be made in the railways, how it should be spent and what the priorities are. I hope that hon. Members will reflect on the fact that, if the proposals become the law of Europe, there will be precious little point in holding any debates on railway policy in the House. As directives are published, I hope that hon. Members will become aware of the extent to which we are totally throwing away decision making and giving it to another body in Brussels.

The hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) referred to the new funds that will be made available. Provision is made for funding. If we want high-speed rail links, we shall have to go to Brussels and say, "Please may we have them?" Other countries will have to do the same.

I hope that hon. Members who like the idea of a high-speed rail link will read the document. The idea that there will be a coherent policy is utter nonsense. All we have are the old Euro-beliefs. We are told that a competitive, safe and environmentally friendly railway network will emerge from the proposals. Those are daydreams. According to page 57, one of the aims is to provide a common and, therefore, a more effective and credible front in the face of competition from Japan. I had never thought that one of the major problems facing British Rail was competition from Japan.

I hope that hon. Members also realise that if we go ahead with the proposals, there will be subsidies for high-speed rail links and crossing points. We all know that section——

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the Motion, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business), to put the Question necessary to dispose of them.*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 112, Noes 149.

Division No. 229] **[11.43 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Allen, Graham	Corbyn, Jeremy
Anderson, Donald	Cox, Tom
Armstrong, Hilary	Crowther, Stan
Ashton, Joe	Cunliffe, Lawrence
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Cunningham, Dr John
Barron, Kevin	Dalyell, Tam
Beckett, Margaret	Darling, Alistair
Beggs, Roy	Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Bermingham, Gerald	Dewar, Donald
Boateng, Paul	Dixon, Don
Bradley, Keith	Doran, Frank
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*	Dunnachie, Jimmy
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*	Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Buchan, Norman	Fearn, Ronald
Buckley, George J.	Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Flynn, Paul
Canavan, Dennis	Foster, Derek
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*	Foulkes, George
Carr, Michael	Fyfe, Maria
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*	Godman, Dr Norman A.
Clelland, David	Golding, Mrs Llin

Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Mullin, Chris
O'Brien, William
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Ruddock, Joan
Short, Clare
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ken Eastham and
Mr. Martyn Jones.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bellingham, Henry
Bevan, David Gilroy
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Hague, William
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Sir Charles
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Paice, James
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walden, George
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

Question accordingly negatived.

Maintain Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 4478/90, relating to Community railway policy; and broadly welcomes proposals aimed at improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the European railways.

PETITION

Sheppey General Hospital

11.55 pm

Mr. Roger Moate (Faversham): I beg leave to present a petition to the House from Mrs. B. Hardman, clerk to the Leysdown parish council, supported by about 1,000 other signatories. I am in total agreement with the petitioners, whose case has already been put on a number of occasions to the House of Commons. The petition states:

The Humble Petition of the Residents of Sheppey herewith. That the decision to close the Medical Care Beds at Sheppey General Hospital will cause great distress and possible loss of life to cardiac and stroke victims and persons with other life threatening conditions by forcing them to travel to hospitals on the Mainland of Kent.

Your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House will take issue with the Medway Health Authority to reverse the decision to close the said beds. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound will ever pray.

I also present a petition from Mrs. Weller, of 145 Wards Hill road, Minster on Sea, Sheerness. This is also supported by about 350 other signatories and is in broadly similar terms. It reinforces the distress felt on the Isle of Sheppey at this time. It says:

The Humble Petition of the Residents of Sheppey showeth

That the decision to close the Medical Care Beds at Sheppey General Hospital will cause great distress and possibly loss of life—

by forcing residents—

to travel to hospitals on the mainland of Kent. Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House will take issue with the Medway Health Authority to reverse the decision to close the said beds. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

11.57 pm

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): This is not a party political issue, and I hope that the Minister will not treat it as such. As he knows, it has aroused concern among people of every political persuasion. He has no doubt cast his eye over early-day motion 36, which is sponsored by myself and his hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr), and has been signed by a number of his colleagues. It is not uncommon in this place for Ministers to urge me to continue to raise this issue, so I do so in the knowledge that the issue arouses widespread concern.

I appreciate that the Minister may not share my view, but he must by now know enough about the case to realise that there is something seriously wrong. I draw his attention in passing to the fact that it was January 1982 when I first wrote categorically and in some detail that the persons convicted of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings were innocent and that the Maguire family were innocent. What has happened since in the Guildford case is a matter of record, and the Minister will be aware that the convictions of the Maguire family are collapsing daily in front of Sir John May's inquiry.

The case of the six people convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings has also collapsed. The trial judge, Lord Bridge, said in his judgment that there were two main planks of the Crown's case against those six people—one was the forensic evidence and the other concerned confessions. The star forensic witness was Dr. Frank Skuse, who has since been dismissed, at the grand old age of 51, for what the Home Office coyly calls "limited effectiveness". The test that he employed, which was the central feature of his evidence, has been discredited. Even the Lord Chief Justice accepted that at the appeal two years ago.

The forensic evidence now hangs by a single thread—the test carried out by Dr. Janet Drayton at Aldermaston. The printouts from that test—the only documentary evidence of it—have disappeared, as have some of Dr. Drayton's notes. The notebook still exists, but the stubs of pages that were torn out have gone. Dr. Drayton's recollection of the result of that test are different from those of Dr. Skuse. That is all that remains of the forensic evidence.

As the Minister will be aware, it was obvious from the outset that the confessions contradicted each other in every major respect and those contradictions were examined in detail at the trial. It is also evident that, in their first few days in custody—this is not, I think, controversial—the men were severely beaten. The controversy arises over whether they were beaten in police custody or in the custody of Winson Green prison warders, or whether, as they say, they were beaten by both. No month has passed without someone contacting me who has overheard police officers involved boasting at one time or another about what happened to the men, although it is fair to say that they have gone a bit quieter in recent years.

The list of witnesses who have put their signatures to statements saying that the men were beaten in police custody—or that there was some evidence of that—include

the two solicitors who interviewed them in police custody, two prison officers who received them at Winson Green prison, three former police officers who gave evidence at the appeal hearing and Dr. David Paul, the coroner of the City of London. I believe that further evidence has been submitted to the Minister by defence solicitors. I put it to him that that undermines any credibility that the confessions ever had.

The Minister will tell us that all this has been considered by the Court of Appeal, and so it has. But I wonder whether a jury would have reached the same conclusion had it been permitted to pass comment, and had its members known what we now know. That surely is the key question. It has not yet been addressed, and I invite the Minister to consider it now.

Since the appeal hearing, there have been two major developments, the first of which was the release of the four persons convicted of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings, apparently because the Surrey police were careless enough to leave early drafts of the forged confessions lying around. I do not think that we shall be so lucky in the Birmingham pub bombing case. But we now know that what Lords Bridge, Roskill, Donaldson and Denning found unthinkable is possible: the police can and did commit fraud and perjury on the scale alleged. If that can happen once, it can happen twice.

The second major development that has occurred since the appeal hearing was the winding up of the west midlands serious crimes squad for—would you believe, Madam Deputy Speaker?—forging confessions—the very allegation that was one of the two central features of the trial and involving the very body of men responsible for obtaining the convictions in 1974, including at least four of the same individuals. I do not think that it is necessary to demonstrate that the same individuals were involved. It is enough, surely, to show that the same body of people were systematically forging confessions.

So far, more than 20 people who signed confessions in the custody of the west midlands serious crimes squad have either had their convictions quashed or had the charges against them withdrawn. In addition, Police Sergeant Brian Morton has been to gaol. He was one of those around in Queen's Road police station with access to the prisoners at the time of the interrogation. He went to gaol for beating up a suspect with a view to obtaining a confession, but the Home Office is still telling us that there is no cause for concern. Ministers are still ridiculing those who are trying to draw to their attention what has happened subsequently. They still refuse to establish an independent inquiry that would command public confidence.

Mr. Andrew Hargreaves (Birmingham, Hall Green): The hon. Gentleman and I have had conversations about this point, and I believe that the view that I am about to describe is shared by other Birmingham Members who are present in the Chamber this evening. With regard to the constant reiteration of the possible shortcomings of the West Midlands police, whether of the serious crimes squad or elsewhere, speaking as a west midlands Member, I believe that it must be a main point of the hon. Gentleman's argument that any further measures that we take in connection with the Birmingham Six should be designed partly to re-enhance the credibility and the confidence that the public have in that force.

Sadly, that force has suffered from the necessity to re-examine and examine again the evidence, which has perhaps disclosed further shortcomings in that force. I believe very strongly that it is important that Birmingham Members should ensure that the matter is resolved. I am sure that the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) will be pressing that point on my right hon. Friend the Minister.

Mr. Mullin: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's comments; and his intervention demonstrates that concern about the issue is widespread. The fact that he represents a Birmingham constituency gives particular credibility to his points. It is in the interests of the West Midlands police force as much as anyone else—and in the interests of the credibility of the entire police and judicial system—that the case is not allowed to linger on, but is sorted out as soon as possible.

Three police inquiries are under way at the present time, and they are all prevented by their terms of reference from addressing most of the fundamental issues.

The West Yorkshire police are examining the activities of the serious crime squad. However, their terms of reference preclude them from going back before April 1985, and they cannot address the serious allegations that predate that time, allegations which incidentally do not simply concern the pub bombings, but relate to several other cases.

The Devon and Cornwall police are conducting their second inquiry into the case. They are examining material that was submitted to the Home Office by the defence solicitors before Christmas. The inquiry is proceeding fairly slowly. I do not necessarily complain about that, but I do complain about the fact they they will report to the chief constable of the West Midlands police. He will append his comments and pass the report to the Home Office. It will not be available to the people who submitted the new material. According to parliamentary answers that I have received, the defence solicitors will not see a copy of that report, and it will not be published. I invite the Minister to comment on the fact that it is very difficult to have confidence in an inquiry the report of which will not be made public.

The other police inquiry that is proceeding at the same time as the others is a small inquiry being run by the Lancashire police, who are investigating how I came by some of the documents that I used in the most recent edition of my book on the case. I have written to the Lancashire police suggesting that they might like to address the contents of the documents, but I regret to inform the House that they are not interested in that aspect.

None of those inquiries is a satisfactory way of dealing with the problem, and none of them will resolve the serious and widespread public concern about the case.

I invite the Minister to comment on the need for a public inquiry along the lines of that being conducted now by Sir John May with lay assessors, but with more powers than Sir John May appears to have. As the Minister may have noticed, he is having some trouble persuading one or two of the forensic scientists to come and give evidence, and he is also having trouble getting hold of documents.

There are three specific points on which I should like the Minister to comment, and to help him take the matters seriously, I contacted his office earlier in the day and gave the details of the three points.

[Mr. Mullin]

First, a large amount of evidence in this case has disappeared, which is not an uncommon feature of miscarriage of justice cases. Among the missing items are 2,000 so-called non-material statements. They were not shown to defence solicitors, as they should have been. There is not a single statement from any of the people who were crowded into the Taurus bar where the six men say they were assembled when the bombs were planted. There is not a single statement from any of the transport police who would have been on New Street station observing the comings and goings there. It is not credible that none of those people came forward. Where are those statements? I hope the Minister will do his best to find out.

Also disappeared are the playing cards. They are believed to be—although nobody can definitively assert it without them—the source of the contamination, the nitrocellulose, that probably resulted in Dr. Skuse's positive test. Those playing cards have been gone for many years and nobody has any suggestions about where they may have gone.

The third item that has disappeared is that to which I have referred already—the printouts of Dr. Drayton's tests, the sole remaining thread of the forensic evidence. We are asked to rely on her memory—I cast no aspersions on her—as to what she says she saw on a screen, a blip that lasted a fraction of a second 15 years ago. There were printouts that would have confirmed, or not, Dr. Drayton's interpretation of that result. They have disappeared. Also gone are a number of pages from her notebook. As I say, I cast no aspersions on Dr. Drayton. I just want to know where they have gone, and may we have them back, please?

The Minister will know—it received a certain amount of publicity—that in March, Granada Television provided the Home Office with a document that appeared to come from the Special Branch archives, complete with its criminal records office number. It is a precis of interviews with an IRA man who was arrested in November 1975, six months after the trial and about a year after the bombing. He was giving the police a great deal of accurate information, and he was telling them the names of some of those whom he said were responsible for the bombs. It even contained the remarkable sentence, "So-and-so told me he put one of the bombs in the pub."

While I have grown rather case-hardened over the years, I thought a decent interval would have occurred while the Home Office thought about that. But that is not what happened. Within a few hours of that document being made available to the Home Office, it put out a statement pouring cold water on it, saying that it was old news—which was correct, since the Department or somebody had been sitting on it for the last 15 years—and it contained the inaccurate statement that the document was prepared before the trial.

Where are the original notes of those interviews? This document is a precis. Particularly remarkable about it is that the interviewer can think of no supplementary questions to ask this person who has just told him that so and so told him he had put a bomb in the pub. No surprise is recorded at the receipt of that information. I am sure that everyone would like to see some information about who conducted the interviews, where the original notes of the interviews are and to whose attention they were drawn at the time they were made.

I believe this to be the tip of a fairly large iceberg. I know of at least two other members of the Birmingham IRA who, in the wake of the pub bombings, to a greater or lesser extent co-operated with the police and told them that they had got the wrong people. Those people were in a position to know that.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): What are their names?

Mr. Mullin: I can provide that information. I shall not do so across the Floor of the House, but I am willing to co-operate with the Minister, and there is no problem about that.

I want to know where the notes of those interviews are. What was done with them, and to whose attention were they drawn? I hope that, in return for my providing him with the details—the Minister did not expect me to do that—the right hon. Gentleman will be kind enough to show me the notes.

Thirdly, and lastly, it occurs to me—I do not assert this; I merely put it to the Minister—that the connections between the Guildford and Woolwich and the Birmingham cases are rather stronger than any of us had imagined. There is the obvious point about the massive fraud and perjury which occurred in the former and could equally have occurred in the latter. More specifically, according to parliamentary answers given to me on 30 October last year, nine Surrey police officers were in Birmingham at the time of the arrests in the pub bombing case. It would be relevant to establish whether those officers picked up any of the interrogation techniques of the West Midlands police force. The Guildford defendants were not arrested until some time afterwards, and their account of what happened to them in custody bears some remarkable similarities to the allegations made by the six people convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

I just want to know the names of the Guildford officers who were in Birmingham at the time, and what they were doing there. I have tabled questions about that, and received rather unsatisfactory answers. One said that only three of them could be identified. It does not require a genius to know what step to take next: contact those who have been identified, and ask them who the others were. I leave that thought with the Minister.

I am sure that the Minister will assure us of his willingness to look at new evidence, but we have new evidence coming out of our ears. What is required is some means of assessing it that will command public confidence. This case will not go away. Just as it did in the Guildford and Woolwich case, the truth will out in the end. I am only anxious that the case should be resolved while these six unfortunate men and their families still have some of their lives left after this tragedy is sorted out, and I should appreciate any assistance that the Minister can provide to bring this great scandal to an end.

12.17 am

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): In the brief 10 minutes left to me, I shall do all that I can to answer directly all the questions that the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) has posed.

I, like all right hon. and hon. Members, recognise that any miscarriage of justice has a devastating effect. We all agree that any allegation of a miscarriage of justice must be investigated as fully and carefully as possible. I assure the House that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary will consider any new evidence brought forward in this case, as he has done in the past—as when he showed himself willing to refer allegations made by the solicitor acting on behalf of these people to the investigation carried out by the Devon and Cornwall police.

There is no lack of common ground between us on the seriousness of miscarriages of justice and on the fact that they must be seriously looked into. The difference between us is that the hon. Gentleman does not think that this case is being seriously looked into, or that, if it is, it is being looked into in the wrong way.

I do not want to get involved in the Guildford and Woolwich issue tonight. I can understand that the hon. Gentleman sees parallels and, in the case of the Surrey police, even connections between the two cases. Sir John May can look after himself. He has made no public complaint about a lack of powers to summon people and papers to his inquiry. I read in *The Independent* the other week that he said that he felt that quiet persuasion was a better way to do things. As we know, if it was in *The Independent*, it must be true.

The hon. Member spoke of his concern about the apparent absence of 2,000 non-material statements and of the playing cards. I see that a question about the playing cards has been tabled, and it may come up at the next Home Office questions, on Thursday. The hon. Member has said that he is concerned that it is not possible to say what happened to these statements, which, he says, were not made available to the solicitors acting for the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

It has not yet been established that any relevant evidence in this case is missing. As the hon. Gentleman will know, the alleged failure of the prosecution to inform the defence of the existence of non-material statements formed part of the grounds of the appeals considered by the Court of Appeal in November and December 1987, when the court dismissed the arguments advanced by those representing the six men.

Mr. Mullin: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Patten: If the hon. Gentleman wants me to try to answer his questions, I had better not do so.

Representations about the alleged disappearance of these non-material statements were among the matters put to my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary by the men's solicitor. He has passed these allegations to the chief constable of the West Midlands police, and they will form part of the inquiry being carried out by the Devon and Cornwall constabulary. That will bring to light evidence as to whether the non-material statements and the playing cards are missing or not.

It has been alleged that the police reports were inadequate. It is clear that the hon. Member is not a great admirer of the British police. I cannot remember him ever saying a kind word about them.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): That is silly.

Mr. Patten: No, it is an important point, because the hon. Gentleman should balance his criticisms with appreciation.

Mr. Mullin: We are talking about the West Midlands police.

Mr. Patten: Indeed, and many West Midlands policemen would bitterly resent aspersions being cast on them and on the way in which they carried out their duties.

The hon. Member for Sunderland, South has referred in disparaging words, which will appear on the record, to various police inquiries connected with this case, and has commented adversely on the fact that it is not intended to make public the results of these inquiries. As hon. Members will be aware, it has been the practice of successive Home Secretaries, both Labour and Conservative, not to publish the reports of such inquiries, as the information that they contain is provided to the Home Secretary of the day on a confidential basis.

However, I can assure the House that, should my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary decide, after consideration of the report from the Devon and Cornwall constabulary, when it comes, to refer the case of the Birmingham six back to the Court of Appeal, copies of all statements taken in the course of the inquiry will be made available to those representing the six men, in advance of any appeal.

The House will recall that this is exactly the same procedure as that which was followed with the Guildford Four, when my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd), then the Home Secretary, decided to refer that case to the Court of Appeal, after considering reports of inquiries carried out by the Avon and Somerset police. On the other hand, following precedent, should my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary decide not to intervene further in the case of the Birmingham six, I assure the House that he will place in the Library a detailed memorandum explaining his reasons for that course of action, and his response in detail to the representations that he has received. That is the proper way in which to proceed.

We have confidence in the Devon and Cornwall police conducting a thorough and conscientious inquiry. I hope that the hon. Member for Sunderland, South agrees. I note that he does not seem to; that is a matter for him. The inquiry will, of course, include the allegations about collusion between the officers of Lancashire county council and members of the West Midlands police to which the hon. Gentleman has referred.

The hon. Gentleman will be aware that allegations about misconduct by members of the former west midlands serious crimes squad are being considered by West Yorkshire police under the direct supervision of the independent Police Complaints Authority. Parliament has rightly set up that authority to exercise an independent supervision of the investigation of complaints against the police. Hon. Members will appreciate that we must await the results of that investigation into the serious crime squad. The Police Complaints Authority is precluded under section 98 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 from disclosing publicly any information that it has received in connection with its functions under the Act, except under certain circumstances—for example, in a

[Mr. Patten]

general statement that does not identify the person from whom the information was received or any person to whom it relates.

I am happy to repeat the assurance that my right hon. and learned Friend and I have given on a number of occasions. If anything arises from the present inquiries into the activities of the serious crimes squad that casts doubt on the safety of the convictions of the Birmingham Six, the most careful consideration will be given to that evidence.

The hon. Gentleman, again consistent with form inside and outside the House, has mentioned two more people, but he has not given the names.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): he told you that you could have them.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman has had many opportunities in recent years to tell the House and the outside world that he knows who bombed Birmingham. This obviously makes him uncomfortable, but he has consistently refused to name them.

Ms. Short: The names have been given on television and you have done nothing.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Lady must forgive me; I am not giving way.

Tonight, the hon. Gentleman has had the opportunity to name those——

Ms. Short: He gave the names on television.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman spoke of two additional people tonight, so we are no longer talking about four people, but six. If the hon. Gentleman has had those names in this possession, why were they not given many years before? One day, the hon. Gentleman must answer that question. If he does not answer it, the House must draw its own conclusions.

If the hon. Gentleman wants to present a rounded case to the House, I cannot understand why he cannot present a totally rounded one, giving all the names that he claims to have in his possession.

The hon. Gentleman also mentioned the material contained in the new edition of his book "Error of Judgement"—*[Interruption.]* I note that his hon. Friends do not much like the fact that the hon. Gentleman has not named the names and they must find them very embarrassing, but——

The Motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, Madam Deputy Speaker *adjourned the House without Question put, persuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 13 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

HYTHE, KENT, MARINA BILL

Ordered,

That the Committee on the Hythe, Kent, Marina Bill have leave to visit and inspect the areas affected by the proposed works and their environs, provided that no evidence shall be taken in the course of such visit and that any party who has made an appearance before the Committee be permitted to attend by his agent or other representative.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

South Africa

1. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he intends any change to the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the subject of sanctions and South Africa; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Douglas Hurd): Our policy is unchanged. We want to see the abolition of apartheid and the peaceful transition to a democratic multiracial system in South Africa. We shall maintain our policy of encouragement and pressure on all sides to enter into negotiations on a new constitution. I welcome the decision of the South African Government to lift the state of emergency, except in Natal.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Secretary of State accept that there is widespread recognition in South Africa that sanctions have been one of the key contributory factors to the present and welcome change in the position of the South African Government? Does he further accept that the appropriate response from the Government and European Community would be to retain the present structure of sanctions until the remaining legislation and obstacles to negotiations are finally removed, and to respond, as and when negotiations develop, to the creation of a new constitution by the removal of sanctions during that period? Prompt action would be inappropriate.

Mr. Hurd: We are not planning to remove all sanctions, but we see the need to give practical proof that we are encouraging President de Klerk in the dramatic steps that he is taking, at great risk to himself and his party, towards a new South Africa without apartheid. I believe that those moves are irreversible.

Mr. Burt: Is my right hon. Friend encouraged by the successful talks that are taking place between the business community and the mass democratic movement in South Africa, including the African National Congress? Does he agree that the need is to maintain pressure on the South African Government for the speediest possible reforms? It is only through political reform and change that we shall lay a sound economic basis for the future of South Africa, as all sides wish.

Mr. Hurd: The right mix of pressure and encouragement must be achieved. The business community in South Africa is well placed to do that. It has recognised for a long time that an apartheid South Africa is bad for investment and bad for the prosperity of all South Africans.

Mr. Anderson: The Foreign Secretary said that the Government are not planning to remove all sanctions, yet the Prime Minister said in the House:

"I believe that there is now no place for sanctions".—*[Official Report,* 22, May 1990; Vol. 173, c. 167.]

It is not our job to drive a wedge between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, but will he use his considerable skills to reconcile what are, on the face of it, fundamentally different propositions?

Mr. Hurd: The Prime Minister has often defended, at the European summit and in the House, the step-by-step approach that we are practising. We are moving step by step to encourage the South Africans as they move, while maintaining pressure on them. The sanctions issue is becoming yesterday's argument. It is no longer the most effective means of pressure. The pressures that we have exercised have shown themselves to be effective.

Middle East

2. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives are currently being considered to help advance the peace process in the middle east.

Mr. Hurd: My recent visit to the middle east has convinced me more than ever of the urgent need for direct dialogue between Palestinians and Israel. I can see no other starting point for a genuine peace process. We shall continue to work for that with our friends in the region and elsewhere. The grim alternative to dialogue is extremism and more killing.

Mr. Evans: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. If the United States withdraws from dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation for not condemning the attack on an Israeli beach, shall we support the United States? Does my right hon. Friend agree that, with Iraq and Libya heading towards having a nuclear arsenal and with the Israelis having an extreme Government, we should be encouraging world opinion to bring about peace in that part of the world?

Mr. Hurd: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend's second point. We must not forget, as the other problems in Europe and South Africa yield to treatment, that the problem in the middle east is getting worse and more poisonous.

On my hon. Friend's first point, we have urged the PLO to condemn the attack on the beach in Israel. It is important that the United States should remain fully

engaged in the peace process, which means maintaining the contacts that have led to the understanding with the PLO about the Baker plan.

Mr. Ernie Ross: Given the gross violations of human rights that occur regularly on the west bank and in Gaza —the most recent of which was the throwing of grenades into a United Nations clinic yesterday—does the right hon. Gentleman think that this is the most appropriate time for the Prime Minister to co-sponsor an Israeli state of the art exhibition at the Barbican centre in October? Does not he think that it would be much more helpful if the Prime Minister made it clear that she regards the failure by the Israeli forces to behave properly on the west bank and in Gaza as a stopping point on any further co-operation between this Governent and Israel?

Mr. Hurd: My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Minister of State and I have never been slow to condemn the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces in dealing with the intifada. I hope that the hon. Gentleman and all friends of the Palestinian cause are prepared to condemn individual terrorist attacks. It is not enough simply to say that they are against terrorism.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Although new settlements on the west bank do not help the peace process, does my right hon. Friend agree that it is worth while pointing out that Soviet Jews emigrating to Israel are not moving to the west bank in sizeable numbers, contrary to what we sometimes read in the world press?

Mr. Hurd: There is some dispute about the figures. If east Jerusalem is included among the occupied territories —we certainly include it—the situation is different. We need from the new Government of Israel—I very much welcome the fact that there is a new Government—a clear statement and practical measures to ensure that Soviet Jews do not settle in the occupied territories. We welcome the fact that they are able to leave the Soviet Union.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Kaufman.

Mr. Kaufman: Will the right hon. Gentleman join me in condemning the attempted terrorist attack in Israel a few days ago? Will he join me also in welcoming the statement made after that attack by the PLO, in which it said that the PLO

"oppose and denounce any military action that targets civilians"?

I am interested in the fact that the right hon. Gentleman welcomes the formation of a Government in Israel who are totally opposed to any genuine peace process. Will he send a message to the new Israeli Government that the peace process is more vital than ever? Will he make it clear that a policy of settlements in the occupied territories is unacceptable to both sides of the House?

Mr. Hurd: I have already made the second-to-last point clear in my previous answer. I believe that a Government in Israel is better than no Government. The peace process has been completely stymied for weeks because there has been no Government. I hope that, now that there is a Government, all the friends of Israel can begin to persuade them that they should play a positive part in the peace process.

While I was in the middle east, I condemned the attack on the Israeli beach. I note what the PLO has already said; I just wish that it would go that much further because that would make it much easier for the United States to remain constructively engaged, which I believe is crucial.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that this will help hon. Members who are concerned about not being called. I draw their attention to the fact that I am constantly being urged to speed up Question Time, and that is what I am seeking to do. Moreover, I am today giving some precedence to those who were not called during questions on the Prime Minister's statement yesterday.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I think that the hon. Member was called. I call Mr. Snape.

Short-range Nuclear Weapons

3. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to discuss the future of short-range nuclear weapons with the United States Secretary of State.

Mr. Hurd: I met Mr. Baker and other NATO colleagues at the North Atlantic Council meeting held at Turnberry on 7 and 8 June. NATO agreed at that meeting that negotiations on United States and Soviet short-range nuclear weapons systems in Europe should begin shortly after a conventional forces in Europe agreement is concluded.

We shall continue to keep in close touch with the United States on this subject as we prepare for the NATO summit in London from 4 to 6 July.

Mr. Snape: Does the Foreign Secretary accept that the best thing to do with these relics of the cold war would be to return them to the United States of America? If he is not prepared to do that, will he tell the House against whom he anticipates the weapons ever being deployed?

Mr. Hurd: They are there to deter any aggressor in the future.

Mr. Favell: My hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans) mentioned the problems in the middle east. As so many nasty regimes in that area still possess very nasty weapons, would not it be a mistake for us to throw down our arms at this stage?

Mr. Hurd: What we agreed at Turnberry—as has been agreed many times before and as will be agreed many times in the future—is that the 16 NATO allies need an appropriate and sensible mix of nuclear and conventional forces at the lowest level consistent with our security needs. That mix of forces, under an integrated command, is designed to deter attack on our area from any quarter.

Mr. Kaufman: Can the right hon. Gentleman explain how it was that a few days before President Bush announced that there would be no modernisation of short-range nuclear weapons, the Prime Minister was alone in NATO in continuing to advocate the modernisation of such weapons? Will he ask the Prime Minister to stop doing what she was doing yesterday—that is, jabbering on about the NATO flexible response

strategy, given that the intermediate nuclear forces treaty and the American decision not to modernise short-range weapons mean that that strategy is dead?

Mr. Hurd: Not for the first time, the right hon. Gentleman is confusing two issues. He is confusing the follow-on to Lance, which is what President Bush has abandoned—he consulted my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in Bermuda before making the announcement—and the general position of NATO, which my right hon. Friend continues to emphasise. I do not know what the Labour party's position is, but our position is the one that I have just stated: we need a sensible mix of conventional and nuclear weapons, including weapons below the strategic level, to protect our security.

Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

4. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultations he intends to have with other Governments in advance of the non-proliferation treaty review conference.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): The United Kingdom is one of the three depositary powers of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and we consult regularly with the other depositary powers and other interested parties.

Mr. Strang: Following the successful military use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war, should not we be even more terrified at the prospect of countries such as Argentina, Iraq and Pakistan—to name only three—developing nuclear weapons? Is not the best contribution that the British Government can make in this matter to hasten progress towards a comprehensive test ban treaty? Only if the nuclear weapons states make progress in that direction can we have the maximum impact against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in third-world countries.

Mr. Waldegrave: I share the anxiety that the hon. Gentleman expressed in the first part of his question. We were interested in President Mubarak's initiative for the middle east. The extension of the non-proliferation treaty would be the best way of carrying the matter forward, in the middle east and elsewhere. On the partial test ban treaty, the hon. Gentleman will know the Government's position, which was shared by the Labour party when it was in power: as a nuclear state, we must have the right to test our weapons to ensure that they work.

Mr. Churchill: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the great concern in this country and throughout the democratic world about the prospect of some of the tinpot military dictatorships in the middle east acquiring a nuclear and biological weapons capability allied to a long-range delivery system? Is not it time for us to work closely not only with our European partners and our American allies, but with the Soviet Union, so that those countries are effectively persuaded not to go ahead with those programmes in the year ahead?

Mr. Waldegrave: I agree with my hon. Friend that the only way to avoid what would be a very unstable and inefficient attempt to set up a complex deterrent system in the middle east would be the spread of the non-proliferation treaty. That is the objective of our diplomacy.

Sir David Steel: Does the Foreign Office accept that the greatest possible nuclear flashpoint has now moved from Europe to the middle east? Amid all the hope and excitement in eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and South Africa, will the Foreign Office make it a priority to secure a settlement in the middle east that will stop that flashpoint becoming a reality?

Mr. Waldegrave: I agree with the right hon. Gentleman. There are perhaps two dangerous flashpoints at the moment—one in Kashmir and the other in the middle east. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has already conveyed the sense of urgency that the Government feel about progress in the middle east.

Drugs Trade

Dr. Twinn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to assist the international community to strengthen its offensive against the drugs trade.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): We are vigorously pursuing action internationally against drugs. We hosted the recent world ministerial drugs summit in London, and are playing a leading role in United Nations and European Community anti-drugs co-operation. We have expanded our overseas drug-related assistance programmes, and have so far signed 15 bilateral agreements or arrangements for tracing, freezing and confiscating the proceeds of trafficking.

Dr. Twinn: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his reply. I know his deep concern about the international drugs trade. Can he confirm that we are unlikely to make much progress in tackling that evil trade until we have the fullest possible international co-operation among as many countries as possible.?

Mr. Sainsbury: I very much agree with my hon. Friend about the need for international co-operation. One of the very welcome aspects of the world ministerial drugs summit was that 127 countries unanimously agreed on the need for international co-operation to counter drugs trafficking.

Ms. Abbott: Does the Minister agree that we shall not make progress in fighting that evil trade until we seriously address the problem of crop substitution? The economies of many third-world countries are heavily dependent on the production of marijuana and cocaine. Will the Minister assure the House that the Foreign Office is continuing its support for the sugar protocol?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am sure that the hon. Lady recognises that alternative development or crop substitution is one of the important ways in which that trade can be countered. That is only one way, but it is something which we recognise as important. Indeed, our support for the United Nations fund for drug abuse control, which plays a leading role in alternative development, is evidence of our support for crop substitution and alternative development. Indeed, we are the fifth largest donor to UNFDAC.

Political Union

6. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in formulating the United Kingdom position on political union; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: We are active in all those Community discussions. I set out our views in some detail in the debate in the House on 11 June.

Mr. Gill: With regard to subsidiarity, my right hon. Friend will be aware of the necessity to protect the best features of our national and local democracy. What assurance can he give the House that that will amount to more than crumbs from the European Commission's table?

Mr. Hurd: I listened to my hon. Friend's particularly interesting speech on that theme on Monday, and I commend it to the House. The powers of the European Community are not vested in the Community and then, as it were, the Community lets us have some crumbs from the table. It is the other way round. In the treaty of Rome, the treaty of accession and the Single European Act, this country, this Government and this Parliament have given certain clearly defined powers to the Community. Therefore, those powers cannot be increased without the same process and amendment of the treaties.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Does the Secretary of State recognise the inconsistency of European politicians who speak about political union and who, at the same time, use every opportunity to restrict movement within the European Community? Does he deplore the partitionist policy of the Dublin Government in forbidding their citizens to have day-trip shopping in Northern Ireland? Does he condemn the decision of the Dublin Government yesterday to defy the European Court, which condemned the 48-hour shopping restriction?

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. Gentleman is right. There is an occasional and lamentable gap between the Europe of phrases and the Europe of facts, and it is part of our job in this country to try to bring the Europe of facts into line. I assume that bonfires are burning on the mountains of Mourne today as a result of the European Court's decision against the Republic. I am sure that the Irish Government will pay proper, due regard to the findings.

Mr. Marlow: No one is quite sure what is meant by European political union. If further powers are to be given to European institutions with regard to the initiation of policy, will my right hon. Friend undertake on behalf of the House that, if there is to be further policy initiation by the European Community, it should be done by elected bodies and not by the civil service or Treasury?

Mr. Hurd: We now know more clearly what political union does not mean. Thanks to the answers to questions that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister put at Dublin, it does not mean doing away with our basic national institutions or powers of peace and war. What will happen under that heading is a search for greater effectiveness of the Community's institutions, and part of that is democratic accountability. We believe that there is a stronger role in that process for national Parliaments —not just this House—across the Twelve. It is encouraging that that view is held increasingly in other member states as well.

Mr. Robertson: I am sure that the whole House will be gratified that the Prime Minister has been able to save the monarchy at one fell swoop in her discussions at Dublin. Is the Foreign Secretary aware of the speech made by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry last Tuesday, when he advocated a future Europe of two speeds, with Britain at the second and lower speed? On Thursday, the deputy Prime Minister advocated an integrated Europe, with Britain not in an outer circle, in the same way as Austria, and incapable of influencing events that are going on there. Is the Foreign Secretary in the Ridley camp, the Howe camp, or has he a tent of his own?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman will achieve even greater performance in his political career if he actually studies the texts that he describes before manufacturing differences that do not exist. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is not suggesting that Britain should in some way be in a secondary position. What we are doing is maintaining a central position by active, constructive and, I hope, agile thinking in all the discussions. It is not in our interests that we should be left behind or be negative in the discussions.

Latin America

7. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's relations with the Latin American countries.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have excellent relations with the countries of Latin America, and strongly support the return to democracy in the region.

Mr. Arnold: Is my hon. Friend aware of the widespread unease in Latin America because of our concentration on events in eastern Europe? What reassurance can my hon. Friend give our Anglophile friends in Latin America that that concentration will not lead to a reversal of the growing interest that we are now showing in the region?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am happy to have this opportunity to reaffirm our interest in the region and to assure my hon. Friend that in no way does our interest in important events in eastern Europe detract from the importance that we attach to our relations with Latin America. Indeed, I draw his attention to the fact that several distinguished Latin American leaders, including the Presidents of Mexico and Colombia, and the President-elect of Brazil, have recently visited London.

Mr. Dalyell: What agile thinking are the Government giving to the speech in the western Amazon of President Collor de Mello who, unlike President Sarney, is in favour of debt-for-nature swaps?

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we give a great deal of thought to the assistance that we can give to protect the environment, particularly the tropical and rain forests of Latin America and Brazil. Debt-for-nature swaps is one issue which has been raised and one suggested way of achieving better protection which will certainly receive consideration.

Mr. Rathbone: Will my hon. Friend assure the House that he will apply ever more agile thinking, particularly in terms of economic support and ensuring that the European Community is outward looking, to ensuring economic stability, without which political developments cannot be successful?

Mr. Sainsbury: We certainly attach the greatest importance to economic stability and progress towards greater prosperity in the region because that is an important way of supporting democracy. The European Community is taking an active interest in seeing what it can do to promote trade in the region. Recently it reached an agreement with central American countries to that end.

Middle East

8. **Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest progress towards the release of British hostages held in the middle east.

Mr. Waldegrave: The recent release of two American hostages is a welcome development. We very much hope that it will be followed by the release of all hostages in Lebanon. Those events show that Iran and Syria can, if they wish, use their influence effectively to bring about the release of hostages. We urge them to persevere. The holding of hostages, whether in Lebanon or elsewhere, is wrong in itself and in no one's interest.

Mr. Evans: Will the Minister acknowledge that, besides British hostages, nationals of many countries are held captive in the middle east? Does he agree that incarcerating innocent individuals will not solve the many difficult problems of that region? Will he consider convening a conference in London, under United Nations supervision if necessary, to try to reach common agreement that the tactic of kidnapping individuals for political reasons will be abandoned and that all captives will be released?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman is right. The House, with its natural concern for British citizens, concentrates on them, but many other people are held, and more Lebanese than any other nationality. I am interested in his suggestion. It is already against all international and national laws to hold hostages. I doubt whether such a conference would take us much further forward, but we rule out nothing and try to discuss these matters in every available forum.

Mr. Temple-Morris: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, in efforts to assist the hostages, the best way of pursuing parliamentary relations and diplomacy with Iran is through a properly constituted parliamentary exchange with the Iranian Majlis which should consider not only the hostages but all aspects of our relations, including hostages?

Mr. Waldegrave: I am aware of the suggestions for a parliamentary delegation. That could help. Those who are concerned, including my hon. Friend, are in touch with the Foreign Office about it.

Mr. Winnick: Is not the taking of hostages a most barbaric action which causes immense strain and torture, first and foremost to the victims, but also to their loved ones who, month after month and year after year, simply do not know whether the person is alive or dead and, if alive, under what circumstances? Does the Minister agree that with or without a delegation to Iran or any other action, it is essential that the Government, together with the Opposition in this Parliament, make it clear that there can be no appeasement of those who are responsible for kidnapping? If there were such appeasement, it would undoubtedly be an incentive for further kidnapping.

Mr. Waldegrave: I agree wholeheartedly with the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question. I have spent many hours with the families of the British hostages—both the Waites and the McCarthys. I pay tribute to Mr. McCarthy senior, who is one of the most remarkable people I have ever met. The hon. Gentleman is right that there can be no question of appeasement in any of these matters. But it is vital to see whether genuine misunderstandings can be removed and to improve background relations if we can. None of those who hold hostages, whether Israel, which took Sheikh Obeid last year, the Hezbollah groups or others, advance their cause by so doing.

Mr. Hind: Does my right hon. Friend agree that agile thinking is needed when considering the problem of hostages? Does he agree that the way to do so is to develop stronger links with Iran and, preferably, eventually to re-establish full diplomatic relations with that country? Only through that process shall we be able to put pressure on those in the Lebanon who hold British hostages and eventually persuade them to release their hostages.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes, but we should remember that Iran broke relations with us. We believe that we have some legitimate complaints against Iran, including the problems with Mr. Rushdie and Mr. Cooper and the influence which we know that Iran can now exercise over hostage groups. None of that means that we should not explore the signals that are being sent from Iran. We welcome what Mr. Moussavian said recently in the interview with *The Sunday Times*. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary made it clear that there was no question of the British Government or the British people wishing to insult Islam or any other of the great religions.

Antarctica

9. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has had expressing concern about non-scientific activities in the British Antarctic territory.

10. **Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he is taking to ensure that the environment is protected in Antarctica.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have received representations from many hon. Members and members of the public. We fully support and comply with the relevant obligations under the Antarctic treaty system and the Antarctic minerals convention, which offer the best possible means of protecting the Antarctic environment.

Mr. Kirkwood: Does the Minister accept that any commercial exploitation of mineral reserves in Antarctica would cause intolerable environmental damage? Does he agree that the Government's position to date will have the practical effect of allowing industrial diggers to slip in via

the back door? Will he give the House a categorical assurance that he will support the creation of a world park for Antarctica to give some protection to that last unspoilt corner of the planet?

Mr. Sainsbury: I fear that the hon. Gentleman has not studied either the provisions of the minerals convention, the history which led to its being on the table, or the widespread support for it of most of the nations that are parties to the Antarctic treaty. Our objective is to achieve the best possible protection for the Antarctic environment. In the absence of a minerals convention, there is nothing to protect the Antarctic against mineral exploitation and exploration. I hope that the hon. Gentleman wants that protection to be in place as soon as possible.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the Minister accept that we have before us a proposal from the French and Australian Governments for a wilderness reserve and a proposal from the West German Government for a 50-year moratorium? Both are enlightened and workable solutions. Why do not we support them? Is not it time that we were on the side of the goodies just for once?

Mr. Sainsbury: I repeat my answer to the hon. Gentleman. If he studied the history of the Antarctic treaty system and the protection that it has provided to the Antarctic for 30 years, and if he would realise that it has taken about 10 years to arrive at an agreement on the minerals convention—in the absence of a minerals convention there would be no protection for the Antarctic environment—he would surely welcome that convention coming into force as soon as possible. We can move on from that to a comprehensive further package of environmental protection which we look forward to discussing at the next meeting in Santiago later this year. The hon. Gentleman must be aware that other proposals that have been put on the table by no means command unanimous support and, therefore, cannot be implemented. In the absence of the implementation of such proposals, surely a minerals convention that can command support is worth having.

Mr. Hill: Does my hon. Friend agree that we must not have the sort of deadlock that occurred over the problem of fishing for whales when almost all the whales in the southern hemisphere were slaughtered? I fully realise that my hon. Friend will take a compassionate view of this matter because we are the party of environmental protection. This could be the first major environmental issue for the Conservative party. There must be a compromise. Some part of Antarctica must be preserved for nature and for future generations.

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure my hon. Friend that the minerals convention provides the strictest regime of environmental protection anywhere in the world. It is by no means a charter to allow the exploration or exploitation of mineral resources. Indeed, it is not known whether there are substantial mineral resources in Antarctica. The convention provides for exploration to be carried out only with the consensus of the parties to the Antarctic treaty, who would give priority to ensuring that environmental protection was built into any action that might be taken.

Mr. Summerson: Does my hon. Friend agree that if the minerals convention is not supported, the Antarctic treaty system may collapse? If that happens, the whole continent of Antarctica will be open to exploitation by other countries.

Mr. Sainsbury: My hon. Friend makes an important point. I am sure that we all agree—at least I hope we do—that it would be disastrous if the Antarctic treaty system collapsed, especially given its success over the past 30 years in providing protection to the Antarctic, keeping peace in the region and eliminating territorial disputes. The minerals convention would add substantially to the protection of the Antarctic environment. I hope that we shall see its early agreement and then move to a comprehensive package of environmental protection.

Mr. Foulkes: Why does not the Minister now accept that, as we predicted when we opposed the Antarctic Minerals Act 1989, Australia, France, New Zealand and other countries will never sign the minerals convention because it is a prospectors' charter? Therefore, at the very least, at Santiago in November will the Minister support the German compromise for a long-term moratorium on mineral prospecting in Antarctica? If he does not, the United Kingdom will once again be totally isolated and the Prime Minister's "green mantle" will be shown up for the fraud that it is.

Mr. Sainsbury: I seem to remember that the attitude of the Labour party to that Act was inconsistent. It changed its mind during the Act's passage. The hon. Gentleman seems to have overlooked the fact that 19 countries support the minerals convention. Therefore, it is wrong to talk about isolation and even more in error to refer to the minerals convention—which, as I said, provides the most stringent regime of environmental protection anywhere in the world—as in any way a charter for mineral exploitation.

Horn of Africa

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the situation in the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Waldegrave: In both Ethiopia and Somalia fighting has continued between Government and rebel forces with consequent suffering for the civilian population. We have participated actively in efforts to promote negotiations which offer the only prospect of lasting solutions and of tackling the problems of famine, refugees and underdevelopment.

Mr. Bennett: From the Minister's reply it is clear that he accepts—as, I am sure, does the whole House—that many people in both countries are still suffering from the effects of famine now and that it is likely that that famine will damage children, if they survive, for the rest of their lives. Will he redouble his efforts to bring peace to the area because only by ending the conflict can the problems of famine in the short term and of the long-term development of the area be tackled?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman is right that the underlying restoration of peace is vital. We welcome the steps that have been taken by Mr. Nyerere and President Carter to get talks going on Ethiopia. There now seems to

be some hope of them making progress; the Ethiopians have accepted the idea of a United Nations observer and we hope that the Eritreans will respond.

Mr. John Carlisle: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the only other country in the African continent that can assist with resources is South Africa, which is already doing what it can? Therefore, when Mr. Mandela visits my right hon. Friend and his colleagues in July *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has a right to put his supplementary question in the way that he thinks proper.

Mr. Carlisle: When Mr. Mandela visits my right hon. Friend in July, will he impress upon him that his sanctions policy is futile, and out of date and will deny the peoples in the Horn of Africa the assistance that they could get from a prosperous and economically strong South Africa, which is anxious to help them?

Mr. Waldegrave: It is true that the most powerful economy of the continent should be governed by a just and proper constitution and that all the people should share in the ownership of the economic assets and in the political system that controls them. It is true also that those who seek to damage that economy for no other reason, as far as I can see, than to support an outdated position on sanctions are not helping the continent.

Cambodia

12. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to review the Government's position on the seating of Cambodia at the United Nations when the matter comes before the credentials committee later in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: With our EC partners we are reviewing our policy towards Cambodia's representation at the United Nations. In doing so we shall be taking into account the efforts of a range of countries, notably the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to achieve a comprehensive political settlement.

Mr. Mullin: May I draw the Minister's attention to a report by Mr. Raoul Jennar on the situation in Cambodia in which he states that because of the termination of aid from eastern Europe the Government in Cambodia will not survive for more than six to 18 months, and that the only force capable of filling the vacuum is the Khmer Rouge? Will he give an undertaking that in no circumstances, in September or October when the decision arises in the United Nations, will we vote again for the coalition which contains the Khmer Rouge?

Mr. Sainsbury: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that active negotiations are taking place to achieve a comprehensive political settlement. That is surely the right way to achieve lasting peace and stability in Cambodia. We hope that the negotiations, with the United Nations playing a leading role, will enable us to establish a supreme national council which would occupy the seat for Cambodia at the United Nations. We must not anticipate the outcome of the negotiations, but we cannot want them to fail.

Mr. Bowis: Does my hon. Friend accept that it is offensive that the seat at the United Nations for the Cambodian people should be held by people who are at least the henchmen of Pol Pot? Will my hon. Friend do everything in his power to ensure that the United Kingdom and the international community stand up to those people, especially at a time when the offensive by the Khmer Rouge forces is getting closer to Phnom Penh?

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure my hon. Friend that we have made clear on numerous occasions our repugnance for the Khmer Rouge regime. We have not supplied assistance to it of any kind at any time. The objective must be to achieve peace and stability in Cambodia through a comprehensive political settlement, and that is the end to which we are working with our partners among the permanent representatives at the United Nations. I hope that we shall succeed in time for a supreme national council to represent Cambodia at the United Nations.

Europe (Security and Reconstruction)

13. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent consultations he has held with other Foreign Ministers of the European Community concerning security and reconstruction in Europe.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Francis Maude): My right hon. Friend has attended meetings with all or some European Community Foreign Ministers in Ireland on 19 to 20 May, in Copenhagen on 5 June and at the NATO meeting at Turnberry on 7 to 8 June.

Mr. Boswell: Does my hon. Friend agree that the climate is now extremely positive and is based on a common recognition of the dual importance of the European Community as the motor for European economic reconstruction and of the Atlantic alliance as the necessary umbrella of security? Within and outside them, does my hon. Friend agree that political co-operation between the European states and the conference on security and co-operation in Europe process, bringing in the superpowers on the edge of Europe, is also extremely important?

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the different but sometimes overlapping roles of the various bodies. There is a growing consensus among member states that the Community's principal role must continue to be the economic one in which it has already been extremely successful. There is a strong view in NATO that it must remain the underpinning strength of the security system in the west. My hon. Friend is also right to draw attention to the possibilities for expanding and enhancing the role of the CSCE.

Mr. Tony Banks: Given that the Government have done a deal with the French to locate the new European development bank in London, will the Minister support the application by the London borough of Newham to have that bank located in Stratford, or at least somewhere within the bounds of the people's republic? Will he acknowledge that the people of Newham have suffered so much and for so long under capitalism that we should at least gain some of the minor advantages of having the bank located there?

Mr. Maude: I am delighted to hear of the London borough of Newham's enthusiasm for this symbol of capitalism. No doubt Mr. Attali, the president of the new bank, will listen carefully to its request; but the location is a matter for the bank to decide, not us, although of course we are giving it every help in its search for premises.

Sir Peter Blaker: Has my hon. Friend seen reports that yesterday President Gorbachev referred to a union of sovereign states as a possible solution to the problems arising between the Baltic republics—and other republics in the Soviet Union—and the central Soviet Government? Is not that a positive concept? Will the Government do what they can, in consultation with their Community colleagues, to support that idea in the Soviet Union?

Mr. Maude: The matter must be resolved between the Baltic republics and the Soviet Union. It is good news that there are signs of flexibility, and I hope that a dialogue can take place quickly to resolve what is, at the moment, an unhappy position.

German Unification

14. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's current policy on German unification.

Mr. Hurd: We warmly welcome the prospect of German unification. I am working with the Foreign Ministers of the United States, France, the Soviet Union, the two Germanies and others concerned to settle the external aspects of German unification as soon as possible.

Mr. Welsh: What will be the status of a reunited Germany in relation to the European Community? Will a reunified Germany have to apply for membership of the Common Market, or will it automatically become a member?

Mr. Hurd: East Germany proposes to join West Germany under article 23 of the Federal German constitution, which provides for such a move, and the European Community is taking account of that. If the hon. Gentleman has at the back of his mind the notion that Scotland could slip quietly out of the United Kingdom and quietly back into the European Community as a new and separate member, that is richly absurd.

Mr. Wilkinson: In her statement to the House yesterday, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said that President Gorbachev had discussed with her the possibility of the Federal Republic of Germany's being called on to pay the costs of the repatriation of Soviet troops from the DDR under any withdrawal plan. Was any figure put to the Prime Minister, and was any discussion entered into with the Federal German Government about the matter?

Mr. Hurd: That is not primarily a matter for us. As far as I know, no figure was put to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in that discussion. I would expect there to be contacts and discussions between the Soviet Government and the Federal German Government if that point were to be pursued.

Middle East

15. **Sir David Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new initiatives Her Majesty's Government have taken recently to help the middle east peace process.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply given earlier by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Sir David Steel: Does the Minister agree that there has so far been a wholly inadequate response by Israel to the initiatives taken by the PLO leader in recognising that state and in restraining terrorism? In the absence of pressure from the United States, will he consider a European Community initiative to persuade Israel to pursue the path of peace?

Mr. Waldegrave: Many times the general consenus in the House has been to urge a positive response from Israel to the steps that were taken in Algiers by the Palestine National Council and the PLO. We hope, although with some foreboding, that the new Government in Israel will make such a response. I do not rule out a role for Europe. Doubtless my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be discussing the middle east at the next meeting of Foreign Ministers.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my right hon. Friend accept that in the House and in the world there is a great feeling for world Jewry and the problems that they suffered in the great war? But does my right hon. Friend also accept that there is a feeling that the new Government in Israel are set upon a path that may drag us all into another conflict from which nobody could gain? Will he urge the new Government in Israel to accept that the Palestinians have a right to their place in the sun that shines on them all, as does every other people? If they do not adopt such an attitude the Israeli nation—the Jewish people—will lose a great many friends.

Mr. Waldegrave: I would be a little careful about associating Jewish people with the policies of the state of Israel. We had our arguments with the previous Government of Israel, but there are many Jewish people, inside and outside Israel, on both sides of the argument. However, I thoroughly agree with my hon. Friend that the right of the Palestinian people to a secure home and to self-determination is as absolute as that of the inhabitants of Israel.

Antarctica

16. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Governments of France and Australia on the future of Antarctica.

Mr. Sainsbury: There have been no formal discussions with the French or Australians at governmental level. The French ambassador and Australian high commissioner called on me on 3 May to present their joint proposals for environmental protection in Antarctica, for consideration at the special Antarctic treaty consultative meeting in Santiago in November.

Dr. Howells: Does the Minister agree that many people in Britain and elsewhere are deeply suspicious of

Governments such as ours who talk green, but who, in their next breath, promote multinational corporations which spill their oil across the seas and spoil wildernesses such as those of north America, Africa and Asia? Does he understand that the world needs an imaginative gesture, and that a continental wildlife park in Antarctica would be the right one?

Mr. Sainbury: I suspect that the hon. Gentleman knows that he is talking nonsense. Negotiations on the minerals convention began in 1982 and were concluded in 1988 by consensus of 33 countries, 19 of which—the majority—signed the convention. That convention will give unparalleled protection from mineral prospecting in the Antarctic; without it there would be no legally binding or enforceable protection for the Antarctic environment. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will welcome its coming into force at an early date.

Romania

17. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's reaction to the outcome of the Romanian elections held on 20 May.

Mr. Waldegrave: The elections were an important step towards democracy. However, much remains to be done if Romania is to develop into a truly free society.

Mr. Sumberg: All of us welcome the steps that Romania is taking towards democracy, but will my right hon. Friend make it clear to the Romanian Government that membership of the democratic family depends on there being truly free elections and a system of justice which ensures that people who are guilty of crimes under the former regime are called to account?

Mr. Waldegrave: I agree with my hon. Friend on both points. We shall be watching what constitution the new constituent assembly in Romania—which is effectively what it is—now brings forward. We shall want to look at the gamut of protection of the rights of the individual, and so on.

Middle East

18. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet a representative of the Government of Israel to discuss the middle east peace process.

Mr. Waldegrave: We regularly discuss with the Israelis the urgent need for peace in the middle east. They are well aware of our view that direct negotiation between Israel and representative Palestinians is an essential first step.

Ms. Short: Does the Minister agree that the formation of that extreme Government in Israel is deeply worrying—it is even supported by a party which calls for the expulsion of the Palestinians from the west bank and Gaza—that we need urgent action, and that the answer is for the United States to pressurise the Israeli Government into negotiations? Through the European Community, we could have a big new high-profile initiative to put pressure on America, which in turn could bring Israel to the negotiating table. Those matters are now very urgent.

Mr. Waldegrave: I share the hon. Lady's sense of urgency. Let us see what the new Government in Israel propose. Let us hope that they surprise us. Some of their supporters, as the hon. Lady says, were hard line in their previous statements, but let us see what they propose. What is needed is the dialogue to which I referred, and every day that passes makes that dialogue more urgently required.

Staircase Refurbishment, Foreign Office

19. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the cost of refurbishing staircases in the Foreign Office during the past 12 months.

Mr. Sainsbury: Work on refurbishing the two important staircases in this grade 1 listed building has extended over the past 24 months at a total cost of £361,000.

Mrs. Gorman: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Is he aware that *The Times* stated that that work was costing £30 million which, translated into medieval terms, is vastly more than Michelangelo got for painting the Sistine chapel? If what my hon. Friend says is correct, *The Times* should be asked to insert a correction, but if *The Times* is correct, most taxpayers will be appalled at that sort of indulgence by the Foreign Office on a building which hon. Members hardly ever see, much less the taxpayer.

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure my hon. Friend that the figure that I have given is the correct one. A much larger scheme of refurbishment is being undertaken in what are known as the Old Public Offices. It is the first major scheme of refurbishment since they were built some 130 years ago, it is much needed and it will bring many worthwhile benefits.

BALLOT FOR NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FRIDAY 29 JUNE

Members successful in the ballot were:

Mr. John Bowis
Mr. Tony Banks
Mr. Gerald Bowden.

BILLS PRESENTED

Ban of Imports (Child Labour)

Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie, supported by Mr. Allen Adams, Mr. Jimmy Wray, Mr. Frank Haynes, Mr. Jimmy Hood, Mr. Alan Meale, Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Frank Cook, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. George Galloway, Mr. Keith Vaz and Mr. Mike Watson, presented a Bill to prohibit the sale of imported goods, the manufacture of which has involved child labour; And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 July and to be printed. [Bill 162.]

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I will put together the Questions on the four motions relating to statutory instruments.

Ordered,

That the Education (Recognised Awards) (Amendment) Order 1990 (S.I., 1990, No. 1085) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Netherlands) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Italy) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the Farm and Conservation Grant (Variation) Scheme 1990 (S.I., 1990, No. 1126) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

Beaches and Coastline (Regulation)

3.32 pm

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to regulate and control beaches and coastline; and for other purposes.

I am presenting the Bill today because of my experience in my constituency, which has extensive beaches and coastline, where during April a voluntary organisation, made up of 500 volunteerss, collected 3,000 plastic bags and burned 20 tonnes of timber. In a month when the European Commission has confirmed that it is beginning legal action against the United Kingdom Government in the European Court of Justice because of dozens of polluted beaches which have failed the EC minimum standards, it is salutary to remember that an EC directive on pollution was introduced in 1975—15 long years ago. Despite that intervening period, we now find that 109 beaches in the United Kingdom fail the sewage test, and that other hazards have been highlighted.

The Bill will address the environmental concerns—and who is not an environmentalist now after witnessing the Prime Minister's indecent haste to become green? I remind hon. Members that in 1982, at the height of the Falklands crisis, the Prime Minister said:

"When you've spent half your political life dealing with humdrum issues like the environment, it is exciting to have a real crisis on your hands."

We have a crisis every day on our hands. One therefore has to doubt the Prime Minister's political integrity while she demonstrates touching faith in her Secretary of State for the Environment who has been hauled before the European Court of Justice.

My Bill seeks to amend the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 (Commencement) (No. 1) Order 1988 in order to tighten up the penalties for dumping at sea. The Marine Conservation Society claims that dumping at sea is the main source of marine litter and that an estimated 500,000 plastic containers are dumped daily from merchant ships alone. It is also estimated that more than 100,000 marine mammals and 2 million sea birds are killed each year, due to eating or becoming entangled in marine debris.

My Bill would also institute more and better testing than the United Kingdom now undertakes under the EC directive. There are no standard virus tests. In the absence of such tests, my Bill would provide for testing for salmonella and the various enteroviruses, since these are the most serious risks to people's health that scientists hve demonstrated. The Government are not testing for these viruses on most beaches. Where tests have been carried out, the Government have not included the results for the percentage of beaches that have passed the test.

My Bill would also introduce, for sewage disposal, secondary biological-chemical treatment for all towns with a population of more than 5,000. According to the "Nature" programme in March 1989, the Prime Minister said:

"No raw sewage is discharged round Britain's coasts."

I, like many other hon. Members, could take the Prime Minister to my constituency and show her that that statement is not true.

There are many questions that one has to ask. Why, as we approach the 21st century, are 300 million gallons of sewage—much of it completely untreated—entering the seas around Britain? The debris is sickening to environmentalists. Dr. Mark Woombs, of the Knotts End study centre near Morecambe, where children come to learn about the environment, said in the *Observer* magazine of a few weeks ago:

"Children come here to learn the difference between biodegradable and non-biodegradable matter. Instead, every time one of them comes back with a small green object which they think is a rare plant species. Unfortunately, I have to tell them what it is—a decomposed turd."

My Bill would make it mandatory for signposts to be placed on all designated beaches detailing whether it had passed or failed the bathing water quality standards in the past year. The Bill would also provide for carrying out a proper national survey of the health effects of bathing in contaminated waters. It would also contain a provision for the allocation of £2·5 billion for a capital investment programme to bring Scotland's water and sewerage standards up to those contained in the EC directive. We are keen to ensure that the Scottish water industry receives equality of treatment with that in England and Wales, which received a Government cash injection of £1·02 billion and was allowed to write off £4·5 billion in the run-up to privatisation. It is important that Scotland should be treated in the same way.

I am aware that expense is always uppermost in the Government's mind, but the criterion should be quality, not cost. If, in their privatisation of British Gas, the Government could spend £350 million on telling the British public all about Sid, they can spend a fraction of that sum on telling people that bathing in contaminated water is no good whatsoever for their health. Just like the Government's statements, the odd green pellets that people pick up on the beach are not what they seem at first sight. That is why the need for the Bill is paramount, and that is why I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. John McFall, Mr. Alun Michael, Mr. Frank Haynes, Mrs. Maria Fyfe, Mr. George Foulkes, Dr. Norman A. Godman, Dr. Kim Howells, Mr. Brian Wilson, Mr. Thomas Graham, Mr. Paul Flynn and Mrs. Alice Mahon.

Beaches and Coastline (Regulation)

Mr. John McFall accordingly presented a Bill to regulate and control beaches and coastline; and for other purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 July and to be printed. [Bill 161.]

Orders of the Day

British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

New Clause 12

GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

'The Governor of Hong Kong should submit to the Secretary of State an annual report on the discharge by the Governor of his functions under this Act.'.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

3.39 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peter Lloyd): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider new clause 1—*Governor's Annual Report*—

'The Governor shall submit an annual report to the Secretary of State on the operation of any scheme made under this Act.'.

Mr. Lloyd: The Government tabled new clause 12 having seen and approved the intention behind the Opposition's new clause 1. In Committee, we had a useful discussion about how Parliament could keep an eye on the way in which the selection procedures flowing from the Bill and the Orders in Council to follow were progressing under the direction and management of the Governor. In Committee, I said that periodical reports from the Governor to the Home Secretary that would be available to Parliament would be useful.

Both new clauses put that suggestion into legislative form. I hope that Opposition Members will not press their proposal but will support the Government's new clause in preference because it is slightly broader. For instance, new clause 1 would probably not cover registration for wives and spouses. New clause 12 would, by contrast, cover every aspect of the Governor's functions under the legislation. I believe that that extra reach would be welcomed by the House.

I am grateful to Opposition Members for their initiative in taking me at my word in Committee and tabling new clause 1, thus providing the Government with an incentive to table new clause 12. I commend it to the House.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): I am grateful to the Minister for tabling new clause 12. As he said, it is probably an improvement on new clause 1 in the name of my right hon. and hon. Friends and myself. It would be useful for the House to be kept informed as to how any scheme introduced by the Bill operates and for the Governor to report formally, as well as informally and through other channels, on how the situation in Hong Kong is progressing.

As the Minister said, new clause 12 covers slightly more points than were raised in Committee. It is not just the operation of the points scheme that I want the Governor to consider. It may assist the House if I outline two or three considerations that I believe the Governor should take into account.

The Bill is about the stability of Hong Kong and how the United Kingdom should best behave and react to the changing circumstances there. Individuals and groups of people in Hong Kong are not catered for under the Bill, and we should become more concerned about them as we move towards 1997. The question of spouses will probably be more conveniently dealt with under a later group of amendments, but there are other aspects that the Governor could usefully consider.

The Minister himself mentioned the operation of the points system. The Committee dealt with it at some length, and it is not my intention to cover that ground again, though other right hon. and hon. Members may want to do so. Suffice it to say that we have some reservations about the operation of the points system. In particular, we believe that it will cater for only a narrow section of the people living in Hong Kong—those who have other choices before them. People who are left behind or who will not qualify under the points system will feel that the Bill does nothing to reassure them.

I should like the Governor's annual report to include an indication of how the system is working in respect not only of its application but of its effect on the population of Hong Kong as a whole.

I should be particularly interested to know whether the jobs left vacant by people leaving Hong Kong are filled by others. A newspaper report two weeks ago indicated that about 40 people applied for each vacancy in the Administration. If that is so, we should be aware of it, so that we can keep our eye on the general position in Hong Kong.

3.45 pm

There are two or three other categories of people not dealt with in the Bill but upon which we touched in Committee. The first group is those with no effective nationality. You, Mr. Speaker, were not able to select our new clause that dealt with this point, and, although it is not my purpose to raise the matter now by another means, I think that I can legitimately touch on the point in this debate, because we are discussing matters that the Governor should take into account when preparing his report.

In Committee, we raised the plight of people who will have no effective nationality after 1997. They are mainly of Indian descent. I know that the Confederation of Indian Organisations has been in touch with the Minister, and that in response to that meeting he wrote to the confederation as follows:

"British nationals have the specific parliamentary assurance given on a number of occasions that if, against all expectation, any solely British national with no claim to Chinese nationality came under severe pressure to leave Hong Kong, the Goverment of the day would be expected to consider with considerable and particular sympathy their case for admission to the United Kingdom. We stand by that assurance."

For the avoidance of doubt, I gave an assurance on behalf of the Labour party in Committee that in the event of our being the Goverment at the time we would give these people the same consideration, unless their position had been dealt with elsewhere.

I mention those people because it is all very well to offer them sympathy and assurances, but that may not be of immediate help to them. The Opposition remain concerned that these people, whom the Chinese do not regard as Chinese for obvious reasons, may find

themselves in a difficult position, especially if there is any upheaval or internal division in Hong Kong at or about the time that it passes to Chinese control.

Indeed, these people are excluded from holding high office under the terms of the agreement with China. I should be grateful if the Minister would give an assurance that the Governor will report on their plight, because if they are in difficulty Parliament should be aware of that, earlier rather than later, so that we can, if necessary, do something about it.

I need hardly remind the House that it is now about 20 years since the east African Asian British passport holders were given assurances following upheavals in east Africa, yet many of them are still waiting to come to this country under the terms of the assurances given by successive Governments. Many of them live in Hong Kong, and this loose end in British immigration law is unsatisfactory; people are given assurances and told they will be dealt with under an informal or even a formal system but outwith the mainstream immigration regime, yet they find themselves left in the unsatisfactory state of having only travel documents. That is what British overseas citizenship is: it does not give the right of abode anywhere other than in Hong Kong. If these people find themselves in difficulty in Hong Kong, we have an obligation to them.

The Government have said that an assurance has been given to these people, but I submit that it is not much of an assurance. The Select Committee that went to Hong Kong last year specifically raised this problem and recommended that the Government deal with it.

I mentioned two other categories with whom the Governor should deal. First, the House should be kept informed of the way in which section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 works. As the Committee heard, 180,000 people are in Crown service in Hong Kong. There have been 540 applications for citizenship under this section of the Act, of which only nine have been granted because only nine qualified under the terms of that subsection.

The Minister gave an assurance in Committee that section 4(5) would work alongside this measure, and I think that the Governor should report each year on the operation of the subsection and on whether any amendments to it need to be made. This is especially important, since Crown servants are to be relied on to keep Hong Kong going and sometimes put themselves in difficult positions because of that, so we should not turn our backs on them.

Finally, the Governor must deal with the issue of children. In Committee we did not manage to persuade the Government that children who are wholly dependent on parents but who are not minors should in some circumstances be granted citizenship so that they will not be left behind. I have in mind, for example, a family with three children, two aged 14 and 12 and one perhaps aged 19. If the 19-year-old were dependent on his or her mother or father—perhaps he was handicapped, or just living in the family unit, as children do in all parts of the world—it would be manifestly unfair if that family had to come to this country and leave one child behind. If the object of the Bill is to provide assurances and to anchor people in Hong Kong, it seems an odd way of anchoring people if one child must be left behind.

I said that family unity and the way in which minor children are referred to in the immigration rules and regulations needs consideration, because the United Kingdom is no longer in harmony even with EC regulations, where the age is 21 and not 18. That must be considered specifically with Hong Kong in mind, although clearly it might have other repercussions.

We are told that Hong Kong is a special case, and I accept that, but the Bill remains deficient in many respects. Many people living in Hong Kong have a need to be looked after rather than a pure economic need, or are in a position where it would be economically more advantageous to keep them in Hong Kong. I am concerned that I am continuing to hear reports that many of the people who will qualify under the Bill will also qualify to go to Canada, Australia and other countries. We are forgetting, or leaving behind, those who may find themselves in difficulty as we approach 1997.

Lest there be any misunderstanding, I reiterate that it remains the hope and wish of every hon. Member that conditions in China and Hong Kong will continue to improve, that the problems of 12 months ago will not recur and that the same transformation will take place on that side of the world as has taken place in Europe, particularly eastern Europe, over the past few years. We must guard against the possibility of things not going as we wish.

If new clause 1 is not accepted, I hope that the Governor will deal with those points, in recognition of the fact that there are genuine concerns among those who care not only about Hong Kong but about how the scheme will work, particularly in relation to those people whom it will not directly affect.

Mr. John Butcher (Coventry, South-West): I endorse the comments of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling). The House hopes that circumstances will change and will evolve on mainland China, rendering the fallback positions enshrined in the Bill either irrelevant or unnecessary.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to speak to the new clause, which deals with the functions and duties of the Governor. It is an improvement to a certain extent, because it at least improves the channels of accountability to the House. None the less, I have grave misgivings about its workings and the criteria that the Governor will be asked to bear in mind. It is difficult to set yardsticks by which we measure our definition of the great and good residents of Hong Kong. Many hon. Members find that exercise morally excruciating and difficult to reach a firm view about, because we are being asked to do something that has proved virtually impossible in previous immigration laws and Acts of citizenship, not only in Britain but in other parts of the world.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Does not it also introduce a wholly new idea and basis for immigration? It does not say that people may come to Britain because of their attachment to it, their desire to serve it or to throw in their lot with its people; it allows them to come here precisely because they are, or may be, useful to Hong Kong.

Mr. Butcher: My hon. Friend makes a powerful point, but there is a piece of hard data that goes a long way towards answering his question. We see from the criteria that 50 points out of a total of 800 are to be awarded for "British links". Presumably that is the measurement by the Government and the Governor of the strength of loyalty that these citizens may have to the United Kingdom. I

[Mr. Butcher]

should have thought that, with a measure of 50 points out of 800, we can already see the pitfalls that lie in wait for anyone who tries to establish measures by which these people will be seen as worthy citizens of the United Kingdom should things go wrong in the colony.

The concept of loyalty is an equally difficult concept to enshrine in these criteria and one that I have never seen in any legislation. I am talking about the broader loyalties of a Foreign Secretary in conjunction with the Governor to those who may be under threat in the colony of Hong Kong if things go wrong and about a couple of loyalties which will not enter into the Governor's consciousness but which Conservative Members must maintain—loyalty to our party's manifesto and supporters, and loyalty to the nation. As our party has said many times, we want good community and intra-community relationships to exist and the surety that there will be an end to primary immigration.

We in this country have a moral obligation to those who will be under threat if the mainland Chinese do not honour the traditions and liberties of Hong Kong residents. Amendment No. 42, which may be discussed later in greater detail, expresses a genuine intention to define those people who may be at risk. It refers to people being

> "(a) in the opinion of the Governor, likely to be in danger of reprisals for services rendered to the Crown before 30th June 1997,
>
> (b) liable to become stateless after the transfer of sovereinty over Hong Kong on 30th June 1997."

Estimates have been made of the number of people in the so-called "sensitive" categories, including one estimate of 6,300 people. I do not know of any of my hon. Friends who do not recognise the Government's moral responsibility to those people. We may be talking about people who have served in the intelligence service or have been members of certain branches of the police force; but what about the people from more mundane professions who may be in a sensitive position if the mainland Chinese so deem it?

Is a schoolteacher any less of a good citizen or any less loyal to his fellow citizens in Hong Kong or to his links with the United Kingdom than a wealthy employment and wealth creator in Hong Kong? Who is more worthy? How many times have we had debates in the House about the relative merits of certain categories in society? Do we not talk many times about the extent to which we could not create wealth in this country and the extent to which there would not be rich entrepreneurs and job providers if there were no decent trainers and educators to provide the human feedstock and the skills required to generate a dynamic economy?

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My hon. Friend wisely, caringly and sympathetically outlined the relative problem that schoolteachers may face. Perhaps I may illustrate his point. Schoolteachers in Hong Kong probably now teach versions and elements of British history. We have a changing regime in China; it is to be hoped that it will become more benign, but it may remain much as it is at the moment. If that happens, the teaching of British history in schools in Hong Kong may be regarded by the Chinese authorities as subversive. Although a teacher who has been teaching history under the existing regime may not be as wealthy or potentially as useful in the United Kingdom as some other citizens, he or she may be at a greater risk than them after 1997 if the Chinese Government develops as we hope they will not but as they could in adverse circumstances.

4 pm

Mr. Speaker: Before the hon. Member for Coventry, South-West (Mr. Butcher) answers that intervention, I should point out that it seems to go very wide of the new clause. The hon. Gentleman must not raise points that may have been raised on Second Reading or allude, as he did a moment ago, to amendments that are to be called later.

Mr. Butcher: I am grateful to you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker. I should reassure you and my hon. Friends that I have undertaken not to detain the House for more than 10 minutes, so it would not be in my interests to stray too far from the new clause.

Having noted the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), I return to the criteria. A major problem lies at the heart of those criteria, which create a set of excruciatingly difficult dilemmas for the Governor, no matter how often he reports to the House through the Foreign Secretary. He is being asked to create lifeboats for key people in Hong Kong, but Hong Kong is a vessel full of people. What signal will the Governor be giving to the generality of the people of Hong Kong if he says, "Lifeboats are available only for 50,000 citizens"? How is that supposed to improve the morale of the ship's complement? That is the Governor's difficulty, and that is why I shall have grave difficulty in supporting the Government in the Lobby tonight.

The criteria are muddled. They illustrate the central moral dilemma that we have unnecessarily imposed upon ourselves, having already constructed criteria in the British Nationality Act 1981. If the proposals remain unchanged, in two or three years' time my hon. Friends on the Front Bench will have to live with some of the idiocies that the criteria entail, and although the controversy about the Bill may not be great this afternoon, the Bill will provide a framework in which we may face immense problems in three or four years' time. At that point, it will be too late for the House to reconsider its moral responsibilities, its loyalties or the practicalities of the Bill. I know that my hon. Friend the Minister is genuine in his intentions, and I hope that, even at this late stage, he will consider the dilemma with which he will be confronting his successors as we move towards 1997.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): As long as it remains the responsibility of the Government to look after all the people of Hong Kong, it will be possible for Britain to take a decision about their future that may benefit them, without regard to the present provisions. It will be possible for the Government to reverse their decision and for legislative provision to be made to back up any change of course that may be necessary between now and 1997.

We must address ourselves to the limited scope of the scheme and to its adequacy and consider whether the Governor's annual report on his functions, as provided in the new clause, would make a significant contribution. In

my view, it is an acceptable new clause, but it does not go very far because it confines the Governor to reporting on his functions under the Bill.

The Governor's functions, according to the Bill, are no doubt capable of causing great trouble in respect of all those people who will be disappointed by the fact that they are excluded from the scheme for which the Governor and the Government will be responsible. None the less, those people are concerned about their future. If the Governor's report is intended simply to record how the scheme has operated, it will not tell us a great deal about Hong Kong or its political needs. It will certainly not greatly serve to underpin the Governor's difficult position in that country.

The new clause does not deal with the point raised by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) about the difficult position of people who may well prove to be stateless following 1997. Those people may not enjoy the security of a right of abode in this country or the right to a proper passport entitling them to a right of abode anywhere or a right to be recognised as citizens of the People's Republic of China. They are not specifically provided for in the Bill. The Governor will have no duty to report on that predicament.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman has referred to stateless people in Hong Kong. Will he be kind enough to give us his impression of how many such people there are in Hong Kong, how they got to Hong Kong in the first place, and to what extent, given the different categories of people who are stateless in Hong Kong, the British Government and the British people have any responsibility for them?

Mr. Maclennan: Many are recent immigrants and some arrived in Hong Kong a long time ago. Many have come from the Indian sub-continent and there are many thousands of them. Representations have been made to many Members of this House about their predicament. They are not catered for specifically and the Government have not made any provision that will reassure them. That is a serious matter, and it is shown by the fact that the People's Republic of China, in its treaty arrangement with this Government, has not undertaken to recognise those people even as citizens of the People's Republic. The anxieties of that section of the community, for whom we have responsibility, are real and legitimate.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman is implying that some of the stateless persons in Hong Kong are possibly illegal immigrants. If that is the case, to what extent do we have responsibility for them?

Mr. Maclennan: If I had felt that that was the case, I would not have implied it; I would have said it. Those people are in Hong Kong and they are legally resident there. However, they do not enjoy a proper prospect of citizenship following 1997. It is frankly deplorable that a British Government, at the end of empire, should walk out on those people. I am addressing the matter in the context of the requirement of a report from the Governor about his functions. I stress that that report will be narrow and will not enable us to consider what else should and must be done.

The hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) must be aware that we are not debating a fallback position. The provision will come into operation immediately. It does not depend on a change of circumstances in Peking or anywhere else. It is being brought forward now to deal with the present concern of the people of Hong Kong that Hong Kong's economy will be disrupted and the prospects of prosperity undermined if there is an exodus of people in sensitive positions in industry and commerce. Those people want the scheme on which the Government will be required to report to be drawn up quickly. They do not want to wait to see what is coming down the pike or to see whether the Peking Government become like Governments in eastern Europe. They want an assurance now. That is what the Governor will be reporting on.

This proposal is not a great concession. It is a narrow point. Although it is not something that I would dream of opposing, we must regard it for what it is—a pretty thin concession.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): I welcome the new clause. Without any offence to my right hon. and hon. Friends, I have no fear about the effect of any of the measures in the Bill on British immigration policy. That is no part of my argument, and even though I have had representations from my constituents, I hope that I can take as honourable a view as I took at the time of the issue of the Ugandan Asians.

We are dealing with the annual report of the Governor and the way in which he will discharge his functions when the Bill becomes an Act. Therefore, we must recognise that the Bill is a response by her Majesty's Government to events in Peking last year as they were perceived in Hong Kong to be likely to affect the welfare of the territory in future. People in Hong Kong would have been less than human had they not been undoubtedly alarmed and concerned about what was going on in the north and the likely implications for their life style in future.

Although my hon. Friend the Minister is a Home Office Minister, I hope that he will accept that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office cannot be totally divorced from either the contents of this legislation or the Governor's report. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will agree that relations between Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China—and, equally important, relations between her Majesty's Government and the People's Republic of China—are an essential fact of life and must be an essential component of the Governor's report to the House, as proposed in the new clause.

The report and the legislation flow directly from the 1984 joint agreement. That is the basis of legislation determining the relations of the future status of Hong Kong. Under that agreement, the British and Chinese Governments are committed to maintaining the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. My concern about the legislation has always been that, rather than maintaining stability, it may do just the reverse.

There will undoubtedly be further changes in China between now and 1997. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) will allow me to make two points that he has made succinctly and forcefully many times, and which are of fundamental importance to the way in which we look to the future of Hong Kong.

First, there never has been any form of democratic regime in China. There probably in our lifetimes——

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): Nor in Hong Kong, for that matter.

Mr. Adley: I shall refer to that point in a moment.

There has never been any form of democratic regime in China, and the welfare, stability and prosperity of Hong Kong have never depended upon there being any form of democratic regime in China. However bestial one may perceive Chinese Governments to have been from time to time—it is quite arguable whether the present Government are more or less bestial than their predecessors—it is a fact of life that has always governed relations between Britain and China and between Hong Kong and China.

Secondly, as the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) has said from a sedentary position, there has never been any form of democracy in Hong Kong. Many of the unelected people—sometimes rudely known as "fat cats"—who purport to speak for the 5 million or 6 million people of Hong Kong probably have rather less knowledge of how the hawker in the back streets of Hong Kong thinks or what his concerns are than we may sometimes be led to believe.

On the Governor's report, we must recognise that the commitment of both Governments to prosperity and stability relate not only to how we and the people of Hong Kong regard the influence of this agreement on their lives, but how the people of China—the Government of China, in particular—regard the effect of this legislation on their commitment to the maintainance of prosperity and stability.

I hope that my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South will agree that some people who recognise the essential truth may have doubts about the following proposition. My right hon. Friend would agree that the welfare of the people of Hong Kong has always been best served when there have been good relations between the British and Chinese Governments. There has never been advantage to the welfare of the people of Hong Kong when Britain and China have been at loggerheads.

If one accepts that proposition, I am bound to say that the fact that the Bill was produced without any consultation between the British and Chinese Governments, or without the Chinese Government even being informed of Her Majesty's Government's intention to introduce the legislation, is not the best way to ensure the maintenance of good and stable relations between the two countries on which, at the moment and for the foreseeable future, the welfare of the people of Hong Kong depends.

I am worried that the issuance of passports under the Bill will deprive many Hong Kong citizens of their rights as Chinese citizens. I hope that I am not out of order if, in the light of the wording of the new clause, I remind the House of certain aspects of the two memoranda relating to passports and status which were attached to the 1984 agreement. I have the impression that not every hon. Member is entirely familiar with them.

4.15 pm

The first was submitted by the British Government and includes the following proposition:

"All persons who on 30 June 1997 are, by virtue of a connection with Hong Kong, British Dependent Territories Citizens (BDTCs) under the law in force in the United Kingdom will cease to be BDTCs with effect from 1 July 1997, but will be eligible to retain an appropriate status which, without conferring the right of abode in the United Kingdom, will entitle them to continue to use passports issued by the Government of the United Kingdom."

The Chinese Government's brief response includes the following:

"Under the Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China, all Hong Kong Chinese compatriots, whether they are holders of the 'British Dependent Territories Citizens' Passport' or not, are Chinese nationals.

Taking account of the historical background of Hong Kong and its realities, the competent authorities of the Government of the People's Republic of China will, with effect from 1 July 1997, permit Chinese nationals in Hong Kong who were previously called 'British Dependent Territories Citizens' to use travel documents issued by the Government of the United Kingdom for the purpose of travelling to other states and regions."

As both the British and Chinese Governments signed and accepted those memoranda, it is inconceivable that a British or Chinese Government could have introduced this legislation without recognising that they influence at least the spirit and, quite possibly, even the letter of the 1984 agreement. What has always worried me about the legislation and the way in which it has been handled is that, in the eyes of the Chinese Government, the British Government appear deliberately to have abused both the spirit and the letter of the 1984 agreement. That does not serve the people of Hong Kong well.

Mr. Marlow: The Government have said that their objective in the Bill is to keep people, particularly influential and important people, in Hong Kong. Many people who oppose the Bill fear that it will have the opposite effect. So far, the Chinese authorities have made straightforward statements, but if they make it clear that if any Hong Kong Chinese who accepts British citizenship under the provisions of the Bill will not be allowed to stay in Hong Kong or China after 1997, it will drive people out of Hong Kong.

Is it appropriate or right to allow a Governor in his report to react to circumstances in China which would lead him to believe that the provisions already in the Bill would cause people to leave Hong Kong, having the completely contrary effect to the Government's intention? Should he include that in his report and, if so, should Parliament be able to do something about it?

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend makes a sound point. It is likely that the Chinese Government would deduce that people who take up their right to passports are, in effect, giving up their right to Chinese nationality, and therefore face the choice of either remaining in Hong Kong stateless or coming to the United Kingdom. Nobody is likely to want to take the chance of remaining in a country stateless. There is a real risk that the Bill will encourage people to leave Hong Kong.

My anxieties have nothing to do with my views on British immigration policy. I am worried about the effect of such an event on Hong Kong. There have always been many people leaving Hong Kong regularly for elsewhere in the world.

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Adley: I will answer my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) first, and then I shall give way.

There has always been a regular outflow of people. Clearly, it is bound to fluctuate from time to time, but inevitably the constitutional changes that will take place in 1997 will create a great deal of uncertainty. In his annual report the Governor should address the likelihood that,

when the Bill becomes an Act, instead of a regular flow of people from Hong Kong, there will be a risk of creating a flood. I do not use that word to be abusive or to imply that there will be a flood of people to Britain. However, there could be a flood or haemorrhage of people from Hong Kong all at one go.

If one is trying to maintain the stability of a territory, in what worse way could one go about it than introducing legislation that risks creating a sudden haemorrhage of large numbers of people at one time?

Mr. Hill: Does my hon. Friend agree that the last thing that the Chinese Government want—my hon. Friend is far closer to the Chinese Government than I could ever be—is to get rid of the people who are making the enterprise culture in Hong Kong work? It is pretty obvious to me that the Chinese Government are looking forward to a wonderful community that will produce vast amounts of money. I do not accept the argument that the more British passports we issue, the more people will be frightened away by a Chinese Government—quite the reverse. The Chinese Government will know that we have hand-picked those people as part of the enterprise culture, and they will do everything in their power to retain them. After all, if Hong Kong is not a thriving port, it is nothing but a little barren rock.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend is probably closer to the authorities in Taiwan than I am ever likely to be, but that need not preclude our agreeing from time to time on certain matters.

Mr. Budgen: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Adley: In a moment. My hon. Friend must let me answer the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Test (Mr. Hill) first, because it is important.

With respect to some of the Ministers, not at the Home Office but at the Foreign Office, one of the problems is that they were not around when the joint agreement of 1984 was being negotiated, let alone the months and years leading up to it when everyone knew that negotiations had to take place and all sorts of silly phrases such as "leaseback" were in the air. My hon. Friend will remember it. It is probably not too indiscreet of me to say now that I wrote my book called "All change, Hong Kong" in 1983 and had copies scrutinised verbatim by both the Foreign Office and the Chinese Government. Things needed to be said at that time which neither Government felt able to say, and I was the fall guy who said them.

My hon. Friend the Member for Test is right: the spirit of the 1984 agreement is that, basically, Chinese pride was deeply wounded by our acquisition of Hong Kong, and the ambition of successive Chinese Governments, many of whom were far more vitriolic about Hong Kong than the Communist Government have been since 1949, was the return of sovereignty. As my hon. Friend said, they wanted sovereignty to be returned but Hong Kong to be left as it was.

The Chinese are not altruistic. That is the last thing that one could accuse them of being. They are self-interested, and they want to retain the wealth and the benefits that they receive from Hong Kong. Their desire and that of the British Government to maintain stability is enshrined in the wealth and benefits that come from Hong Kong. Of course, my hon. Friend is right: the last thing that the Chinese wanted to do, or want to do now, is to drive away from Hong Kong the very people on whom its prosperity depends. My hon. Friend is perhaps implying that, by this legislation, we are likely to further the departure of people from Hong Kong rather than to still it. I believe that that is the point that my hon. Friend made, and it could well be true.

Mr. Budgen: I wish to take up with my hon. Friend a relevant point. Has not a feature of Hong Kong life since 1984 been the way in which a considerable number of people, without offence to the Chinese authorities, acquired alternative rights of abode in the traditional immigration reception countries of the United States of America, Canada and Australia? Is it not important that the Governor's annual report tells Parliament what is happening about that trend? Many of us fear that, instead of acquiring rights of abode in those countries which have traditionally always welcomed immigrants, people will turn their attention to emigrating to Britain.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend has a point. Given the remarks made by my hon. Friend the Member for Test, I suppose that I should have declared my interest as the chairman of the British-Chinese parliamentary group. As a member of the Select Committee on Members' interests, I am not sure whether I should have done that earlier. However, I hope that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) will not give me too hard a time as I continue my speech.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton South-West (Mr. Budgen) has made a valid point. Recently in Hong Kong, discussing among other matters the one that he has just raised, I discovered that the lowest going price for a passport was $HK50,000 for a passport for the Dominican Republic. Perhaps, in the report that the Governor produces to Parliament, he should also produce an annual chart of the going rate for a passport for any given country. There is nothing particularly new about that.

One aspect to which my hon. Friend did not allude but which certainly concerns me—perhaps the Governor could turn his mind to it—is whether, under the Bill, we shall create a market for jobs with British passports. There is a market in just about everything else in Hong Kong, and I cannot see any reason why jobs that carry the likely right to a passport, under the Bill, will not have a price. Personally, I have never discovered anything in Hong Kong that does not have a price.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Does the hon. Gentleman believe that the Chinese authorities would ever know the identities of those who could not manage to secure a right of abode in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Adley: I had not considered that, but it is an interesting question. I do not know, but I suppose that one would have to look into the procedures. The hon. Gentleman should address to the Minister the question whether all the applications will be handled in total secrecy and how that secrecy is to be maintained. The retention of such secrets in a place like Hong Kong may not be easy——

Mr. Marlow *rose*——

Mr. Adley: I am more than happy to give way to my hon. Friend if other hon. Members do not think that I am taking up too much time.

Mr. Marlow: I believe that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) was looking at and referring to me when he made his intervention. Whether or not the Chinese authorities come to know about those who will have the right of abode under the provisions of the Bill —and they probably will—what is more important than that—

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is an assumption that the hon. Gentleman cannot make.

Mr. Marlow: Well, what is more important than that is that those people who do receive the right of abode will go through their lives with the assumption that the Chinese authorities will get to know that information?

Mr. Adley: That is a somewhat esoteric point, which I had not been going to cover and on which I have no information, because there can be no information. That is an additional concern, but I am anxious——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Will my hon. Friend ask the Minister to assure us on that point, because it is exceedingly important that we know? The Minister is sitting on the Treasury Bench and he should know.

Mr. Adley: I am not joining an attempt to filibuster the Bill. I do not like the Bill—*[Interruption.]* I do not wish to be unkind. The House voted to give the Bill its Second Reading and I gather that the mood of the House is to allow the Bill to pass, but I am anxious to put on record some of my thoughts and worries, which should concern other hon. Members, which, I am sure, bother Sir David Wilson and which I hope he will be minded to include in his report.

The last two or three points that have been made have related to the sort of place that Hong Kong is. It is a mercurial place, with one of the most irresponsible presses in the free world, for which sensation and rumour are the order of the day.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Minister of State is not in his place. When he was last in Hong Kong, having read the *South China Morning Post* and other newspapers and believed what was in them, he thereupon made a statement about how many passports the French and West German and other Governments would offer the citizens of Hong Kong. I must advise him that it must be quite some time since any Minister from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can have achieved such a swift response from friendly Governments, remonstrating at what a British Minister had said. Even the Canadian Government were constrained to object to the British Government about what my right hon. Friend the Minister of State had said.

Therefore, I hope that care will now be taken by Ministers and that they will recognise that, although we do not have to like or admire the Chinese, we must recognise the facts of life and that they are there and will assume sovereignty. Their good will and their interpretation of this legislation are of vital importance to the people of Hong Kong. Therefore, the British Government and the Chinese Government must stay in contact. They must talk to each other and keep each other informed of their thinking.

I have expressed in answer to an intervention my fear that the Bill will create a haemorrhage of people from Hong Kong, the very haemorrhage that the Bill is supposed to stem. I hope that I am wrong. In my view, those in Hong Kong who have clamoured for the Bill have taken a major step, some wittingly and some unwittingly, to undermine relations between Britain and China over the 1984 agreement. If I may say so, they do not and have not served well those for whom they purport to speak and by whom they have never been elected.

I am extremely concerned about the Bill. I hope that everything that I have said turns out to be entirely wrong. I believe that, in itself, it is an undermining of the 1984 joint agreement, upon which Hong Kong's future undoubtedly ultimately depends.

4.30 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): First, I welcome the new clause. A number of hon. Members, including myself, urged on Second Reading that an annual report should be presented. I am grateful to the Home Office and to the Government generally for tabling and introducing the new clause. I agree with the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) about its limited purpose and narrow intentions. Nevertheless, it provides an important peg and an opportunity for the House in the years to come, especially between now and 1997, to monitor political events and developments in Hong Kong.

I wish to dwell for a short while on the mechanics of the presentation of the report and the opportunities for the House to perform a monitoring role. The report will be presented to the Secretary of State for the Home Department. We have had an annual debate on Hong Kong over recent years and I assume that the report will be an important part of the papers available to us when we debate Hong Kong in the future.

If the annual report is to be presented to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, it seems that that will not provide the full parliamentary scrutiny that I would like. I suggest that the Government and all the parties represented in the House consider the possibility of setting up a joint committee of the Select Committees on Home Affairs and on Foreign Affairs, which would be charged with the responsibility for monitoring political, social and economic events in Hong Kong. That would enable the Select Committee machinery to produce reports for the information of the House, and would provide the important information that Members will require when they come annually to debate the report that will be presented by the Governor and other matters relating to the affairs of Hong Kong.

The Select Committee on Home Affairs will be able to make inquiries about the annual report, but I am concerned that there appears to be no machinery to enable either the Foreign Secretary or the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs to have a locus. The House must do everything in its power to build confidence and try to reinforce confidence in the minds of the people of Hong Kong, who remain extremely anxious about their position during the years before 1997, by creating new extra-governmental institutions that will provide powers and opportunities to hon. Members to express concerns and anxieties as we proceed to 1997. If my suggestions were adopted, we would have a regular and sustained opportunity to ring the alarm bells if hon. Members or Select Committees were alarmed about anything.

The hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) has great knowledge and experience of Asia, especially China and Hong Kong, and I bow to that experience. I listened

intently to what he said, and agreed with much of it. However, I must emphasise what has not been emphasised in earlier debates, and certainly not today: the haemorrhage is already here. Every week 1,000 people are leaving Hong Kong, and recent events have done nothing to strengthen their confidence about their well-being and safety, and that of their families, up to and after 1997.

Mr. Adley: I do not know when the hon. Gentleman last checked the figures, but I did so six or eight weeks ago. In the 10 months after the events of June last year, there was a marginal decrease in the number of people leaving Hong Kong. I hear what he says, but if he checks the facts and figures he may find that the alarming totals of which he has spoken are not borne out in reality.

Mr. Madden: I was in Hong Kong in April, when we were given that figure of 1,000 people a week. I have just consulted my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours)—who was in Hong Kong a fortnight ago—and he has confirmed that that figure is about right. We must not quibble about 100 either way; we should agree that substantial emigration from Hong Kong is now taking place. The Bill is an attempt to stem that haemorrhage now and in the foreseeable future. It does not serve us well to dwell on the minutiae of the spirit of past agreements between China and Britain when we are dealing with events after 1997.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To some extent it is not real emigration. Many people are simply trying to establish a right of abode in other countries. Having established that right, they often return to Hong Kong to carry on their business activities. There is a name for those people in Hong Kong—astronauts. In the main, they go to Canada to establish a right of abode—while safeguarding their short-term private interests—and then return to pursue their commercial activities. Their loyalties often remain to the colony, where they want to stay in the long term.

Mr. Madden: My hon. Friend is right. Let me reassure the hon. Member for Christchurch and others that, even if passports giving the right of abode are issued under the legislation—I understand the matter is being dealt with urgently—the first passports are to be issued later this year; there is no guarantee, and there should be no fear in the minds of hon. Members, that all 50,000 plus their dependants will seek to come to the United Kingdom. In my opinion, and in that of many other people whom I have consulted, not all those entitled to right of abode would wish to exercise that right. They would go to Canada, America, Australia and elsewhere, where they would be admitted.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): The hon. Gentleman said that there was great urgency over the issue of the passports. What is the great urgency?

Mr. Madden: The great urgency stems from the men and women in Hong Kong who still have vivid memories about what happened in mainland China last year and vivid recollections of what has been happening in China during the past 12 months, and they marked that in their tens of thousands in Hong Kong a few days ago. Their anxieties are about whether they will be able to live in peace and security in Hong Kong after 1997 when the sovereignty of Hong Kong is handed to China.

To pick up the point made by my my hon. Friend the Member for Workington, many of the people who are now seeking to leave Hong Kong are going abroad to obtain the right of settlement and of abode. The only way in which they can qualify for that is to leave Hong Kong to settle temporarily in one of a number of countries to obtain nationality and a right of abode which they will wish to exercise only if life in Hong Kong becomes intolerable after 1997.

Mr. Tebbit: The hon. Gentleman may be using the word "urgency" in an odd sense. He means that the people of Hong Kong are extremely anxious, not that the problem is urgent. As he rightly says, the problem will not arise until 1997, and in the meantime the people of Hong Kong have found another method of dealing with it—establishing a right of abode in other countries. Therefore, the problems cannot be urgent in the sense that some great disaster will befall those people if passports are not issued this year, next year or the year after. In fact, they do not need them until 1997.

Mr. Madden: The right hon. Gentleman is either being particularly obtuse or is seeking to continue his campaign which fizzled out on the night of the Second Reading debate when the votes were counted.

The urgency is to get under way the scheme that is enshrined in the Bill and to make the passports available to stop the haemorrhage that is now under way. That is why I say that the matter is urgent. That is the view that I expressed on Second Reading to explain my unwillingness to oppose the Bill even though I recognise its fundamental defects. I abstained on Second Reading and I shall be supporting various amendments tonight, but I will not oppose the Bill on Third Reading.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Adley: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Madden: If I am to fulfil my promise not to detain the House for any length of time I must conclude by welcoming the new clause. I hope that it will be carried. If the Minister intends to reply to the debate, I hope that he will at least say that he is willing to consider my suggestions about the procedures of the House strengthening and reinforcing the confidence that lies at the heart of the Bill and in the minds of the men and women of Hong Kong and perhaps to have further discussion about how they may be fulfilled.

Mr. Tebbit: Before you, Madam Deputy Speaker, came to the Chair, Mr. Speaker was being extraordinarily kind in allowing the debate to run quite wide, I think on the basis that almost anything that might be raised at this stage might go into the Governor's report if such a report were to be made. However, I do not want to take undue advantage of that and at this stage I have only two points to make about the new clause.

I preface my remarks by saying that since the House gave the Bill its Second Reading on the night when 80 members of the governing party either voted against the Bill or deliberately refused to support it, events have moved on a little, particularly in one respect. During that debate—I do not know to what extent it influenced any of my right hon. and hon. Friends—we were told by Ministers that the Chinese Government were not upset by

[Mr. Tebbit]

the measure and were quite content. The very next day a spokesman for the Chinese Government made it plain, as my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) said, that the Chinese Government are bitterly opposed to it and regard it as a breach of the accord which was reached between the two Governments, and so it clearly is.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *indicated dissent.*

4.45 pm

Mr. Tebbit: It is no good my hon. Friend shaking his head. The Chinese Government, who are at least as likely to have it right as this Government, regard the measure as a breach of the accord. There is no doubt in my mind that that is so. Certainly it was completely wrong for Ministers to tell the House that the Chinese Government did not regard it as a breach. After all, the only people who can say whether the Chinese Government do or do not regard it as a breach are the Chinese Government themselves, and they made their position plain.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend the Minister shakes his head. I think that I can confirm to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) that the Chinese Government consider the measure to be a breach of the agreement, in the spirit and possibly in the letter, and that was why I read out in detail the two memoranda.

Will my right hon Friend comment on a point on which the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) would not give way? There is one point that we should put on the record, and it should also be part of the Governor's report, because he is responsible, as her Majesty's Government's representative in Hong Kong, for maintaining that stability.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the thousands of people in Hong Kong who were demonstrating. That is their right. But under the 1984 agreement there is a vital clause of desperate importance to the people of Hong Kong, and that is that, between 1990 and 1997, the Chinese Government will not interfere in the day-to-day running of Hong Kong and meddle in its internal politics. Equally, there is a commitment that the people of Hong Kong will not meddle in the politics of China. The temptation for the latter to do so is immense, but the danger of their doing so is equally immense. Therefore, I hope that my right hon. Friend will agree that within the Governor's report we should have an indication that he is doing his best to make the people of Hong Kong aware of the risk that they run by constantly seeking to have their cake and eat it.

Mr. Tebbit: I am sure that my hon. Friend is right. There is a real risk that, if the Government of China see what they believe to be constant breaches of the accord on what may be broadly called our side—the United Kingdom Government and the Government of Hong Kong—they will not feel unduly bound to stick to it themselves, and that would be a great pity. In the post-war era, every agreement that we have made with the Chinese Government has been kept. They may not have liked it at times and they may have made it plain that they did not like it, but they have stuck to their word. I regret that that Government should now see this Government, of which I was a member when the accord was made—the Government whom I support—as being in breach of an accord that has been entered into solemnly.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I did not intend to intervene in my right hon. Friend's speech, but I must do so to make it clear that the Government are quite certain and know very well that this measure is not in breach of the joint agreement and accord, and a close inspection of the quotations read by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley), which I hope will be reproduced in *Hansard*, will demonstrate that.

Mr. Tebbit: The Minister gives the Government's view. That is not my view. Perhaps more importantly, it is not the view of the Government of China, altough on Second Reading we were told that it was the view of the Government of China.

Mr. Madden: Before he moves on to other issues, why is the right hon. Gentleman seeking to apologise for that gang of geriatric murderers? Does he not recognise that many people in Hong Kong and elsewhere believe that the massacres which occurred in China last year were an excellent reason why Britain should have called an end to the accords over Hong Kong and 1997? Does he not realise that so many people were outraged by those events that they will dismiss his comments now as an obscene apology for geriatric murderers, who should not be given an inch, and that we should defend the interests of the men and women of Hong Kong in every way that we can?

Mr. Tebbit: I do not wish to provoke the hon. Gentleman into getting to the stage where he is asking my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to declare war on the Government of China, which would appear to be the logical extension of his remarks. I hope that he is keeping a tally of the number of people who have been shot dead in the present civil disturbances in the Soviet Union, as well as those who were shot dead in the disturbances in Tiananmen square a year or so ago.

Mr. Budgen: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Tebbit: May I proceed for a moment? I do not wish to get into a debate with any hon. Member about the regime in China.

Mr. Madden: What about South Africa?

Mr. Tebbit: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will contain himself for a moment. I do not wish to get into a debate about the communist regime in China. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that I support any communist regimes anywhere in the world, he is looking at the wrong man and the wrong side of the House. However, I do not wish to be distracted further down that road. I want to follow up some of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) concerning the impact of the proposed report by the governor and how we would deal with it in the House.

Such a report would be a nice thing to have. It will make a nice piece of work for someone to write an article about in *The Times* or even talk about on Sky television where perhaps it would get a larger audience—[HON. MEMBERS: "What about the *Evening Standard*?"] Yes, even the *Evening Standard*—there are many newspapers which are well worth reading.

How will the report be useful to us in the House? Let us suppose that the Governor's report contains material which we regard as a suitable subject not merely for debate but for a critical debate or even for a vote. What would we vote on? What would be the motion? What effect would it have?

Mr. Madden: We could take note.

Mr. Tebbit: Indeed, as the hon. Gentleman says we could have a take-note debate, but that is all that we would be able to do about it.

Although I welcome the new clause, we should not have any misunderstandings that it will make any difference whatsoever to anything that the Governor does in the name of this House, as we have no control over him if we enact the Bill in its present form.

Mr. Budgen: Will my right hon. Friend consider a suggestion for how we might discover the attitude of the Chinese Government? It seems that there have been many suggestions in newsprint about what they believe, and whether the Bill constitutes a breach of the 1984 agreement. If my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State is correct, it is easy for him. Our Government are in constant touch with the Government of China. He could produce a document from the Chinese Government, duly authorised by them explaining that they do not regard the right of entry, which will be granted by the Bill, as in any way a breach of the 1984 agreement. We need not correspond through newsprint. If what my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary says is true, the Chinese Government will be open, and will say so in an official communication.

Mr. Tebbit: I do not want to be taken too far down that line, but it is quite clear that if the Government of China heard the accusations made by their own spokesman in the press saying that the Bill is in breach of the undertaking, naturally, as a Government having friendly relationships with our Government, they would have been the first to make a statement correcting it, and would have sent a telegram to the Foreign Office—I am not sure whether the Foreign Office communicates with the Home Office about such matters—setting the record straight. It could have been laid upon the Table and we would all have been comforted by it.

Mr. Adley *rose*——

Mr. Tebbit: I really do not want to detain the House over this issue, but I will give way.

Mr. Adley: The hon. Member for Bradford, West made an impassioned denunciation of the old men in Peking, and we all agree that on the Richter scale of beastliness, it would be hard to find anyone who registers more than they do at the moment. But surely that is not the point. Our responsibility is to the people of Hong Kong and to the real world. The Chinese Government are the people with whom we have to deal, like it or not. Of course we all wish that the Government of China were more like the Government of Luxembourg, but they are not and we have to deal with matters as they are.

Mr. Tebbit: That is absolutely true. There is little chance that by berating those old men in this Chamber we will do anything to bring a beneficial change in China. As my hon. Friend says, it will make matters worse.

One other subject has been mentioned in connection with the amendment which I do not think was covered very well by the Labour amendments which have been selected; that is the position of people who may become stateless after 1997. I am not clear about the attitude of the Government towards those people. It would be helpful to all of us if the Under-Secretary were to make the Government's stance absolutely clear. Is it that, if any such persons are left stateless after 1997, they will be automatically granted either British citizenship or rights of abode, or do the Government have some other position?

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) said that many such people had come from the Indian sub-continent. If that is where they came from, they might have a right to return.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: As I understand the position in regard to people who went to Hong Kong from the Indian sub-continent, they gave up any rights that they might have had to return when they agreed to take British citizenship offered in Hong Kong. I think that it is far from satisfactory that the British Government should now be taking a position whereby those people will be left with no proper passport or home following 1997, unless amendments are made to the Bill.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend has a good point. If those people were induced by the British Government to go to Hong Kong by the issue of a document which deprived them of their nationality and will prevent them from returning to the countries from whence they came, it seems, even to me—I am not notably soft on immigration issues—that there is a case for saying that they should be found a home. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary can give an estimate of the numbers concerned, and we could deduct that from the numbers which would otherwise be admitted under the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Those people who are properly resident in Hong Kong can apply for British dependent territory citizenship now. In 1997 British dependent territory citizens of Chinese descent will automatically become Chinese citizens. There is a question mark beside those who are not of Chinese descent. If they do not become Chinese citizens—that is a matter for the Chinese Government—they will be British overseas citizens, carrying a British overseas passport which will enable them to travel round the world to every country where there are residents who hold such passports. They will not have the right of abode in the United Kingdom, but they will have the right of abode in Hong Kong, and that will be guaranteed to them under the joint agreement.

Mr. Tebbit: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making it clear that they will not be left as flying Dutchmen—perhaps flying Hong Kongmen would be a better expression—for ever circling the world and never being allowed to alight anywhere. If my hon. Friend can assure me that under the terms of the agreement the Chinese Government accept that they will have a right of abode in Hong Kong, it seems to me that there is no need for us to make specific provision for them. In the event of the Chinese Government not carrying out the undertaking, for some reason, there would be an emergency. We could deal with it in the way in which we always deal with emergencies. I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for clearing up that point.

5 pm

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): I intend to speak on the two subjects raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit). The first related to urgency. I agree with the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) that the matter is urgent because of the brain drain, which has grown worse, in absolute numbers, compared with a couple of years ago. If one talks to representatives of British companies operating in Hong Kong, or with interests or investments in Hong Kong, it immediately becomes clear that they are beginning to feel the damage that is caused by the acceleration of the brain drain.

I have been told of key managers leaving Hong Kong to go to Australia, Canada and the United States. We are familiar with the recent raid by Qantas Airways in an attempt to take away 250 mechanics from the Hong Kong aircraft engineering industry Fortunately, the raid was unsuccessful, or had very limited success. That is an example of what we shall face in the future if we do not do something about it now. It is essential, therefore, that Parliament should pass the Bill.

The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) referred to the fact that many Hong Kong Chinese go to Canada or other countries to get the right of residence there, either through themselves or their families, and that many of them come back to Hong Kong. I know that many want to return to Hong Kong, but many of them, I fear, having established residence in Canada and having sent their children to school in Canada—for example, in Vancouver, which is a very agreeable city—find it much more difficult to return to Hong Kong and work there than they had expected when they left to go to Canada. We should not be too encouraged about the numbers who return to Hong Kong in those circumstances.

That is why this Bill is important. It provides a passport for 50,000 heads of families without their having to go and reside in another country for several years, with the consequence that most of them will not return to Hong Kong.

Mr. Marlow: I ask my right hon. Friend to transpose himself and think of himself as a successful Hong Kong Chinese citizen who is quite well-to-do and who has enough money to take his family with him, after having been offered a British passport. If he were to take the view that life after 1997 under a Hong Kong Chinese Government would be unacceptable and not in the best interests of his family, would he wait until 1997, or would he get out now so that he could re-establish himself and his family and his children's education at the first possible opportunity?

Sir Peter Blaker: I should certainly stay. I do not see why my hon. Friend thinks that I would want to exchange 15 per cent. income tax for 40 per cent. income tax, or that I should want to exchange the agreeably warm climate of Hong Kong for the sometimes chilly climate of England. My hon. Friend is right off the rails.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I refer the hon. Gentleman back to the question of emigration to Canada. The reason why people are going to Canada now and returning in the way that the right hon. Gentleman does not suggest that they are, but which I know they are, is the nature of the Canadian scheme. They have to go now. If they had the option of delaying their emigration to Canada, they would surely do so. It is not that they go to Canada uniquely to establish a right of abode; often they set up businesses in Canada and then return to their businesses in Hong Kong. Frequently those companies intend to trade.

Sir Peter Blaker: I agree with the hon. Gentleman's main point, although our assessment of how many people return to Hong Kong is different.

My second point relates to the Eurasians and Indians in Hong Kong. The Under-Secretary of State knows that I have been in correspondence with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on the matter. I do not intend to repeat everything that I set out in that correspondence. It is right, however, that the matter should be raised, since I hope that I shall receive reassurance on the point from my hon. Friend at the end of the debate.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary has already explained that the people to whom I refer will have neither British passports nor Chinese passports: they will have British national (overseas) or British dependent territories citizen passports. The Eurasians and the Indians are concerned that they will not have a right of abode elsewhere. They fear—whether they are right or wrong I do not say—that after 1997 they will not be so generously treated as they were during the period of British rule.

I have received representations from Mr. Eric Ho, a distinguished former senior civil servant, the president of the Welfare League which looks after the interests of the Eurasians. He refers to the great loyalty to the Crown and to this country of the Eurasians in Hong Kong. He quoted an extract from the dispatch by General Maltby after the capture of Hong Kong by the Japanese in December 1941. General Maltby said:

> "In closing my despatch I wish to pay especial tribute to the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps . . . To quote examples seems almost invidious, but I should like to place on record the superb gallantry of No. 3 (Eurasian) Company at Wong Nei Chong Gap".

That is a striking example of the loyalty that the Eurasian population of Hong Kong have always had to this country. Mr. Ho estimates that only 1,000 passports would be required, not for heads of families but for individuals, to provide for the needs of the Eurasian population.

Mr. Adley: Will my right hon. Friend address his mind to a point that keeps worrying me during the debate: that 50,000 passports will largely go to 50,000 influential, articulate people who know their way around? Is my right hon. Friend willing to contemplate the following proposition: if by giving such an advantage to people who are in a position to apply we thereby destroy the atmosphere for the remaining 5 million Hong Kong citizens who are not so articulate and well connected, shall we be serving all the people of Hong Kong well?

Sir Peter Blaker: That is not my assessment of the likely effect on the morale of those who remain in Hong Kong. It is a difficult problem, but I believe that we are right to do what we are planning to do. In my view, it would be possible to put the figure a little higher than 50,000 heads of families, but that proposal is not before us.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: On Second Reading, my right hon. Friend referred to the Tootal case. He said that it wants to bring 25 heads of household to this country. Given the

number of managers who are eligible, and given also the number of applicants that there are bound to be, it is most unlikely that all 25 managers will be successful in their applications. How can my right hon. Friend take the view that that will be good for the morale of the Tootal work force, let alone for the work forces of other companies, if that should prove to be divisive? What about the other managers that Tootal has not chosen for selection but who consider that they should be selected? The proposal will be totally divisive when it comes to the management of work forces in Hong Kong. It cannot possibly have the result for which the Government hope.

Sir Peter Blaker: Since the Second Reading debate I have had conversations with Mr. Geoffrey Maddrell, the managing director of Tootal, on that precise point. My hon. Friend is wrong to say that Tootal wants to bring 25 managers to this country. Tootal wants them to stay in Hong Kong, and that is what they want to do; indeed, most of them are working in south China. However, Mr. Maddrell acknowledged that there would be a problem if all the 25 are unable to obtain passports. Nevertheless, he believes that it is preferable that some of them should obtain passports rather than that none of them should. That, I believe, is a tenable position.

Reverting to the question of the Indians, it has been suggested that they were induced by a former British Government to Hong Kong, but that was not the reality. After the second world war, they made a choice between going for British nationality in Hong Kong or for Indian nationality. The Indian population has played a distinguished role in Hong Kong, particularly in commerce, and has been important to the colony's economy. The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) suggested that there are many thousands of Indians in Hong Kong, but he was overstating the case.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary says in a letter to me:

> "If, against all expectations, any solely British national with no claim to Chinese nationality came under severe pressure to leave Hong Kong, the Government of the day would be expected to consider with considerable and particular sympathy their case for admission to the United Kingdom."

He was referring explicitly to the Eurasians, but I believe that he was intending a similar assurance to be given in relation to the Indians. Can my hon. Friend the Minister reaffirm that assurance, and perhaps go further in his response today?

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I cannot go beyond my right hon. and learned Friend's assurance, because it was intended to cover, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) said, Eurasians and other Asians —the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong who may not have Chinese citizenship after 1997. Who they will be is unclear because those who have Chinese citizenship is not something for us to determine—it is a matter for the People's Republic of China.

Those belonging to the ethnic minorities who are not included and who are legitimately in Hong Kong not only have the opportunity of becoming British overseas citizens, as I described earlier, with their situation guaranteed under the joint declaration, but my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has made it clear —and I am happy to repeat now—that if pressure is put upon them despite the joint declaration and their rights under it, and if it became difficult for them to lead their lives in Hong Kong, we would look most carefully at any claim to right of settlement here, outside the rules.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): I am by no means satisfied that those who will have British overseas passports and British overseas status after 1997 will be welcome in Hong Kong. The Chinese are not noted for their welcome of other ethnic groups within their own society. I have no reason to believe that the Chinese Government will take a particularly sympathetic view of the presence of the Indian members of the Hong Kong community after 1997.

It is unfortunate that the Government have come to the House today without being able to give precise figures for how many such people there will be. We have a duty to bring them here if we have to do so, so I fear that we may expect substantial extra numbers after 1997, over and above those catered for in the Bill, to whom we shall have to offer homes in this country. It is important for the House to know how many people there may be, and that that estimate should be incorporated in the overall total being considered today, rather than have us return to those people at a later stage—as I warn the House we shall inevitably have to do.

It is extremely important that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary reports regularly to the House, as the hon. Member for Bradford, West, (Mr. Madden) suggested, when the Governor reports to him. Nothing in the Bill says that he has to do so. I should like a categorical assurance from my hon. Friend the Minister that the Home Secretary will report at least annually in detail to the House on what he has been told by the Governor. That is the least assurance that the House should seek.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: If my hon. Friend is saying that there should be an annual report made by the Governor to our right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary and that it should be available to the House, that is exactly what new clause 12 will achieve.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I am delighted to hear it. Perhaps I misunderstand the new clause. I thought that it only required the Governor to report to the Home Secretary —but if I have misunderstood the new clause, I am delighted.

It is also extremely important that the Governor should report on the speed and percentage of take-up in each category. I share the belief of the hon. Member for Bradford, West that there will be a sense of urgency among those in Hong Kong to make their applications for inclusion in the categories—not least because of the number of applications likely to be made against the number of available places. As soon as the Bill becomes an Act, the Government will face a deluge of applications. There is a great danger that, when my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary comes to the House next year with the Governor's first report, all 50,000 places will have been filled, which would be a thoroughly unsatisfactory state of affairs. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister agrees.

5.15 pm

I again ask my hon. Friend to tell the House what guidance will be given to the Governor on the speed which he should fill the available places. If the scheme is to be

successful, and if it is to be spread among the people whom we are attempting to benefit and to persuade to remain in Hong Kong, there must be an annual quota.

Residents aged 30 to 40 are more than likely to have young teenage children. My understanding is that, as soon as those children reach 18, they will cease to qualify under the Bill and therefore will be separated from their families, should their families decide to come to this country to live. That cannot be something that the Government envisage. It would impose enormous extra pressure on any Hong Kong citizen with a BDTC passport who wants to make an application under the scheme. If residents have children who will shortly be 18, they will rush to make an application.

When one considers the number of people involved against the number of places available, it is horrifying to think that anyone would seriously propose that the scheme have a stabilising effect on Hong Kong. I refer to the guidance on the working of the Act, which my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) attempted, rightly, to have incorporated in the Bill. Unfortunately, that amendment is not before the House today.

In the business and management category, 342,800 people are eligible under the scheme, but only 19,703 will be allocated places. In engineering, there are 57,300 possible candidates but only 3,230 places. In medicine and science, 44,700 would qualify but only 2,584 would be offered places. Members of my old profession, lawyers, will do particularly badly. Less than 1 per cent. of the 3,700 eligible will be allocated one of the 323 places. [HON. MEMBERS: "Too many".] I agree that we could do without further competition, but how will it stabilise the legal profession in Hong Kong if only 323 of their number will be offered passports? I await with breathless excitement to hear how my hon. Friend the Minister will satisfy me on that point.

The Governor will also have to report on the categories for residents in sensitive service and in the disciplined services. The number of places stated in the Bill to be available to those who have given outstanding service to the Crown, and who might be in danger if they remain in Hong Kong after 1997, is 6,300. Where does that figure come from? Is my hon. Friend the Minister satisfied that 6,300 is the number of heads of households who fall into that category? Nothing in the Second Reading or Committee debates, which I read in great detail, sets out how that figure of 6,300 was arrived at.

Mr. Butcher: If the House accepts that the 50,000 places will be rapidly allocated and that my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) will be among those asking for more categories of people to be admitted, are we not debating the beginning of the minimum bid, from which the bidding will go up when we come to debate the Governor's reports in years to come?

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I agree. When the 50,000 places have been filled and an awful lot of people in categories to which places clearly must be allocated have been left, then the 50,000 which the Government have undertaken as a maximum will have to be breached. That is one of the reasons why I am worried and why it is essential that regular reports to this House show how we are progressing, so that we can take whatever steps are necessary either to allow more people in—I would find that difficult—or somehow to stem the flood in other categories and to alter the way in which we choose those who will come.

I hope that the Minister will tell me how the 6,300 figure miraculously appeared and how—there is nothing in the memorandum to tell us—if there are more than 6,300 in this category, a choice will be made between them. If I read the memorandum correctly, the points system does not apply to this group.

The points system does apply, however, to the disciplined services. Seven thousand places have been allocated to those services, spread across eight separate services on a proportional basis. Here, too, it is inconceivable that many of these services will have enough allocated places to satisfy the demand or to stabilise the position in Hong Kong, the latter being one of the two fundamental requirements that the Government seek to meet in the Bill.

I am sorry to say that I am profoundly disturbed by the proposal that the memorandum should be adopted, but I welcome the new clause, because it will at least give the House a regular report on how the measure is being implemented.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): I have followed my hon. Friend's argument, which he has expressed with a certain elegant scepticism, but I am left wondering what the logical conclusion of it is. It seems to me that it can either be that more people ought to be offered more places or that no one ought to be offered any places, which brings us back to the Government's point of view.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I am grateful to my hon. Friend; sad to say, the amendment that I tabled has not been chosen by Mr. Speaker, so I cannot enlighten my hon. Friend on what the correct solution is.

In my view, there are two categories that we have an honourable commitment to allow into this country: first, people who have done service that will put them in danger after 1997. I have dealt with them in some detail. Secondly, there are those who will be left stateless or with inadequate passports after 1997—especially people from the Indian subcontinent, about whom I spoke earlier. If we gave the right of abode and citizenship to those two categories, we would fulfil our commitment to Hong Kong and the commitment that the Government have given to the people of this country, which was outlined so eloquently on Second Reading by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit). In that way, we should avoid flooding this country with immigrants from other places, given that we are an overcrowded island experiencing great difficulties already with assimilating the immigrants whom we have taken in in the past 30 years.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham (Mr. Lloyd) for tabling the new clause in answer to some of the debates that took place in Committee. I admire the courteous and professional way in which he and my hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire, North (Mr. Maude) conducted our debates in Committee, which greatly helped the passage of the Bill.

Although I welcome an annual report, it has already been pointed out that the new clause is deficient, in that the report is to the Secretary of State, not necessarily to

Parliament. So the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) will not get his way if the new clause is passed without amendment.

Such a report may well go to the Secretary of State for the Home Department; the Home Department is not known for releasing the least bit of information that could possibly be classified as confidential. I very much doubt whether the report will see the light of day outside a few offices and desks in the Home Department—unless the Home Office carries out what I understood to be an undertaking from the Minister that he would present the report to the House. That presentation and the report's contents are important.

If I understand the Government's argument aright, the report will contain no reference to categories of people not accommodated under the Bill—the Eurasian and Indian population, and the spouses who will be dealt with in an amendment to be moved later. Categories not dealt with in the Bill will be dealt with exactly as they would be under the British Nationality Act 1981. So the categories for which my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), in a caring and understandable way, sought exemption cannot possibly be included in such a report.

The argument that they should be accommodated by the Bill and dealt with in the annual report is symptomatic of the chaos that the Bill will create in Hong Kong because of the jealousies and hard feelings that will be generated when one person is selected and another is not. One category, for whom we have already heard special pleading on the Floor of the House, will not be accommodated by the Bill. The whole process of trying to select one person in preference to another is divisive and will profoundly undermine confidence in the future of Hong Kong.

Mr. Butcher: Is not the House coming to a general agreement that the Bill is custom designed to alienate more people than it placates? Are we not setting in train a series of rather unpleasant rows for the remaining years until 1997? Is this a way to draw up legislation and immigration and community relations policy in the colony? Will we not have to come back to the House in coming years for rows about categories of people who have not been successful, about further categories that should be considered and about further numbers? Surely the House should think again, even at this late stage, about the time-bomb that we are priming for future rows?

Mr. Wells: My hon. Friend is entirely right, and it will be worse than he has said. Although there is no appeal process, the people of Hong Kong are well educated and perfectly capable of sending letters. Most of those whom I have met—some of them from humble backgrounds—are capable, for instance, of writing to my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South to outline their dissatisfaction, which I am sure he would then bring to the attention of Ministers.

I believe that the Minister introduced the idea of the annual report because of the constitutional outrage contained in clause 1(1), which specifies:

"the Secretary of State shall register as British citizens up to 50,000 persons recommended to him for that purpose by the Governor of Hong Kong".

It is quite wrong that a governor in a colonial country should be able to register people as British citizens without reference to an elected Minister who is responsible to this House.

By introducing the annual report—I trust the Minister's undertaking that he will produce it for the House's inspection and debate, but that is not certain—the Minister will be accountable for the actions and decisions taken by the Governor and his appointed sub-committees. That is an outrageous innovation, to which we shall regret. That is the kind of ingenious and generous way in which my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham has tried to meet the point. The Bill is difficult for him. He finds it difficult to change one jot or iota because of the consequences of so doing for immigration policy, particularly the interpretation of our law as enshrined in the British Nationality Act 1981.

5.30 pm

I hope that the report will state how many people applied for British citizenship, how many were refused and why they were refused. Many of these applications will be made by private sector companies and groups and even by people within the civil service, but there will be no explanation of why others have been left out. That will cause much resentment, and I hope that the report will explain why they have been left out.

Equally, the report should say how many people have been accepted and why they were accepted. The Bill has a specific purpose—to retain those in the service of the Government or of private sector businesses in Hong Kong. We need to know why they were offered British citizenship. We want to know how many people stayed, having been offered British citizenship in Hong Kong. My right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South and many people from OMELCO—I am glad to see that we welcomed the leader of OMELCO—believe that, once people have been granted British citizenship, they will remain in Hong Kong. But someone with young children who wishes them to continue their education will wish to move to Britain soon after they receive citizenship.

We should see whether the Bill is working as the Government said it would—whether it is retaining those people in Hong Kong up to 1997 and beyond. Surely the argument is they should stay beyond 1997 and continue the amazing success of Hong Kong.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend is on the verge of making a point that has not been picked up by every hon. Member. Once these people are granted British passports, they are British citizens, but we would have no record of whether they have come to live in Britain, because we do not keep a record of British passport holders entering Britain. All we would know is whether they had left Hong Kong. We would not know where they had gone, whether they were intent on staying away or whether they intended to reside here. Many of them will be highly talented people, which is why they are being selected.

I can imagine the advertisements in the Hong Kong newspapers from British companies, once it is known that they have British passports, seeking to recruit them to work in Britain. They would be good employees for those British companies and they would have the right of abode here because they would be full British citizens. The door would be wide open for massive emigration from Hong Kong—the complete opposite of what the Government say they want.

Mr. Wells: My right hon. Friend is entirely right, and shares my concern. These people, once they have a British passport enabling them to travel freely, will have the

[Mr. Wells]

opportunity to offer their services to many of the highest bidding companies not only in this country but elsewhere in the world.

We have been assured by the Minister that the Hong Kong Government keep a record of those leaving the colony and of their destination, but they would not know whether they got off the plane on the way back to Britain or, as my right hon. Friend says, whether they had arrived here and are still here. It is essential that the report records those who have stayed in Hong Kong and those who have not, so that we can judge whether the Government's action is working as they said it would.

As we all know, the success of Hong Kong depends not on our giving 50,000 heads of households a British passport and citizenship but on the development of relations with China. If the purpose of the Bill is to try to reinforce confidence in the future of Hong Kong, the annual report should record and detail how relationships have been conducted between Hong Kong and China, not only at ministerial level, about which I hope we will hear, but at official level. With robust, continuous and persuasive effort and contact with the Chinese Government, confidence will build and hon. Members will be able to ascertain whether the Hong Kong Government are fulfilling the job we expect them to do—to try to get on with China, for the benefit of Hong Kong's future, as well as they can. That point was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley).

The Bill's success will depend on whether the Government of Hong Kong have made the right proposals for democracy and a directly elected legislature in Hong Kong to replace the British Government, who have provided the Government in Hong Kong so successfully over the years. The successful functioning of that body and the participation of the Hong Kong people in leadership decisions will ensure that Hong Kong continues to operate as a capitalist enclave under democratic government, as the agreement of 1984, which we are treaty-bound to honour, sets out.

Mr. Adley: Hong Kong has succeeded despite there being no worthwhile democratic institutions there. As a matter of debate, will my hon. Friend comment on two points? First, why would changing that improve Hong Kong? Secondly, as the joint agreement calls for the maintenance of stability and prosperity, why does my hon. Friend think that fundamental change to the democratic institutions is in accord with the 1984 agreement?

Mr. Wells: Let me take the last point first. We are committed, by the treaty, to an elected legislative assembly and an elected or indirectly elected president or chief executive. Hong Kong has not had a directly elected assembly, and I have been a critic of that for many years, without success.

I have not been successful because the Hong Kong formula has worked. It has worked because those administering Hong Kong on behalf of the Crown have been responsible to this Chamber through the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. It has been possible to change the chief executive and the Civil Service. That offered an in-built means of preventing corruption from taking place. The tradition and culture of officials of the Hong Kong Government who are of British origin were also in-built. For that reason, they built houses and took account of the social conditions of Hong Kong, which is why we can see the culture and social ideas that have been a feature of this country repeated in Hong Kong. That is part of the great success of Hong Kong. Hong Kong's present problem is how to replace that. It must be done by treaty, democracy and a directly elected assembly.

Mr. Walden: Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be a little unfair to criticise the Government, as has been done implicitly or explicitly by both sides of the House, for provoking the Chinese by giving 50,000 passports to their future citizens and at the same time criticise the Government for not provoking the Chinese by moving towards democracy much faster than Peking wants and, incidentally, risking destabilisation of Hong Kong on a much broader and deeper scale than is risked by the Bill?

Mr. Wells: I do not accept that analysis. I am confused about the reason why the Government are prepared to offend the Chinese Government. The Chinese Government have issued press releases and sent letters saying that they regard this action as, in spirit, an abrogation of the treaty that they signed. They believe that we are not working in accordance with the spirit of the agreements.

On the other hand, the British Government are not prepared to press the Chinese Government on the issue of democracy. When the Foreign Affairs Select Committee visited Peking, we went into this question in great detail, and the result is recorded in the Committee's report. Just before the events in Tiananmen square, the Chinese Government said that they were prepared to let democracy develop at the speed at which those in Hong Kong wanted it to develop. After Tiananmen square—I am not saying that it was a little lily-livered and in two minds before then—OMELCO came forward with support for the establishment of democracy on a much faster time scale than has now been agreed.

I can only welcome the assertions by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs that he will work to persuade Chinese Ministers to accelerate that programme so that there is a directly elected assembly and directly elected chief executive before 1997, so that the people of Hong Kong can begin to breathe life and credibility into those institutions and fulfil the work of governing Hong Kong democratically. I hope that progress on that democracy, which is essential for confidence in the future of Hong Kong, will be reported upon.

There should be a report on the economy and the way in which the private sector is acting. Much of the Bill has been stimulated by the private sector in Hong Kong being unwilling, understandably, to have some of the crucial skilled people and leaders in companies leave. I should like to be able to test the private sector's commitment to the future of Hong Kong. I should like to see in the report a paragraph stating how many of those people continue to reside and trade in Hong Kong, how many of the companies have sought different places for their headquarters and the extent to which these people, who are asking us to make this sacrifice, are prepared to make sacrifices for confidence in Hong Kong's future.

It is essential that we get the emigration numbers straight, and this should be clear in the report. There is

confusion, as the House has demonstrated. Looking at the numbers purely in raw terms, the emigration figures this year are down compared with last year. Emigration from Hong Kong has always taken place, but in making a judgment on these matters, it is important to consider the categories emigrating. Whether the Bill is a success or not will depend on whether that emigration is stemmed and whether it is stemmed in particular categories.

The report must include a record of the Chinese Government's attitude to the future of Hong Kong. The future of Hong Kong and its people rests increasingly with the attitude, work and confidence-building measures of the Chinese Government to build Hong Kong under two systems, one country.

5.45 pm

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): I share the surprise of my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) about the fact that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does not appear to have any final power to override the Governor's recommendations as to who might be admitted. I am surprised that the Home Office agreed to that. I should have thought that there were circumstances in which such a power would be necessary. I should like to hear an explanation from my hon. Friend the Minister as to why this provision is not included in the Bill.

I should like to comment on what I believe would be an important part of a report from the Governor. The idea of such a report is welcome and I am glad that the report is to be made available to the House. When the Government first published their scheme, I was concerned because, in 1981, I had been heavily involved in the passage of the British Nationality Bill.

The principle embodied in that legislation was that British citizenship was to be based on a number of criteria, all of which implied close involvement in Britain. Those criteria were birth, descent, residence or marriage, and descent did not stretch far back into the past. I was afraid that the scheme might be used as a convenience by people in Hong Kong who would see it as a way of, to put it crudely, establishing a bolthole, and who would come to Britain to exercise their citizenship but might then disappear fairly rapidly for other parts of the world. That seemed to be a problem and a sense in which the scheme might be out of line with the philosophy behind the British Nationality Bill.

I was relieved, therefore, when the Government included in the legislation the provision that spouses and children—the dependants of those who were to be given passports—would be classified as British citizens by descent. That meant that, at least if they went overseas, they would not have the same power to pass on citizenship to the next generation and we would therefore not see the proliferation, which I feared, of British citizens living in many parts of the world who had no real links with the United Kingdom. The inclusion of that provision was one reason that led me, after much thought, to support the legislation on Second Reading.

I am concerned about one group of people living in Hong Kong who, by almost any common-sense standards, clearly have great loyalty to the United Kingdom but who may not be served by the Bill—employees of the British Council. As a vice-chairman of the British Council, I obviously have a particular interest in this matter. I am talking not about London-based employees but about the locally based employees. I understand that there were about 60 such employees in April.

These employees may well fall into one of the relevant occupational categories proposed in the draft scheme. They may be included in the information services or education groups, and of course I would welcome that. The question is whether they would score enough points under the points system. There are two respects in which they would obviously do well—command of English and British links. Those two categories would clearly be beneficial to them, but in neither case do they score highly in the proposed points system. They get only 50 points for each. There is a risk that people who are working for the British Council will not qualify under the scheme, which would be nonsense.

I am not asking for additional places; I am simply saying that these people should be allowed to qualify. No group of people in Hong Kong serves the British cause more loyally, and often for a longer time, than British Council employees. I know that a similar argument could be made for the employees of the British Trade Commission and I am aware of the great importance of promoting British trade in Hong Kong, but it is specifically the British Council with which I am concerned. I therefore hope that it will be seen clearly from the first Governor's report that those who work for the British Council who have applied for British citizenship will be well served. I would go further: I hope that we shall not have to wait for the first Governor's report to get the reassurance that we seek. I hope that we may receive it from the Minister this evening.

Mr. Marlow: The Bill gives the Governor of Hong Kong a great many scarcely fettered powers. The new clause seeks to provide that the Governor should make an annual report on the discharge of his functions. My hon. Friend the Minister said that the report would be made available to the House. I trust that, in his closing remarks, he will make it clear that the report will be open to debate.

The Bill has been introduced to deal with problems that may or may not arise in the future. The future is uncertain; circumstances may change. It is vital, on an issue as sensitive as this, that as those circumstances change, the House should have an annual opportunity to debate the situation and to commend or recommend any changes that we may feel are necessary.

The Bill is about the way in which the Governor should discharge his responsibilities. I am sure that he should discharge those responsibilities in the light of commitments that have been given. Commitments have been given at many levels and by many different people. Initially—and the Bill is the result—commitments were given to the people of Hong Kong by Ministers or the Prime Minister to the effect that provisions would be introduced to allow up to 50,000 persons and their families to come to the United Kingdom. Those commitments were made by the Government; they have not yet been made by Parliament, and it is not the role of Parliament to act as a rubber stamp for what the Government say they wish to do.

We have other commitments, which go wider. We have commitments under international law. We have commitments within the European Community. We have commitments to deal with refugees and asylum. But we also have a commitment that is more important than all of those commitments put together: we have a commitment

[Mr. Marlow]

to the British people—to the people of these islands, whose only home this is. The Conservative party has made that commitment clear on a number of occasions. During our election campaign in 1970, we said in our manifesto that there would be no further large-scale permanent immigration into this country. The Conservative party won the 1970 election and has been in government for most of the time since that election. Since that time, however, we have had a migration into this country of between 750,000 and 1 million people from the third world.

I do not believe that what we have done since 1970 accords with the commitment that we gave in that year. In every election manifesto since 1970, we have given a firm, powerful—and, I hope, binding—commitment to the British people that we will take account of their fears and concerns about immigration. In 1987 we said:

"We will tighten the existing law to ensure that control over settlement becomes even more effective."

Yet the Bill suggests that an extra 250,000 people of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds should be allowed to come to Britain, which is the only home—the already restricted space—that the British people have. To proceed with the Bill would be, should be—and will be, if the Bill is passed—a blot on the conscience of the Government.

It is true that we have many commitments, but we cannot fulfil all of them. The most important commitment that we have made is the commitment to the British people, whose Parliament this is, who supported us, who voted for us and in whose interests the Government should act.

Mr. Maclennan: Does not the hon. Gentleman acknowledge that this Government—and this Parliament—are also responsible, as the only Government the people of Hong Kong have, for the people of Hong Kong, and that must also be weighed in the balance?

Mr. Marlow: I quite agree with the hon. Gentleman. I said that we had many commitments, and many of them are conflicting commitments. Obviously we must take account of the circumstances in Hong Kong. We have responsibilities to the people of Hong Kong and we must discharge them as best we can. I would wish the Government to do that. But the Government of Britain have an overriding commitment and it is to the people of this country. That has to come first.

Mr. Maclennan *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman says no. I wonder whether he is aware that more than half the children in Inner London education authority schools are of non-British ethnic origin. London is our capital city. When those children grow up, they will be citizens of this country. That will mean that half our citizens——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. Mr. Speaker told the House that we should have a wide-ranging debate on the new clause, but the debate is now becoming enormously elastic, and I should be obliged if the hon. Gentleman would refer to the new clause.

Mr. Marlow: As you have instructed me not to do so, Madam Speaker, I shall not follow up the intervention of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan).

The new clause says:

"The Governor of Hong Kong shall submit to the Secretary of State an annual report".

It will be an annual report on how he has done his job and carried out his functions.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) suggested a number of issues which he thinks should be included in the report. It is also the intention of the Bill to keep people in Hong Kong. I believe that, if circumstances in China do not improve—indeed, if they get worse—anyone who has been offered a British passport will not delay or stay until 1997.

Such people will not keep the ship on course and their businesses running; they will seek to get out with their families as soon as possible. If they have to get out, they will get out now. If they have to re-establish a career, they will do it early. If they have to get their funds, cash and investments out of Hong Kong, better safe than sorry. If they have a young family whom they want to educate, the sooner they can bring them to a country with a different system of education and get them on the way to being educated, the better.

It is important that in each of the annual reports, the effectiveness of the Bill in fulfilling the Government's intention should be made crystal clear. Passports have been issued. How many people, having been issued those passports, will leave at the earliest opportunity? If the House has that information, we may be able to reach a view as to whether the Bill is correct and effective or whether we wish to amend it further.

In his report, the Governor should also make an account of changes in China. In the past year, the whole nature of Europe has changed; the whole nature of the Soviet Union has changed; it is to be hoped that the whole nature of the conflict between east and west—the cold war—is also changing.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): You have not changed.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman says that I am still the same. But the British people are still the same. I submit to the hon. Gentleman that my view of the Bill is shared by 90 per cent. of his constituents, just as it is shared by 90 per cent. of mine. The nature of circumstances in China could change, and if those circumstances change, the Bill may no longer be necessary.

Again, the House may seek to amend the provisions in the Bill. As I have said, the Governor will have unfettered power. He will have a fantastic amount of power. According to clause 1(1):

"Subject to the provisions of this section, the Secretary of State shall register as British citizens up to 50,000 persons".

I presume that the Governor can decide how close to that figure of 50,000 that should apply. If circumstances in China change, I presume that the Governor will be able to reduce that number to 30,000 or 20,000.

I am more concerned by the provision that

"the Secretary of State shall register as British citizens . . . persons recommended to him for that purpose by the Governor of Hong Kong".

What would happen if my hon. Friend the Minister, in the discharge of his duties, was aware of the fact that a person in Hong Kong was connected with a criminal organisation

such as the Triads and connected with someone who was already in Britain? Suppose the Governor had said that that person should be issued with a British passport and the Home Office felt that it was not appropriate for that person to enter Britain because of the activities in which he might well indulge and there was evidence that he might well indulge, my hon. Friend the Minister would be completely powerless to do anything about that.

Mr. Madden: Not for the first time, the hon. Gentleman is talking abject nonsense. The Home Secretary would simply issue an exclusion order stating that the presence of the individual concerned was not conducive to good order in this country, and that person would not be admitted.

6 pm

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman may say that, but that is matter of assertion and proof. If the person concerned has a British passport——

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Marlow: Of course.

Mr. Lloyd: I hesitate to interrupt, because I know that I might give my hon. Friend cause to continue for another 10 minutes or a quarter of an hour. However, I want to assure him that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has a duty to assure himself that any recommendation from the Governor is of a person of the right character to receive British citizenship. If he is not so assured, he may not register that person as a British citizen.

Mr. Marlow: I accept my hon. Friend's assertion in principle. However, as I read clause 1, it appears that that is not the case.

Mr. Lloyd: Read the whole Bill.

Mr. Marlow: I have indeed read the whole Bill. Clause 1 would seem to allow that to happen.

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman should not make such categoric assertions without reading clause 5, which explicitly gives the Secretary of State the power to reject a recommendation if he believes that that person

"is not of good character."

Mr. Marlow: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says; no doubt this debate will continue for some time.

I am concerned about other issues in the Bill. The Governor will put forward a scheme which will be agreed by the House, but he shall be authorised

"to decide at his discretion between persons equally qualified under the scheme;"

Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister can tell us how the Governor will carry out that judgment of Solomon. Will there be a ballot? Will people draw straws? How will those details be considered?

The Governor is getting a great deal of power. For the first time in British history, a civil servant, not an elected Government or a Minister, will be entitled effectively to award British citizenship to people from outside this country. That is a matter that should cause the House a great deal of concern, and I am interested to hear what my hon. Friend the Minister has to say about that.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Although it seems a long time ago, I agree with the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), who said that the new clause is narrow. It would help progress this evening if I were to treat it as such.

I was glad that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) appeared to be happy to accept new clause 12 in place of new clause 1. He raised a number of issues; and indeed every hon. Member had his own ideas about what he would like to see in the Governor's report. I have noted those points and I will consider them with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary and with the Governor. However, the new clause requires the report to be on the Governor's functions under the Bill. The Governor will certainly want to set his report in the broadest context so that it is useful to the Home Secretary, to the Government and to the House so that we may all judge how our duties and responsibilities are being discharged in Hong Kong.

The hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) and my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) were anxious that the report, which I said would be made available to the House by the Home Secretary, should be debated. That is not a matter for me or for the Home Secretary; it is a matter for the House. However, the Home Secretary and I would be pleased if the report was debated in the House because we would like Parliament to give continuing attention to Hong Kong and to the evolution of our duties and responsibilities there.

The hon. Member for Bradford, West also wondered whether the appropriate Select Committees, either the Foreign Affairs Select Committee or the Home Affairs Select Committee, would also take a close interest in these matters. Again, that is not a matter for the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary or me; it is a matter for the Select Committees concerned and the House. I hope that those Committees will interest themselves in the subject, and it would be valuable if they did.

Most of the other points that were raised in the debate either affect issues on which I cannot give definitive answers now or relate to matters that will arise in later amendments. However, I want to refer to an observation made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit). I intervened once in his speech and I did not want to encourage him by doing so again. He said that a Minister—I do not know who he was referring to—intimated on Second Reading that the Government believed that the Government of China were happy with the Bill. No Minister made such a statement on Second Reading. However, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said that he hoped in due time that the Government of the People's Republic of China, and I hope some of my hon. Friends, would come to understand fully the intentions of the Bill and be happy with the results that it produces.

Mr. Adley: May I ask my hon. Friend——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister was not giving way. He has resumed his seat, and it is now my duty to put the Question.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 2

ROLE OF THE COURTS

'Nothing in this Act effects the Jurisdiction of any Court to entertain proceedings of any description concerning the operation of any provisions of this Act or made under it.'. —*[Mr. Darling.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Darling: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 37, in clause 1, page 1, line 21, leave out 'Neither'.

No. 38, in page 1, line 21, leave out 'nor' and insert 'or'.

No 39, in page 1, line 22, leave out 'any reason' and insert 'reasons'.

No 40, in page 1, line 23, leave out from 'Act' to end of line 24.

No. 49, in page 1, line 24, at end insert—

'() Nothing in this Section affects the jurisdiction of any Court to entertain proceedings of any description concerning the rights of any person under any provision of this Act.'.

No 18, in clause 3, page 2, line 41, at end insert—

'(5) Any Hong Kong resident of a class, group, category or description qualified for registration under subsection (1) above, Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 to this Act who, having made application to the Governor to be recommended for registration under section 1(1) of this Act, is not so recommended shall have the right of appeal to the Secretary of State.'.

Mr. Darling: We move from new clause 12, which was uncontroversial, to one that may be controversial. However, as it is quite narrowly focused, it may be possible narrowly to focus our discussions on it. The purpose of the new clause is to make it clear that it will be possible to raise proceedings judicially to review any decision that may be made under this legislation.

It would not normally be necessary to add such a new clause because it is normally well settled in law that it is possible to review any administrative decision. Unfortunately, because of the language in which the Bill is framed, it would appear that it is the Government's intention to exclude any such possibility.

Before considering the question of judicial review, as there was some confusion when we discussed the matter in Committee, perhaps I should make it clear exactly what we are discussing. We are not discussing the possibility of an individual appeal; we are discussing the more narrow legal concept of judicial review of a decision.

If I illustrate it, the position will perhaps become clear. If an individual were awarded a certain number of points under the scheme, it would not be possible for him to appeal simply because he did not like the number of points that he was allocated. It would be possible to raise proceedings only if his allegation was that those allocating the points had taken into account matters that they should not have taken into account or, alternatively, failed to take into account matters that they should have considered. It is a well settled point of law, but it is fairly narrow. It is the way open to individuals to question an administrator when an administrator has done something that he should not have done because he had no power to do it or, alternatively, when an administrator failed to do the things that he should have done.

I want to make that point clear because this is not a wrecking measure; it is not as amendment No. 18 appears to be. I do not see any purpose in clogging up a system to allow perhaps 200,000 appeals for anyone who was aggrieved who did not qualify under the scheme. That would be quite wrong. I make the Opposition's position quite clear. We oppose the legislation for the reasons that we have outlined, but it has not been our purpose, either in Committee or today on Report, to put forward amendments other than in the spirit of trying to improve a Bill as best we can, notwithstanding the fact that we consider that its basis is wrong.

It is quite wrong that the Government should attempt or purport to exclude any possibility of appeal. Clause 1(5) provides:

"Neither the Secretary of State nor the Governor shall be required to give any reason for any decision made by him in the exercise of a discretion vested in him by or under this Act and no such decision shall be subject to appeal or liable to be questioned in any court."

On one construction that would mean that it would not even be possible to question any decision, let alone any appeal, and it could be that anyone attempting to lodge papers to start appeal proceedings would be told by the clerk, "Sorry, any proceedings under this Act are simply not competent." I know that the Government have a slightly different interpretation, and I shall refer to it shortly, but perhaps it should be stated again and again that it does not matter what any hon. Member says during proceedings in this House. A court will have regard to what is in the Act, not to what Ministers or hon. Members have to say.

That issue was raised in Committee, and the Government's position was set out in a letter by the Minister to my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton). The Minister said:

"I have now . . . considered the matter again but have concluded that an amendment would indeed be unnecessary, and furthermore would be unhelpful."

I am bound to say that I cannot see how spelling out a citizen's rights can ever be unhelpful, but, to the Government, perhaps such a step would be unhelpful. The Minister went on to say:

"Whatever grounds there may have been for including section 44(3) in the 1981 Act there are none for including a corresponding provision in the Bill."

Section 44(3) of the 1981 Act, which is the British Nationality Act that governs citizenship in this country, has a similar privilege. It states quite explicitly:

"Nothing in this section affects the jurisdiction of any court to entertain proceedings of any description concerning the rights of any person under any provision of this Act."

In other words, it is quite clear that, under the British Nationality Act 1981, it is possible, and is explicitly stated, judicially to review any decision made under it. There is no corresponding provision within the Bill, and our new clause would add one.

The Government seem to think that there is a distinction between the 1981 Act and this Bill. Again I refer to the letter from the Minister to my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East. He said that the 1981 Act

"confers entitlements to be registered as a British citizen . . . The Bill confers no such rights".

I fail to see that distinction. The 1981 Act spells out when one is entitled to citizenship and when one is not, and the Bill sets up a system, but the result is exactly the same. Under the Bill, it is possible to acquire British citizenship with all the rights that citizenship acquired under the 1981 Act can achieve. I believe firmly that it should be possible judicially to review decisions made either under this Bill or

under any other Act. As I said, the Bill entitles an individual, if he or she has a grievance about how the system works, to air it before a court. That seems to be a basic concept of human rights and one that we should not exclude.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Will my hon. Friend confirm that the new clause would protect a person who was deemed to be not of good character? Could such an individual appeal against such a judgment?

Mr. Darling: It depends. To appeal or to get a court to uphold that the decision was bad, he would have to show that the Secretary of State took into account factors that he should not have taken into account before coming to his conclusion. If the Home Secretary, in exercising his discretion, takes account of all relevant considerations, the matter is not subject to appeal.

6.15 pm

In other words, if the Home Secretary looked at all the facts before him and said, "I think that this person is of bad character," that would be the end of the matter. However, if he looked at all the facts before him and they did not disclose evidence of bad character but he then said, "I do not like this individual because he voted Labour at the last election; therefore, I think that he is of bad character," that matter could be reviewed judicially, or at least it could be so reviewed under the new clause.

Mr. Madden: Will my hon. Friend confirm that, as he rightly says, under the 1981 Act it is impossible for an applicant who is refused to appeal? Indeed, there is no right for an explanation from the Secretary of State if an applicant is refused. However, it is possible for an hon. Member or a Member of the other place to ask the Secretary of State for an explanation. Clearly, if the decision is thought to have been taken on incorrect information, it is possible to ask the Secretary of State to review the decision to refuse citizenship. Am I right in assuming that, if that were the case under this scheme, it would be open to residents of Hong Kong who are refused to ask Members of this House or Members of the other place to make representations to the Secretary of State in the way that I have described?

Mr. Darling: The answer to my hon. Friend's question is no. The subsection to which I referred makes it clear that neither the Secretary of State nor the Governor shall be required to give any reason for any decisions. That matter was raised at some length in Committee. It would appear that, as the legislation is phrased, no reason shall be given. That means that any aggrieved individual may be at some disadvantage. In the case of a decision by a housing department in failing to allocate a set number of points to a housing application, it is normally quite easy for an individual to find out why the decision was made.

The Government have phrased the Bill in terms to exclude the giving of reasons. That is regrettable. It is regrettable also that, as I understand it, it appears to be the view of those at least who purport to speak for Hong Kong —those who come to this country—that that is entirely acceptable in Hong Kong. I do not accept that. Our new clause would not put that right. We explored that matter in Committee, but we are not able to do so on Report. Those in another place, when considering the legislation, may want to return to that point.

I accept that my new clause is limited to that extent, but my primary concern at this stage is to ensure that it is possible for a judicial review to take place. As the Bill stands, the Secretary of State and the Governor do not need to give any reasons, and the matter cannot be questioned in court. That is wrong. I am trying to put right the appeal point. We tried at an earlier stage to put right both points.

Mr. Maclennan: Will the hon. Gentleman clarify whether, in moving new clause 2, it is his intention effectively to repeal the provision in clause 1(5) which would exclude decisions which have been taken in the exercise discretion from liability to be questioned in a court? On the face of it, it seems that the new clause would achieve that result. Is that the hon. Gentleman's intention?

Mr. Darling: Indeed it is. I am not too proud to say that I took a leaf out of the hon. Gentleman's book. In Committee he attempted a similar exercise with about as much success as I anticipate achieving this evening. The obvious criticism that the Government will make is that I am breaking new ground, but all I am doing is following the 1981 Act, which sets out as a general proposition that no reasons will be given and no challenges made. That excludes the sort of appeal about which I spoke earlier. It goes on to state that nothing in the Act could possibly exclude the question of judicial review. If any matter comes before the courts, those acting for the Home Office may well say that, if Parliament had intended there to be an appeal, it would have followed the same model as the 1981 Act, which this Bill does not. That is why it is so important that Parliament leaves the courts in no doubt that we do not want to exclude the possibility of reviewing an administrative decision.

In my experience, if administrative decisions are not subject to review, it creates an injustice and tends to make for bad decision making. We have many examples of that. With the best will in the world, people who make administrative decisions tend to make better ones if they think that they may be held to account and questioned at the end of the day. Obviously the Government know that the scheme has drawbacks and flaws. They have been touched on, particularly by Tory Members, or at least by those who are making constructive suggestions on the Bill. Obviously those who will make the decisions are aware that they may run into difficulty. It was understandable that those who put together the initial drafts—I expect that they were administrators themselves—were keen to exclude any possibility of appeal. I am sure that many who take administrative decisions, if left to to their own devices, would like to exclude appeal in a wide range of Bills.

It would be wrong if we were to agree with any idea that judicial review should be excluded. Judicial review would improve the Bill and it would not in any way undermine the intention behind the Bill. Indeed, that is not the purpose of the new clause. It would make for better administration, and it would certainly get round the obvious injustice where someone believes that something has gone wrong for example, in the allocation of the points system, yet can do absolutely nothing about it. We have talked about the resentment that the scheme will create, which is undeniable, but a greater injustice and resentment will be caused if individuals feel that they cannot air a grievance either here or in Hong Kong.

Mr. Marlow: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman if he has already covered this point, but I had to leave the Chamber, as one does from time to time. Will he make it clear—no doubt he is seduced by what he reads in the opinion polls—whether, if there were a Labour Government, they would introduce judicial review into this Bill?

Mr. Darling: I do not think that we would have any difficulty in introducing the possibility of judicial review into any administrative decisions. We may have something to say about that before too long.

Mr. Marlow: Is that the hon. Gentleman's intention?

Mr. Darling: One advantage of having passed new clause 12 is that we shall have an opportunity to review how the Bill works. I cannot give any commitment about what legislation we are proposing. It will depend on what the circumstances allow.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Darling: If I may finish the point, I shall certainly——

Mr. Lloyd: I am trying to be helpful.

Mr. Darling: I am sure that the Minister is trying to be helpful. If the opportunity presents itself, I cannot see why we would not want to introduce judicial review as a safeguard. It is an important point of principle as well as one which would improve the Bill.

Mr. Lloyd: The question is not whether a Labour Government would make judicial review available under the Bill. It is available. It is just that clause 1(5) states categorically that judicial review will not be available where the Governor or the Secretary of State is exercising a discretion. For the rest of the Bill, judicial review is available, as it always is in every Bill.

Mr. Darling: I thought that the Minister was going to be helpful, but he was simply getting his oar in early. I am coming to that argument. The Minister wrote to me on the subject and I shall deal with it.

To complete the point raised by the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), we have already made it clear that, as any incoming Government would do, we shall see how things are working generally, and this provision will be no different.

In a memorandum which the Minister circulated, he put the Government's view, which is that nothing in the Bill excludes the jurisdiction of the courts from carrying out a judicial review. Therefore, I cannot see why he should object to new clause 2, which makes that explicit rather than leaving interpretation to a memorandum or statements from the Dispatch Box which have absolutely no bearing on any judicial determination.

Mr. Lloyd: Perhaps I do not follow the hon. Gentleman's case. It seems from the wording of the new clause that it would override, or be in conflict with, clause 1(5). If it would not, and is merely asserting that on anything other than discretionary matters, the conduct of the Governor's responsibilities under the Bill and the Orders in Council will be a subject of judicial review, there is little between us.

Mr. Darling: Discretionary decisions are not subject to judicial review anywhere so long as the person exercising the discretion carries out his normal duties in reaching the decision. There is no difference between us on that. The new clause would do exactly the same as section 44(3) of the 1981 Act. It would make it clear beyond doubt, so that no judge would have any difficulty with the point, that it is not intended to exclude the possibility of judicial review where the circumstances warranted it. That is the only difference between us. New clause 2 follows the pattern of the 1981 Act.

I accept that ministerial discretion cannot normally be subject to judicial review unless the Minister considers matters which he has no business to consider or fails to look at all the matters at which he should look. That is well settled. I see no difficulty about that. I read the Minister's letter and explanatory memorandum, and there is a difference between us. I am not convinced by them, which is why I am introducing the new clause.

Mr. Maclennan: The trouble is that the new clause does not follow the language of the 1981 Act but goes wider. The 1981 Act deals with rights, whereas the new clause deals with the operation of any provisions of the Bill. That would have the effect of repealing the effectiveness of clause 1(5), which is why I asked whether that was the hon. Gentleman's intention.

Mr. Darling: I must have misunderstood the hon. Gentleman's earlier intervention. For the avoidance of doubt, may I say that the effect of the new clause would be to qualify clause 1(5) to make it clear that clause 1(5) would not fetter the discretion of the court to review any decisions made under the Act, as it will become. I am willing to negotiate on the words and the exact language, but I fear that that is not the difficulty. The Government do not like the intention behind the new clause. This is not a grammatical argument so much as one of substance.

Mr. Adley: To resolve the misunderstanding between the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), may I suggest that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central might like to look at the four amendments which I have tabled which attempt to achieve the same objective as his new clause, but do so more simply by deleting the last sentence of the clause? If the hon. Gentleman would like to take over my amendments, I am happy to let him do so.

Mr. Darling: Exactly that approach was adopted by the Opposition in Committee. We tried another way of achieving the same result. The hon. Gentleman will know that there are certain restrictions on us on Report, and it was necessary to make certain adjustments to accommodate other matters. With respect, I do not think that that is the problem. The problem is that the Government do not like the idea. I dare say that, when the Minister replies, the hon. Gentleman's suggestions will receive no more encouragement than my new clause.

Mr. Marlow: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Darling: May I progress a little? I do not want to get bogged down——

Mr. Marlow: I confess that I am not a lawyer and am not au fait with what judicial review is, what the courts can do and so on. Will the hon. Gentleman answer a clear question? If a Hong Kong citizen sought a passport through the quota system and was aggrieved at not

obtaining one as a result of administrative discretion, would the hon. Gentleman's amendment allow him to take the matter before the courts?

6.30 pm

Mr. Darling: Only if the aggrieved person could show that the person who exercised discretion had considered matters that he should not have considered or took into account extraneous considerations. If the person who exercises discretion, the Governor, followed the points system and allocated the points in exactly the way in which he was supposed to do under the scheme, there could be no appeal. The appeal would come into play only if the aggrieved person could show that the Governor had, for example, taken into account something that had nothing to do with the case. Under the Bill or any other provision, he is not empowered to take into account extraneous factors.

The new clause would not have the effect of granting a common right of appeal. There is nothing new about judicial review. It is a well established branch of the law of this country and, indeed, many others. It is a narrow mechanism that enables courts to put right administrative decisions where things have gone wrong or the administrator has done something that he was not entitled to do. If anyone thinks that judicial review is a mechanism simply to have a case heard anew or considered by someone else, he or she will be disappointed. That is not the intention.

I have outlined the intention of the new clause as comprehensively as possible. I think and hope that I have demonstrated the need for it. Whatever other drawbacks the Bill may have, it is essential that the mechanisms that it sets up are subject to review. If the difference between us and the Government had been one of language or the exact words used, I should be more than happy to come and go. However, that is not the difficulty.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way, and I am sorry to keep interrupting. I want to understand what he is getting at because I feel that there is not a great distance between us. I have reflected on what he said to me and to my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). He appears to believe that any discretionary act of a Minister or public official is not subject to judicial review in the normal way. My understanding is that any act is subject to judicial review, discretionary of otherwise, unless it is specifically excluded, as in clause 1(5). The new clause appears to contradict clause 1(5) on discretionary decisions. If the hon. Gentleman does not intend that the new clause should apply to discretionary decisions, I could not accept it, no matter how willing I were, because it would conflict with what he seems happy to keep in the Bill. We appear to differ on the status of a discretionary decision when there is no specific exclusion of its consideration by a court in the relevant legislation.

Mr. Darling: My new clause would not contradict clause 1(5). It is a qualification of it or addition to it. It makes it clear that nothing in the Bill precludes the possibility of courts judicially reviewing decisions. I made it clear in response to an earlier—*[Interruption.]* I shall deal with that point later. It is difficult to deal with points made from a sedentary position, but I shall do my best.

My new clause is an addition to clause 1(5). As I said, it has the same effect as that of section 44(3) of the 1981 Act. The new clause makes it clear that, no matter what is said at an earlier stage, nothing will prevent a court from considering the proceedings. The new clause is an addition to clause 1(5); it take nothing away from it. The mischief that it seeks to correct is that, as I read it, clause 1(5) would exclude judicial review. I know that the Minister takes a different view on that. The object of the exercise is to make it clear that courts can judicially review the proceedings.

In Committee, we tried several other approaches. It is not good enough for the Minister to say that he does not understand and that he is willing to come and go. I rather suspect that he does not want the possibility of review. If I am wrong on that, I invite him to demonstrate to the House how it would be possible under the terms of the clause to carry out judicial review of any decision made under it.

My new clause is a safeguard and an addition to the Bill. It would be beneficial to the Bill as a whole because it would make it possible beyond peradventure to raise the matter later in court if there were any doubt in a preliminary court. If that is not possible, it will cause great dissatisfaction as well as great injustice.

In conclusion——

Sir Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Darling: I really should conclude, but since the hon. Gentleman has now got to his feet, I shall give way to him.

Sir Alan Glyn: Is the hon. Gentleman referring to appeals on a point of law, on a point of fact, or both?

Mr. Darling: Judicial review is not a point of law as such. It is exercised simply to consider as a matter of fact whether the Governor took into account the matters that he should have considered or—as I have said many times now—matters which he should not have considered. It is fairly straightforward. It is a safeguard and an addition to the Bill.

In conclusion—this time I mean it, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I should have no objection if the Minister accepted the amendments tabled by the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley), because I attempted exactly the same exercise in Committee. However, I fear that the hon. Member for Christchurch may be unsuccessful.

Mr. Adley: After the battle of Britain, Winston Churchill said,

"Never has so much been owed by so many to so few."

I must say to my hon. Friend the Minister, with whom I have had a long, friendly and courteous relationship, that as a result of the brevity of his response to the debate on new clause 12, never in a parliamentary debate has so little been said so quickly to so many. It is unfortunate that, as he implied, he has been left to pick up the bits of what we might call the Foreign Office end of the debate. The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the hon. Member for Warwickshire, North (Mr. Maude), was not here at the beginning of the previous debate and he is not here now. I hope that some of the points that were made will be considered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, if my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department does not reply to them.

[Mr. Adley]

As the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) said in his discussion with the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), we are in danger of creating a lawyers' paradise. As amendments Nos. 37 to 40 have been selected, if the Opposition would prefer to use them as a vehicle at the end of the debate, I shall be happy for them so to do.

It might be for the convenience of the House if I read out clause 1(5) both as currently drafted and as it would be amended. As it is drafted, it says:

"Neither the Secretary of State nor the Governor shall be required to give any reason for any decision made by him in the exercise of a discretion vested in him by or under this Act and no such decision shall be subject to appeal or liable to be questioned in any court."

That is somewhat draconian.

My four amendments, Nos, 37 to 40, would amend that subsection to read as follows:

"The Secretary of State or the Governor shall be required to give reasons for any decision made by him in the exercise of a discretion vested in him by or under the Act."

That seems nothing more than natural justice. Regardless of what might be thought of the Bill, anyone reading the clause would, I am sure, regard the inclusion in the Bill of the words currently printed to be a denial of natural justice.

New clause 8, which was not selected, states:

"The Governor of Hong Kong may, at his discretion, withdraw all or any rights to passport entitlements granted under this Act, and in so doing shall state his reasons."

That was an attempt to put a negative as well as a positive power in the hands of, ultimately, the Government should we wish to reverse any decision if we find that passports have been granted to people who subsequently turn out to be drug dealers, murderers, child molesters, Triad organisers—or heavens knows what. As those people would already have their entitlement to a British passport, that is a situation in which prevention is certainly better than cure.

Finally, I hope that the proposition contained in subsection 5 will not become the custom of this or any Government. Perhaps it should have been included in the Local Government Finance Act 1988 where it would have been a powerful weapon in the hands of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. It was not, and we understand why. Surely if one is considering the relative importance of people's rights as against the poll tax, we should agree in Parliament that people's rights are more important. It is in the spirit of protecting individuals' rights that I move my amendments.

Mr. Maclennan: The debate has become somewhat arcane with its discussion of the alternative language that might be used to ensure that judicial review is open to those who feel aggrieved. However, the principle that underlies the range of amendments that have been grouped together, including my amendment No. 49, is extremely important.

The right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), whose amendment No. 18 is in this group, is proposing to establish a right of appeal and seems to be seeking to introduce a system of review that goes far beyond that of judicial review and would nullify the operation of the scheme that the Government have in mind because it would so protract it that the speedy resolution of cases would become almost impossible. Any benefit that might flow from the implementation of the scheme would thereby be frittered away.

That is why my right hon. and hon. Friends and I doubt whether a full appeal system is possible. I am fortified in that view by representations that we have received from Hong Kong, all of which suggested that if the scheme is to have the effect that the Government would wish, which is to restore confidence to the commercial community and to stop the haemorrhage from Hong Kong of important and significant citizens, it must be up and running quickly. Therefore, I treat the right hon. Gentleman's amendment as essentially a wrecking one.

However, the arguments about the alternative approaches, which seek to allow and to secure some form of judicial review by amending the Bill, are of a different order. As the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) said, they are intended to be constructive and to ensure that grievances that may perfectly understandably arise about the operation of the scheme are removed by reference to the courts for judicial review.

From the beginning of this discussion in Committee, the Minister has said that the Government's view is that judicial review is available to an aggrieved person except where clause 1(5) rules it out—that is, where the Secretary of State or the Governor are acting in the pursuance of their discretion and where the matter relates to a decision that was taken in their exercise of that discretion. I understand why the Minister wishes to exclude those discretionary decisions from judicial review.

The consequence of the alternatives would be to substitute the judgment of the court in the place of that of the Governor or the Secretary of State. I cannot think that that would make sense. If there is an element of discretion in the scheme—that is certainly the case—however detailed the points system may be, it will always be necessary to choose between people who have the same number of points. That cannot be handled satisfactorily by a court; it must be handled by a member of the Government who is accountable to Parliament for the exercise of that discretion.

6.45 pm

Where I have fallen out previously with the Minister —and where I apprehend that I may disagree with him today—is in his belief that there is no scope for specifying a right to judicial review. What the Minister has said about that in debates and in letters has not altered my judgment that the British Nationality Act 1981 was right to secure the right to judicial review in respect of rights conferred by the Act. That is explicit in section 44(3) of the 1981 Act.

The Minister has sought to distinguish between the 1981 Act and this Bill by saying that the Bill confers no rights, but I submit that it does. It confers a right upon those who are subject to schemes to have their cases properly procedurally handled. I do not believe that the Minister can deny that. Insofar as people have those rights, I believe that they should be entitled to judicial review to ensure that their rights are properly protected.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: On the whole, the Bill does not create rights in the way that the 1981 Act did. But it certainly lays duties on the Secretary of State and the Governor which, under the Bill when it becomes and Act and the Orders in Council that will follow, could be the occasion of judicial

review if any applicant felt that the Governor or the Secretary of State had not proceeded as they should under the requirements of this Bill.

Mr. Maclennan: The Minister is narrowing the difference between us. In what I think he will have to admit is a somewhat imprecise way, he is saying that the Bill does not confer many rights. But the very rights that it does confer will give rise to grievances which should be remediable by access to the courts.

I think that the Minister is saying that those who are aggrieved have that right and if he believes that they have that right, I cannot understand his steadfast opposition to securing that right in a clause which would run parallel to section 44(3) of the 1981 Act. That must raise questions about whether the Minister believes that clause 1(5), which puts an impediment in the way of judicial review of the discretionary power, could be invoked to stop judicial review in other cases. That matter is sufficiently in doubt to make it important to have the provisions contained in amendment No. 49.

I do not go along with the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central. His amendment, which is not couched in the language of the 1981 Act, goes too far in overturning the effect of excluding discretions from judicial review. I have sympathy with the amendment, but it goes further than I consider to be appropriate. I think that it would transfer responsibility for taking discretionary decisions from the Governor and the Secretary of State to the courts. That cannot be an acceptable objective.

Mr. Marlow: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the Bill seeks to confer passports on citizens of Hong Kong. Those who have had that benefit will have the right for their children to be accorded passports. There may be some controversy between those issuing passports and parents over which children are entitled to passports. Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that the decision to exclude or include a particular child should be made by the courts?

Mr. Maclennan: I am suggesting that in the exercise of the judgments made by the Governor and the Secretary of State and the procedural rule that will be followed in making assessments, issues such as the one raised by the hon. Gentleman should be open to review. It will be a question of whether the procedures have been properly followed. Did the Secretary of State address himself to the proper questions? Did the Governor do so or did he fail to carry out his duty?

It has been said by some hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), that it is a constitutional monstrosity to suggest that there is an obligation upon the Secretary of State to register those whom the Governor recommends. It seems that a duty is being imposed upon him. It seems also that the procedure confers a right upon those whose names are put forward to be registered save in the circumstance that the Secretary of State takes the view that they are not of proper character. That is the effect of clause 5.

If there is that right to be registered, we are talking of a major right, not a minor procedural matter. It would seem that the Bill is conferring a major right. If that right is subject to judicial review, that meets all the legitimate demands that anyone could have for reconsideration of a mistake, if mistake there has been, without opening up the full panoply of an appeal system with all the possibilities of delay that that could involve and the rendering nugatory of the effectiveness of the scheme.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman and I have crossed swords on this issue in a previous debate. Clause 5(2) states:

> "A person shall not . . . be recommended for registration as a British citizen by the Governor of Hong Kong or . . . by the Secretary of State if the Governor or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State has reason to believe that he is not of good character."

Where does that dividing line come down? Who should decide, the Governor or the Secretary of State? How does that affect the hon. Gentleman's view of judicial review?

Mr. Maclennan: With respect, I do not think that the hon. Gentleman's question is germane to the argument about judicial review. Accordingly, I do not propose to take up the matter.

I may have conveyed to the Minister what it is that I am seeking to achieve. I hope that I have placed upon him the onus of explaining why the Government are reluctant—they have suggested so far that they are opposed to this—to repeat the language of the 1981 Act, which provides a safeguard for people who are aggrieved because there has been some intromission, oversight, error or misdirection by those responsible for the operation of the scheme.

Mr. Tebbit: I wish to speak to amendment No. 18, about which the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), was so scathing. It is extraordinary that a member of the party which was once called the Liberal party should oppose in principle giving people the right of appeal on the basis that that would be a bureaucratic impediment to the swift progress of granting British nationality.

I find it extraordinary that the hon. Gentleman is so bigoted and partisan as to believe that merely because an amendment gives a right of appeal it must be a wrecking amendment. There could be no better illustration of the manner in which the hon. Gentleman's mind is closed like a clam to any idea that does not originate from Opposition Members. That means that he has a remarkably closed mind to any ideas because so few originate from those who sit around him. There is increasing lonelines on the Bench on which he sits.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland ruminated on why the Government were so reluctant to accept the amendments which he has proposed, those which I proposed and not dissimilar amendments which were tabled and introduced in Committee. I can tell him why the Government are reluctant to do so. The answer is easy to understand. My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary does not like this business at all. He wishes that it had never got anywhere near his desk. He has a marked revulsion for the whole darned business. He knows that it is a can of worms and he does not want it to get anywhere near him or his office. He wants to keep it all offshore.

This is one of the first instances where the granting of nationality has been made an offshore operation. The Home Secretary wants to keep the business in Hong Kong. He is pretty darned sure that some nasty and unfortunate things will happen, and the last thing that he wants is to find that he is responsible for them.

It is against that background that we are being asked how the Home Secretary will possibly know better than

[Mr. Tebbit]

the Governor. How, it is said, could the Home Secretary decide anything here except on evidence which had come to him from Hong Kong? It is argued that that would be the same evidence as that which had been presented to the Governor, and that the Home Secretary would merely be churning out the same old stuff. That would be fine if the Governor were responsible to the House, but there is a pretty thick layer between the House, the Governor and those who will be operating the scheme.

I think that Hong Kong is a marvellous place. It is a terrific, successful place, but I doubt whether anyone would be able to maintain that it is the one place in the world where the ethics of business stand out as being more reputable than those anywhere else in the world.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Do not tell us about that.

Mr. Tebbit: It seems that the hon. Gentleman wants to start a debate about other issues. Perhaps they include the way in which Lord Beswick piloted a nationalisation Bill through Parliament and then got a job. I shall not be tempted down that road.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Tebbit: I would greatly enjoy such a debate on another day, because there is much ammunition to be used, and I would have great delight in using some of it. But we are not discussing those issues and I do not want unnaturally to extend the debate. We should focus clearly and firmly on the matters that are under discussion.

The principal issue in this debate is whether someone who is granted the right to apply for registration as a British citizen under the Bill should have a right to appeal to someone who is directly responsible to this Parliament, which has accorded the right. That is the argument. We are not arguing that the Home Secretary should deal with all the applications himself. Clearly, most aggrieved people would accept that they had not scored on the points standard of the Bill, according to what we assume will be the way in which it is operated.

I tabled an amendment—unfortunately, it was not accepted—that would have clarified the criteria by taking the Government's own words from their explanatory memorandum and including them in the Bill. I cannot see why the Government do not want to incorporate their views in their legislation. Obviously they do not really approve of them.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Perhaps my right hon. Friend should consult my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), who explained—when my right hon. Friend was out of the Chamber—that we needed an annual report from the Governor on the facts and progress of the scheme—in case we wanted to change it. Only through delegated legislation in Orders in Council could we do that.

7 pm

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend is completely wrong. He is saying that it would be more convenient legislatively to change the scheme by means of Orders in Council than to do so through primary legislation. That is not an absolute problem; it just takes more time.

As I know very well, Governments do not like to arrange such debates in prime parliamentary time. They would prefer the whole issue to be swept under the carpet in future, so that we did not have to debate it again. Apart from anything else, it is an extremely divisive issue in the Conservative party. Conservative Back Benchers do not support the Bill; nor, in their heart of hearts do Front Benchers, although they may do so in the Lobbies. It certainly does not have the support of those who voted for us at the general election on the clear understanding that no such legislation would be presented.

I am not too bothered by my hon. Friend's objections. If the Government ase to break electoral commitments, they should do so in public, so that the electors know that undertakings have been breached. An even more puzzling question is whether my hon. Friend has any better reason than was given in Committee for not giving the right of appeal. I accept that the Bill should contain the extraordinary little clause that effectively seeks to exclude the courts from any review of their operations: some Conservative Members do not want the courts to be involved, as it would raise too many issues about how British citizenship and passports are handed out. Surely, however, my hon. Friends will not say that in no circumstances should a citizen in Hong Kong have any right to come to a Minister directly responsible to Parliament with an appeal against what has been done.

Mr. Marlow: As my right hon. Friend has pointed out, one of the great departures of the Bill is the offshore award of British citizenship. The person awarding that citizenship will effectively be the Governor of Hong Kong. I understand that my right hon. Friend's amendment hopes to give that final power on appeal back to the people who have been democratically elected to represent the people of this country—hon. Members.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. It is not the Governor's legislation, but the Secretary of State's legislation: it is the legislation of the House of Commons. At the end of the day, it is to the House, through the Secretary of State, that the appeal should be made. How can it be held that the Secretary of State, having put into commission the granting of citizenship—surely one of the most important acts to be conducted by a Government —could then wash his hands of it, and say that he does not want to know and that he will intervene only if citizenship is granted to someone who he believes is not of a fit or proper character?

If someone applies to be registered for British citizenship and is refused, and someone else's application is preferred—perhaps in breach of the rules—will the Secretary of State still say that he does not want to know? Will he say that it is too difficult, and that he does not want to accept responsibility for it?

Mr. Peter Lloyd *rose*——

Mr. Tebbit: Perhaps the Minister is going to say that he does want the responsibility.

Mr. Lloyd: If a selection were made in breach of the rules, it would be a matter for judicial review, and there would be access to the courts, as I pointed out to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling). I do not think that my right hon. Friend was in the Chamber at the

time. If he has read the Committee proceedings—as he said he has—he will know that that was made clear several times.

Mr. Tebbit: Within the rules there is enormous discretion. If the Minister reads the rules of the memorandum that I sought to include in the Bill, he will see that not everything is cut and dried.

Who will decide whether one business man is more successful and entrepreneurial than another? Is there a set of rules, or will a subjective judgment be made? Will a business man who has made £50 million starting from £500,000 be good enough to get in, whereas someone who has made only £25 million starting from £1 million will not be? Obviously, the decision will be discretionary, judgmental and subjective.

If the decision is to be based on someone's judgment, should it be that of a Minister of the Crown or that of a civil servant in Hong Kong? Is my hon. Friend saying that that subjective judgment should be exercised by someone who is not directly responsible to the House?

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The judgment will be based on the value of the individual to Hong Kong. In those circumstances, who better to make that judgment than the Governor of Hong Kong, acting within the rules laid down by the House?

My right hon. Friend has slid off the point that I answered. He referred to a breach of the rules laid down by the House; I said that, in those circumstances, a judicial review would be available, and I hope that he will accept that.

Mr. Tebbit: I will accept that, if it can be established that a decision is in breach of the rules. A judicial review is not the cheapest or the easiest way to bring proceedings. Why not offer a cheaper and easier form of appeal?

My hon. Friend the Minister also conceded my point that in many cases passports will be granted on no more than the view of a group of people as to who are the most valuable citizens in Hong Kong.

Let us imagine what would be said in the House if we proposed to operate such a system here, judging people on the basis of their value to the economy. An official who was not even a Minister could decide to front an invaluable privilege. There would be no right of appeal: a person could not go to judicial review and say that the Governor had made a wrong assessment of his value to the economy of Hong Kong. He will have no right of appeal. The Secretary of State and his Under-Secretary of State say, "Hard luck. Much better that that sort of mess is kept out of our office and is kept over there in Hong Kong. We give up responsibility and we deny any responsibility to the House of Commons."

Mr. Wells: Has my right hon. Friend read the key entrepreneur section which says:

"The Governor would invite those whom he considered might be qualified under this scheme to submit an application".

It is entirely in the Governor's right to decide that. If an aggrieved person believed that the Goverment had not exercised that judgment correctly, there would be no question of judicial review. A small cabal—the elite who rule Hong Kong—would decide who should have British citizenship; citizenship which belongs to Britain through the House.

Mr. Tebbit: As my hon. Friend says, that is how it would operate. We all know that, wherever there is a ruling commercial elite who like to have things their own way, there are outsiders. If one went to the CBI and asked who were the deserving entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom, it would probably omit from its list a great many people who would feel that they had been wrongfully omitted. The CBI would upset a lot of people. Any establishment will do that.

We are well aware of the way in which the ranks close in establishments if somebody should be so unwise as to criticise it—*[Interruption.]* I hasten to say that I speak from no experience of such things, but I have heard that it happens now and again. I have even heard that it happens to hon. Members who have committed such a terrible offence as working for Mr. Rupert Murdoch. They get slung off the Opposition Front Bench for doing so. That is the sort of way in which people can upset the establishment.

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): The right hon. Gentleman will never be Sir Norman now.

Mr. Tebbit: The hon. Gentleman should be careful. He may never reach the Front Bench the way he is carrying on.

Mr. Ashton: I have been on it and come off it.

Mr. Tebbit: Indeed.

The serious point that I am making is, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) said, that to get on to that key entrepreneurs list a person's face must fit with the establishment of Hong Kong, not with the Secretary of State. *[Interruption.]* One of my more vulgar Back-Bench colleagues whom I shall not name says, "or his cheque book". Perish the thought that such a thing could happen in a place like Hong Kong. The idea that people might be able to buy a passport in Hong Kong is outrageous. I am amazed that one of my colleagues could suggest it. I would not have been surprised if such a suggestion had come from the vulgar mob on the Opposition Benches, but for one of my hon. Friends to suggest it—that might be getting somewhere near the truth of the matter. It just might be that there are people in Hong Kong, perfectly successful and honest men, who would deserve the award of citizenship, whose faces do not fit. What will they do?

Mr. Peter Lloyd *rose*——

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend is eager to tell me.

Mr. Lloyd: What the key entrepreneurs will have to do is to meet the criteria that will be laid down by the House in the Order in Council.

Mr. Tebbit: I have been in the business of drawing up legislation for long enough not to fall for that guff.

Sir Peter Blaker: I am sure that my right hon. Friend would not want to mislead the House. I do not know whether he has recently looked at the section on the key entrepreneur. He is giving the impression that only those key entrepreneurs who are invited by the Governor to make an application will be eligible, but that is plainly not true. The document says:

"It would be open to others who wished to be considered in this category to indicate their interest on an application

[Sir Peter Blaker]

form . . . Other potential recipients who did not take that initiative might be identified from information set out on their forms when they applied".

May we have the whole picture, not just part of it?

Mr. Tebbit: I am sure that that is right. If the National Front were to advertise for an administrative officer, it would probably put at the bottom of the page that it was an equal opportunities employer. We can believe that if we wish. It does not matter whether a person is invited to apply by the Governor or not. His face has to fit. If it does not fit well enough to receive an invitation, I doubt whether it would fit well enough to win on an application without an invitation.

Even if we were to believe that on 99 occasions out of 100 all would go well, we must concede that there is a possibility—not even a probability—that there would be a miscarriage of justice. We know that there would be no appeal against that and no way in which the consequences of how the legislation is drawn up could arrive on the desk of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary. I do not blame my right hon. Friend for taking that view. If I were the Home Secretary with this dog's dinner of a Bill, I would be taking the same view. I would want to keep it offshore if I could.

7.15 pm

Mr. Marlow: In a previous intervention, my hon. Friend the Minister said that the measure is about providing citizenship for people in Hong Kong so that they might be constrained to stay in Hong Kong. But I put it to my right hon. Friend that what we are doing is providing people with British citizenship. In that case, is it right that the Secretary of State should have no influence on whether there should be an appeal?

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend makes the essential point. I cannot imagine why the official Opposition are so willing to let the Government get away with it. However, there is sometimes a conspiracy between the Front Benches. It is not unknown. Even when the Opposition Front Bench team opposes legislation, it may not oppose it enough to stop it getting through. It may oppose it only for show, so that it can say that it opposed it, but at the same time let it through.

I am amazed that the Opposition, including the so-called Liberals, bitterly oppose, in the way that they seem to, granting a right of appeal to the Home Secretary on the issue of British citizenship. It is amazing that they are content to leave that in the hands of the Governor of Hong Kong and his officials.

Mr. Maclennan: The right hon. Gentleman's concern for the injustices of the Bill would carry much greater weight if he had a scheme to offer hope to those who will be threatened in 1997 by an oppressive Government in Peking, the responsibility for whom, if his policies were carried out, he would wash his hands of. The British Government would simply turn their back. He has shown no willingness to support the Liberal Democrats' policy that those who have been granted British dependent territories citizen passports should be entitled as of right to come to Britain, in which case there would be none of these review procedures.

Mr. Tebbit: I have made no secret of the fact that I oppose the Bill on two grounds. First, it is a breach of the Government's commitment not to allow further large-scale immigration into Britain. The first obligation of a Member of Parliament is to his constituents here. That is the prime obligation.

Mr. Rogers (Rhondda): Why does the right hon. Gentleman take other jobs, then?

Mr. Tebbit: For exactly the same reason as the deputy leader of the Labour party takes other jobs. If hon. Members want to come to my constituency and tell my constituents that I have not been looking after their interests, they will have to explain why my majority has risen from 4,000 to 18,000 in the past 10 years. That may be the view of ignorant people, but it is not the view of the people whom I look after.

Let us return to the point made by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland. The second reason why I oppose the Bill is also the reason why my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch opposes it: it will not benefit the people of Hong Kong. It will not make matters better there but will make them worse. The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland may take a different view from me, but he should not imply that having a different view from him is a matter of dishonour, because experience has shown that it is not.

Has my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary got any better explanation than the one he put forward in Committee, as to why the House should allow the Home Secretary—I am not speaking of my right hon. and learned Friend personally but of his office—to shuffle off the obligation and thus ensure that the responsibility will never come back to land on his desk, once the House has given its consent to the Bill?

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I am afraid that I shall have to spend a little more time replying to this debate than I did to the last one as it is important and there are genuine misunderstandings and worries on the issue.

In Committee we spent a good deal of time discussing how decisions taken under the Bill might be reviewed. Clearly that was a matter of genuine concern, and I appreciate how strongly the hon. Members for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) and for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) felt about it, and I also find, to my interest, that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) is numbered among those who are concerned.

In Committee, and in letters which I sent afterwards, I sought to explain the background to clause 1(5) and the extent of its effect. Therefore, I wrote to the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton), as the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central remarked, setting out the sort of decision which the Government thought that the courts would be likely to regard as reviewable and those which seemed likely not be reviewable as a result of clause 1(5). I must point out again to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central that new clause 2 would contradict clause 1(5) and could not sit alongside it in the same Bill.

As I made clear in Committee, ultimately it will be not for the Governor or for the Home Secretary but for the courts to decide what is reviewable, having regard to the provisions of the legislation. I wrote to the hon. Member

for Caithness and Sutherland about the case of a person seeking registration as a spouse under schedule 2 who was rejected on grounds of ineligibility.

Let me emphasise once again what I said in Committee. The exemptions in clause 1(5) from having to give reasons and from appeal and judicial review relate only to discretionary decisions. It is in the nature of such decisions that they often involve the exercise of judgment about matters which might be finely balanced, and where there might be no clear right or wrong answer. If I understood correctly the hon. Members for Edinburgh, Central and for Caithness and Sutherland, they had no argument with me or with the Government on that score; their argument is about how we present the matter in the Bill.

Mr. Darling: I am not sure that that accurately represents our view. I said that I thought that there were circumstances in which ministerial discretion could be challenged by involving judicial review under the present law. I make no bones about it: my new clause would qualify clause 1(5) so that, if it were appropriate to do so, and if an aggrieved person had grounds to do so, he or she could challenge such discretion. on occasion the Minister might purport to use discretion but consider matters that he had no business to consider for any reason. I am glad that the Minister has said clearly that clause 1(5) would make such a discretionary decision unchallengeable, no matter now manifestly unjust it was.

Mr. Lloyd: The court would decide whether it was a matter of discretion. I think that in the examples that the hon. Gentleman was trying to think of, and was alluding to earlier, it would be a question of the circumstances in which discretion was applied rather than a question of discretion. The courts will have to determine whether that is a matter for them to review or not. There is nothing in clause 1(5) which provides for discretionary decisions because the intention and effect of the clause are similar to a provision which has formed part of our nationality law for the past 40 years. It is included in black and white, in section 26 of the British Nationality Act 1948, and more recently in section 44(2) of the British Nationality Act 1981. Therefore, the amendments would depart from a principle that has been a long-standing feature of nationality law under successive Governments.

The need for exemption is particularly pressing in this Bill because of the competitive nature of the scheme, which has a ceiling of 50,000 places, and because of the expected high proportion of unsuccessful applications.

If a person felt that a discretionary decision had deprived him of selection, often the decision could be meaningfully reviewed only if the courts also considered the relative claims of other people with whom the applicant had been competing. That would not be practicable. Even if it was, it would result merely in the substitution of one opinion for another. That must be the case when it is not simply a question of getting enough points to reach a pass mark which entitles people to British citizenship. It is a question of getting more points than other people. By securing a place, a person will deny that place to someone else. The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland recognised that that was so.

Mr. Adley: I heard what my hon. Friend said about those sections of existing immigration law which contain phrases or clauses similar to clause 1(5). Does he accept that in those instances British Ministers are answerable to Members of Parliament? What similar fallback position does he envisage for individuals in Hong Kong? Are he and his ministerial colleagues at the Home Office prepared to countenance hon. Members taking up cases brought to their attention with Ministers here in the same way that we mention cases involving our constituents?

Mr. Lloyd: The Home Secretary is not answerable for matters of discretion under nationality law. He makes his decision on the information available, and he is required to give no reasons. Obviously he would listen and receive letters dealing with the cases of people who might have applied for British citizenship, but there is no obligation on him to give reasons for his decision. That is absolutely clear under the present legislation. The Bill requires that the final granting of British citizenship belongs to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, and he would have to satisfy himself of the suitability of the applicant to be a British citizen. For that reason, there will be Home Office officials in Hong Kong to consider the recommendations made by the Governor to ensure that they are suitable people on whose behalf my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary should exercise the discretion which remains with him.

Mr. Marlow: As has been said from a sedentary position, my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary would have a negative power. If the Governor were to say to him, "Thou shalt have a certain person as a British citizen," and my right hon. and learned Friend had information that that person would be unsuitable for the United Kingdom, then, as we have discussed before, he would be able to say that the person could not come into the country. But let us suppose that someone who was eminently suitable for citizenship but who for the reasons given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford —cliques and cabals in Hong Kong—was not allocated one of the 50,000 British citizenships contacted an hon. Member, who then got in touch with the Home Secretary. In those circumstances, what would my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary be able to do about it, given the way that the Bill is drafted?

Mr. Lloyd: There are many people in Hong Kong who are suitable in that sense to be British citizens. However, the selection scheme that the House will eventually provide will be the means by which the Governor will choose those people who, because of their value to Hong Kong, as well as being eminently suitable to be British citizens, will be included among the 50,000.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: During my visit to Hong Kong, I heard two different views about the position if individuals wanted to appeal. I was told by a civil servant that every individual had the right to petition the Governor personally. When I asked the Governor about that, he was less inclined to accept that that was an appeal route. Do people have the right to petition the Governor under the existing rules? If they have that right, should the Governor not be required to provide reasons for his refusal?

7.30 pm

Mr. Lloyd: I do not know the details. I believe that there is a tradition whereby people can approach the Governor, but it is no substitute for the kind of appeal system that the hon. Gentleman may have in mind. The

[Mr. Lloyd]

objective process, as provided for in the Bill, will be laid down in Orders in Council. The Governor will have much less discretion than is assumed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford.

Mr. Madden: I accept that the Secretary of State will not be obliged to give reasons for his refusal to grant British citizenship under the British Nationality Act 1981, but the custom and practice over some years has been that when hon. Members, or those in another place, made representations to the Secretary of State and asked for explanations as to why an application had been refused the Secretary of State offered an explanation that enabled hon. Members to make further inquiries. Will that practice not continue under the new legislation?

Mr. Lloyd: On some occasions my right hon. and learned Friend has done that; on other occasions he has not. He has the discretion to decide whether it would be right for him to give information. My right hon. and learned Friend always tries to be as helpful as he possibly can. When reaching his conclusion, he would seek to take into account any representations that were made to him. We are talking, however, about giving reasons and explanations. Home Secretaries in successive Governments have frequently not done so; their judgment in particular cases was that it would not be helpful.

Arguments similar to those that I have advanced relating to appeals apply to the proposal made by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley): that the Governor or the Secretary of State should be required to give the reasons for a discretionary decision. Given the large number of decisions that will need to be taken about the detailed criteria for the scheme—for example, about the weight, in terms of points, to be given to different qualifications—a requirement to give reasons in all cases would be extraordinarily difficult to work and would not be very meaningful unless one knew what the reasons were in every other case.

This is a competitive exercise. I have stressed that the exemption in clause 1 will apply only to discretionary decisions. Anyone who reads the clause will see that it applies only to discretionary decisions. All other aspects of the selection and registration process will fall outside the scope of the exemption and, therefore, will be within the purview of the courts.

The inclusion of a provision in the Bill stating that explicitly is unnecessary. I know, however, that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland feels passionately about the matter. As I promised in Committee, I have thought long and hard about including words to reassure him. I do not believe that it is good practice to overload legislation with redundant clauses, but in this case I should have been willing to do so if it would have had no other effect than to make the Bill slightly longer. I am afraid, however, that I had to conclude not merely that the addition would be unnecessary but that it would be undesirable as it could raise doubts about the powers of the courts in relation to other statutes.

There is no better illustration of that than the hon. Gentleman's deep concern and the anxieties that have been expressed both this evening and in Committee, which spring from the fact that the words of the hon. Gentleman's amendment, which he wishes to be inserted in the Bill, already appear in the 1981 Act. The inclusion of section 44(3) in the 1981 Act—of doubtful necessity even then—has led some right hon. and hon. Members to assume that the courts cannot review actions taken under the statute unless the statute specifically allows them to do so. The House should not perpetuate that assumption, as it would if it were to accept the amendment. Should we continue to do that from time to time in new legislation —to reassure a particularly forceful hon. Member when he expresses a fiercely held worry—we would begin to raise doubts as to the extent of the courts' competence to review cases without specific legislative authority.

Mr. Maclennan: I am grateful to the Minister for the detailed way in which he is seeking to answer my point. Does he believe, however, that the presence of section 44(3) in the British Nationality Act 1981 leads to doubt about whether judicial review exists? It was included in the Act for the avoidance of doubt. It should be included in this Bill for the same reason.

Mr. Lloyd: To be fair, section 44(3) of the 1981 Act was drafted a decade ago, when this area of the law was less well developed than it is now. The courts are vigorous in asserting their right to review decisions taken by public bodies under powers conferred by Act of Parliament. To include similar words in this Bill would not help. They would add to the damage that the appearance of those words in the 1981 Act has retrospectively caused. I do not want that area of doubt to continue.

The fact that the hon. Gentleman is doubtful and believes that without those words there can be no judicial review leads me to point out to him that there are myriad other Acts on the statute book of which the same could be said; they are no different. There can be a judicial review under these Acts just as, under this Bill, there is the possibility of judicial review, without the words that the hon. Gentleman wants to include. If from time to time we were to include those words in various Acts, it would be possible to argue that if another Act did not contain them it was not intended by Parliament that there should be judicial review.

The fact that judicial review is available is demonstrated by the Immigration Act 1971—10 years before the British Nationality Act 1981—under which hundreds of challenges by way of judicial review are made every year, even though the Act contains no express provision that confers jurisdiction on the courts to consider such challenges. In the case of the Bill, that includes all aspects of its operation, except those discretionary decisions which clause 1(5) explicitly exempts.

Mr. Tebbit: Will my hon. Friend make it clear whether or not there will be the possibility of judicial review arising out of a decision by the Governor within the key entrepreneurs section, were someone to believe that, although he was a key entrepreneur in the top 500, he had not been selected?

Mr. Lloyd: That will be a matter for the courts to determine. I believe that that possibility would not arise, unless the individual could show that the criteria laid down by the House had not been followed. The Governor is required to abide by the rules that we lay down, both in this Bill and, more particularly in the case of the selection scheme, in Orders in Council.

Mr. Tebbit: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the intention of the legislation is that there should not be judicial review of the Governor's decision as to whether or not a man is one of the top 500 entrepreneurs in Hong Kong? Is that right?

Mr. Lloyd: Where there are elements of discretion that belong either to the Governor or to the Secretary of State, the intention is that that should not be a matter of judicial review. However, both the Governor and the Home Secretary are under a duty to abide by the law that is laid down in the Bill, if it becomes an Act, and by the rules and regulations that will appear in Orders in Council. It would be for the courts to decide whether the House had given an element of discretion to the Governor, or whether he had not followed the procedures laid down by the House.

Mr. Tebbit: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, because he is being very helpful. He is describing how it is not the intention of the Government to allow judicial review. The Bill is constructed in a way that is deliberately designed to limit or exclude the courts. My hon. Friend says that the only occasion on which judicial review could arise is where it could be shown that the Governor had not complied with the criteria set down in the legislation.

We cannot yet know what the legislation will look like, but if right hon. and hon. Members will refer to page 2079 of the amendment paper they will see what the Government's explanatory memorandum says about the criteria. I suggest to my hon. Friend the Minister that it would be unsurprising if they were the criteria published by a masonic lodge for membership. The idea that a court would take the view that the Governor had exercised his discretion in a way no reasonable man could have done —and that is the test in a judicial review—in deciding between applicant No. 500 and applicant No. 501 is totally absurd.

Mr. Lloyd: We shall come in due time to the Orders in Council, which will lay down the criteria. My right hon. Friend should not assume in too much detail what those criteria will be. We have done our best in the explanatory paper to show what our thinking is, but the usefulness of the Report and Committee stages is that they enable points to be made that we can bear in mind when preparing the Orders in Council that are to be brought before the House.

My right hon. Friend is saying that, where it is a matter of discretion under the law and under the Orders in Council, it cannot be reviewed by the courts, but where it is a matter of following requirements laid down by the Bill, or by the Orders in Council, it will be open to review.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend the Minister makes it plain that there will be no possibility, in his judgment, of appeal. As to the Orders in Council, why did not my hon. Friend follow the example that I set some years ago, of publishing in draft form the statutory instrument, so that the House could consider it while debating the Bill on Report? There is no reason why that could not have been done in this case. It would have made for a more informed debate, and we would not have the muddle over how the scheme would operate when it came to the point. My hon. Friend the Minister asks the House to pass the Bill before it can see what kind of statutory instrument he brings forward.

Mr. Lloyd: I am not asking the House to pass a statutory instrument that has yet to be brought forward. I have covered most of the points made in debate except those of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and of my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch.

Mr. Marlow: My hon. Friend the Minister says that the guts of the thing will come forward in the statutory instrument, and to a certain extent we must take that on trust. My understanding of a statutory instrument is that one either accepts the whole of it or gets rid of the whole of it, and that it is not amendable. Is my hon. Friend proposing a new form of statutory instrument?

Mr. Lloyd: I am not. I am saying that the Report stage gives plenty of opportunity for my hon. Friend to say what he would and would not like to see in the Bill.

I return to amendment No. 18, in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford and others of my hon. Friends. My right hon. Friend has made half my remarks for me. He is right that a major reason why there should not be an appeal to the Home Secretary is that the Governor will have the information and will be running the scheme according to the means laid down by the House. Therefore, the information available to my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary will be the same as that available to the Governor—it would have come from Hong Kong.

As the criteria are designed to determine those who are most valuable to Hong Kong, my right hon. Friend is right in thinking that the assessment will be more effectively and efficiently made by the Governor. However, he retains to himself the final determination of whether someone should be registered as a British citizen. He will make up his mind on the person's suitability to be a British citizen, though the recommended person will come forward on the Governor's evaluation of his or her value to Hong Kong, the Governor having observed the process that we have set down for him.

No doubt a great many people will apply, and it would be impracticable for my right hon. and learned Friend to scrutinise not just the appeals but the merits of all who had been successful in gaining a recommendation. As there is a top limit on the numbers, if my right hon. and learned Friend allows some appeals, others would have to drop out because of the upper limit set by the House. That would create enormous difficulties, as well as a huge backlog of cases. None of them could be decided until my right hon. and learned Friend had, in effect, reviewed them all. As the need in Hong Kong is for the reassurance that the Bill can give and for it to take effect quickly, it would be wholly counter-productive for the right of appeal to be enacted in the Bill. For that reason, my right hon. Friend's amendment must be rejected.

7.45 pm

Mr. Tebbit: First, may I seek your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The right hon. Gentleman cannot speak a second time without the leave of the House. Does the right hon. Gentleman have the leave of the House to do so? [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] The leave of the House is denied.

Mr. Tebbit: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was not seeking to address the House again on the issues but endeavouring to establish whether the House may vote

[Mr. Tebbit]

on amendment No. 18. I know that it would come not at this moment, but at the appropriate point in the consideration of the Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall have to give consideration to what happens to intermediate amendments, as that may have an influence on the Chair's judgment about the propriety of such a Division. I will consider the matter at the appropriate time, when I shall bear in mind the right hon. Gentleman's remarks.

Mr. Marlow: Two issues still concern me at this stage. The first is the involvement of the courts, as suggested by the Opposition amendment. The second, and more important, is the aspect raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) in his amendment, concerning the involvement by the House at a later stage.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) for clarifying his amendment, which would if anything extend the circumstances in which there could be judicial review and court involvement. I am deeply concerned about that. In respect of various measures passed by the House, notably the community charge, we recently discovered that many aggrieved citizens flocked to the courts and sought to make that legislation more difficult to implement.

If the involvement of the courts is to increase, it is surely possible that many people in Hong Kong will be able to claim not that discretion has been applied unreasonably against them but that in some way, even through the distribution of a notice by post, the matter was incorrectly administered. They might choose to take their argument before the courts to be decided. If the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central were to persist with his new clause and gain a majority for it, there is a real risk that the intentions behind the legislation could be rendered, to a great extent, unworkable.

As for the amendment tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford, I offer the following scenario. Let us suppose that, in the exercise of his powers, the Governor of Hong Kong were to award British citizenship to a certain gentleman. If my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, in the exercise of his powers, said that he had no objection and that this was a suitable person to be given a British passport and to come to the United Kingdom; and if the gentleman then came to reside here, perhaps in Chingford or in my constituency, at an early date—despite the intentions of the Bill, which are that he should stay in Hong Kong until 1997; if, as I say, this gentleman took immediate advantage of his citizenship, he might at some subsequent stage receive a communication from a friend or relative still living in Hong Kong who himself had sought to acquire the valuable privilege of British citizenship. The Governor of Hong Kong, exercising his discretion within the rules, or people acting on behalf of the Governor, might, in the view of this friend or relative, have unreasonably denied him the opportunity to which he felt he was entitled to be granted a British passport.

My consituent might then come to me and say, "Mr. Marlow, there has been a gross miscarriage of justice. The Governor has looked at my friend or relative's application and, because of various circumstances in Hong Kong, has improperly exercised his discretion and refused to grant my friend or relative the passport which, knowing British law, knowing you and knowing the fabric of British society, I believe he should have been granted. What, Mr. Marlow, are you going to do on behalf of my friend or relative?"

I could say, "He is in Hong Kong; it is nothing to do with me." He might say, "Mr. Marlow, it is something to do with you because you are a Member of Parliament and Parliament is responsible for what is happening in Hong Kong." What should I do? Should I write a letter to the Governor of Hong Kong telling him that a constituent of mine has brought me a point to which I have no answer? What status do I have with the Governor of Hong Kong? None at all. If I write to him, what will he say? What will he do? What interest will he have in communicating with me?

No doubt I would receive a polite, decent reply, full of a great deal of explanation, from the Governor, but that is not my role as a Member of Parliament. I would much rather write to my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary to learn from him his views on the problem. That is the way parliamentary democracy works; that is the role of a Member of Parliament. So, before we vote on the new clause, I should like to ask my hon. Friend the Minister for his views on this conundrum.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 176, Noes 297.

Division No. 230] **[7.53 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Adley, Robert
Allen, Graham
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carr, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Ingram, Adam

Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ken Eastham and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham

Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 3

APPLICATIONS FOR ASYLUM

'The Secretary of State shall by direction given to the Governor make provision for him to consider applications for asylum in the United Kingdom in respect of any person who, by virtue of his race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, may be in danger of persecution in Hong Kong after 30th June 1997.'.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Darling: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

As I said in Committee, I doubt whether we would be discussing the Bill were it not for the appalling events in Tiananmen square last year, not because there would not have been problems and uncertainties about what will happen in Hong Kong after 1997 but because there is no doubt that the events that we saw on television last year shocked people around the world and understandably led people inside China and Hong Kong to fear for their lives, or at least their safety, if the regime in China is the same after the handing over of the colony in 1997.

It is all the more surprising that the Bill makes no special provision for those who seek what I might loosely call asylum. We are told that it deals with the special circumstances of Hong Kong, which I understand, but I should have thought that the Government would make some provision to deal with the special circumstances of those who fear persecution or fear for their lives—the usual criteria that are considered for asylum.

Instead, we are told that the individuals concerned will have to use the normal system for considering applications for asylum, even though it is common ground that there are special circumstances in Hong Kong.

That is where the problems start. Anyone who has had the slightest contact with the asylum system that we operate will know that our reputation of being a haven for those who fear for their lives can at times be tarnished by the way in which we operate the asylum regime. One has only to consider the case of the 33 people from China who are currently in this country to see one of the difficulties that they face.

If individuals on the way to this country make the mistake of landing in a third country, the Government's attitude—they would pray in aid the United Nations convention—is that they must make their applications for asylum in that third country. That can be difficult, because the third country may not have the recognised systems and recognised rule of law and due process of law that we have in this country. It could be a country where, to put it bluntly, the system for dealing with asylum may be rudimentary.

In terms of the United Nations convention, the Government are entitled to say, "We are not prepared to entertain your applications for asylum. You must go to a third country." That is a problem for people who fear persecution in 1997 or thereafter. Because of the special circumstances of Hong Kong, there should be a special system to consider applications for asylum from Hong Kong. A number of people may fear for their safety.

I am prepared to concede that if an individual arrives in this country claiming asylum, the application is dealt with expeditiously and normally quite fairly, and the outcome is usually satisfactory from the point of view of the applicant. However, it is obvious that, when more than one or two such people arrive—it may be five or six, or 20 or 30—the attitude of the Government, especially the Home Office, changes dramatically.

We need only look at the position of the Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka in the mid-1980s or the Kurdish refugees who came from Turkey last year. The Government pulled down the shutters. In the case of the Kurdish refugees, the Government even sent immigration officers on to the aeroplane, and they clambered over passengers sorting out who was likely to be visiting this country in the normal course of events and who might be seeking asylum. Some asylum seekers did not even get off the aeroplane, so anxious were the Government to avoid what they regarded as a troublesome crisis.

I make that point because, if things are going badly in 1997, there could well be more than one or two people who fear for their lives or the safety of their families. The Government should set up a special system to deal with Hong Kong. I know that it will be said that there are other areas in the world that are trouble spots and are likely to generate people seeking asylum. That may be, but if we are dealing with the special circumstances of Hong Kong, we should have provisions to deal with people there.

Had it not been for the events of last year, which must have led people to fear for their lives, I doubt that we would even be discussing anything to do with Hong Kong. Most people in this country would like to think that the people of Hong Kong will be treated fairly and reasonably. I am afraid that, without a special scheme, those people

will have to take their chances in the general regime and try to find refuge somewhere in the world—perhaps in this country, perhaps elsewhere.

I understand that the Government will sign an intergovernmental agreement in the next week or two that will radically alter the asylum system in Europe. There will be a common visa system throughout Europe, so that, if an applicant for asylum is refused entry in one EEC country, he will be refused entry for the entire EEC—in effect, the whole of western Europe. If that system is introduced, it will cut the opportunities available to those people who genuinely fear for their lives and their safety. The House should think long and hard before endorsing that system.

It is obvious that that development will have to be discussed at another time because it would be inappropriate to do so in this fairly narrow debate. It emphasises the point that we need a special system to deal with what are undoubtedly special circumstances. It may be that the problem will not arise and that by 1997 conditions will be radically different. But as we are debating the Bill in the belief that the problems may exist, it seems only right that we should introduce this special system to deal with people who may face a substantial risk to their lives.

8.15 pm

Mr. Madden: In supporting new clause 3, I refer to a specific case concerning applicants for political asylum from mainland China which I have raised in the House a number of times in recent weeks. I very much regret the fact that the responsible Home Office Minister is absent and that there does not seem to be any other Home Office representative here. Nevertheless, I hope that the Foreign Office Minister can announce the Government's intentions.

This case arose on Saturday 5 May when 33 mainland Chinese nationals arrived at Heathrow on their way from Panama to Canada, where they hoped to seek political asylum. It was discovered at Heathrow that, although they had valid passports, their visas for Canada were false. The carrier refused to take them on to Canada and they then requested political asylum in the United Kingdom. The immigration service initially treated them as asylum seekers, began interviewing with regard to their claims to asylum and granted them temporary admission to the United Kingdom pending the determination of their claims.

This is the normal method of handling asylum applications. There is an initial brief interview. The individuals are then admitted temporarily to the United Kingdom while a decision is taken at Home Office headquarters. This decision usually takes several months, during which the individuals can consult lawyers and further information and evidence can be submitted to clarify the basis of their claims for asylum. The individuals are sometimes invited to the Home Office for interview, at which time they can bring their own interpreters and lawyers to help them to explain their claim. This normal method has been applied up to now to all Chinese nationals who have applied for asylum in the United Kingdom following the Tiananmen square massacre.

On Monday 7 May, members of various voluntary groups were contacted to help collect the 33 from the airport. These voluntary groups have been co-operating since last June to provide pastoral care to Chinese refugees in this country. Various helpers from the groups took the 33 to accommodation in north and east London.

On Wednesday 9 May, the Home Office began to indicate that it had changed its mind about the group of 33 and was proposing to deport them from England to Panama. The Home Office would, therefore, cease considering their claims to asylum. The reason is that the United Kingdom operates a "safe third country" policy: if an asylum seeker has come from a third country which is regarded as safe by the Home Office, the asylum seeker can be sent back there to apply for asylum in that country. The only role of the United Kingdom authorities in such countries is to check that the third country is truly safe.

Members of the voluntary groups immediately began to check whether Panama was safe, and the information suggested that it was far from safe. The country is still chaotic after the change of Government. There are no legal safeguards for asylum seekers—the eligibility commission, which is supposed to consider asylum claims, has ceased to function. There is strong anti-Chinese feeling in the country, stirred up partly by the new Government. On Friday 11 May, representatives went to see Home Office officials to seek clarification——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am having difficulty understanding whether the people to whom the hon. Member refers came from Hong Kong. What do they have to do with Hong Kong?

Mr. Madden: They are from mainland China. They have passed through——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The new clause relates not to mainland China but to Hong Kong.

Mr. Madden: Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These people passed through Hong Kong on their way to Panama and were seeking to travel to Canada—*[Interruption.]* I do not know what is amusing the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) so much. We are debating matters that are of vital concern to many people.

The new clause says:

"The Secretary of State shall by direction given to the Governor make provision for him to consider applications for asylum in the United Kingdom in respect of any person who, by virtue of his race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, may be in danger of persecution in Hong Kong after 30th June 1997."

The people to whom I refer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would fit precisely that definition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is talking about 33 people who are not from Hong Kong but from another country and not about 1997 but about 1990. I find it difficult to connect the two.

Mr. Madden: The group of people to whom I refer were in Hong Kong and are seeking political asylum in this country. As this debate concerns the procedures operated by the United Kingdom Government in relation to political asylum, I should like to persuade you, Sir, that it is in order to raise their case.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is difficult to understand what the case has to do with the danger of persecution in Hong Kong. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will address his remarks to the new clause or resume his seat.

Mr. Madden: Let me conclude briefly——

Mr. Marlow: Would it be fair to say that, if the group went back to Hong Kong, they would be in danger of persecution there?

Mr. Madden: It is clear that, had they been deported by the United Kingdom Government to Panama, they would have been returned to mainland China. I hope that the Minister may be able to deal with the question whther they would have been returned to Hong Kong in his reply. There are important questions for the Home Office and the Government to answer in relation to this case, which has a direct bearing on those in Hong Kong who may seek political asylum under the new clause.

On Friday 11 May, representatives went to see Home Office officials to seek clarification and explain to the Home Office their view that Panama was not a safe third country. The officials rejected the representations but said that they would be willing to consider further representations. At 5.15 pm on Friday, the voluntary groups were informed that the 33 were to be collected by coach on Saturday, to be taken for interview at the airport with a view to their deportation by Sunday.

The 33 Chinese asylum-seekers instructed a lawyer to act for them. He sought the following assurances from the senior immigration officer at Heathrow: first, that the 33 would not be taken into detention at Heathrow on Saturday; secondly, that lawyers could be present at interviews between officials and the 33; and, thirdly, that adequate time would be allowed for the courts to be approached and asked to test the legality of the deporation order—precisely the matter that we were dealing with in the debate immediately before this. The officer refused to give any of those assurances. On Saturday, the interviewees were moved to Harmondsworth detention centre, near Heathrow—a further indication that the immigration service intended to interview the 33 rapidly, place them in detention and deport them before the weekend ended.

A team of six immigration officers and three Chinese interpreters from the immigration service were present. However, the coach that had been sent to collect the 33 came back empty, the 33 apparently having gone into hiding from immigration service officials.

I hope that, in his reply, the Minister will say that the Government are now willing to make a public statement indicating that there is no intention to deport the group of 33, a substantial number of whom fled from China by way of Hong Kong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. What is the connection between the 33 people to whom the hon. Gentleman is referring and the Bill and the new clause?

Mr. Madden: Their case is central to the treatment by the British Government of those seeking political asylum. If the episode has done anything, it has sent an enormously worrying and alarming signal to Hong Kong. The message that they will receive is as follows: "If you have it in mind to seek political asylum in Britain after 1997, we shall treat you in this way." In my view, the way in which the 33 people have been treated is a shameful indictment of the Government, whose record and reputation on political asylum are, in turn, shameful.

I hope that the Minister will make it clear that the 33, who include a girl who has just had a baby, will be allowed to come out of hiding and will be given a firm, clear assurance that they will be allowed what they and their representatives requested at the time—the right to seek a judicial review of the way in which the case was handled. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a matter that we were debating earlier today.

I hope that the Minister will be able to give those assurances. Unless he does, any fine words that he may utter in reply to the debate will have an extremely hollow ring, not only in this country but in Hong Kong. I hope that the Minister will say, on behalf of the Home Office, that when we are presented, as we undoubtedly will be, with further applications from Hong Kong, between now and 1997 and thereafter, the procedures applied will not be the shameful procedures applied in this case. I hope that the Minister can give those assurances, so that representatives of the group can give the advice that they were eager to give in the first place and so that those people's applications can be properly considered and a judicial review properly undertaken by the courts. They have been waiting for some weeks for such a public statement from the Home Office.

Lastly, I ask the Minister to confirm or deny the rumour that the decision to deport the 33—who included a girl in the advanced stages of pregnancy—was personally approved by the Home Secretary. I have alleged that in the House on a number of occasions in recent weeks but the Home Secretary has sought to dodge the issue and to avoid giving any statement or explanation to the House. I hope that, before the end of our debate, we shall be given the assurance that I have sought and that we will be told whether the decision was personally endorsed and approved by the Home Secretary. If it was, it makes the whole thing even more shameful.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will know that I have registered with the Registrar of Members' Interests my recent visit to the colony.

The new clause deals with the worst possible scenario. I wish to address my comments to a group of people who could be the subject of political discrimination arising from the changeover in 1997. We all know that Hong Kong has not practised democracy as we understand it in the western world—first, because, over the years, the people have felt grateful to the colonial authorities which, in their view, rescued them from the political forces in China; and, secondly, because the colony has been about the practice of enterprise and money-making, which is why there are so many successful businesses there.

In the run-up to 1997, Hong Kong will be faced with the prospect of having to come to terms with democratic arrangements, and the people of Hong Kong will participate in elections. At present, the country is under the control of an Executive Council monitored, in effect, by a Legislative Council. As it moves from one form of control to another, major convulsions in the administration of its society will result. During the period of changeover to democracy in Hong Kong there will be some dramatic times as people, recognising that they have the right to vote, exercise that right and participate in political debates. As they do that, they will look over their shoulders and be ever conscious of what is happening in China. They will consider the implications of what they are doing in the context of that political debate.

8.30 pm

When I was in Hong Kong two weeks ago, I was aware of two bodies of opinion. One body of opinion told me repeatedly that the Hong Kong people did not want to draw too much attention to the tensions that might exist between the colony and China. They did not want to draw attention to the difficulties. Some weeks before I arrived in the colony it was suggested that the Chinese authorities had sponsored the theft of three Mercedes cars and shipped them back to China. That led to a major row in the Hong Kong press. Others believed that such matters should not be raised because they were sensitive and might unsettle the Chinese authorities.

Conversely other people, including politicians such as Mr. Martin Lee, a well-known figure in Hong Kong, believed that the public had a responsibility to debate those matters in the most open fashion. Mr. Lee believed that the Executive Council should act. He called for representations from the British Government to the Chinese Government with regard to the theft of the cars. There is a clear divergence of views on the extent to which the debate should be open, public and voluble as against quiet and discreet.

Over the next few years the people of Hong Kong will be required to take part in that debate. Unless those who are most voluble, and who believe that they have a contribution to make in ensuring safeguards at the time of changeover, are at least aware of the possibility that they may have the right of asylum in another country, that debate might be dampened down. I am most concerned about that group of people.

I do not believe that that group is particularly large. However, to some extent the future of the changeover and the compromises that must take place in the period up to the changeover, will be issues which that small group, as politicians and leaders of the community, will have to address following the elections in 1992 and subsequently. That is very important.

There is another part of the population which we must consider in that context. The problem with addressing that part of the population is that, by implication, in examining their problem, we might open the floodgates in a way that some politicians in this country might try to exploit. When I was in Hong Kong and in Macau, I was aware of major demonstrations. I was in the area just before the anniversary of the events of 4 June although I had no intention of visiting Tiananmen square as was suggested, I believe, by the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) on television. That was not my intention. We planned to spend a weekend in southern China on a cultural visit.

As I said, when I was in Macau and in Hong Kong I was aware of demonstrations on the streets. What will happen to the political leaders who are currently involved in those demonstrations? Must they now curtail their activities because they cannot be sure that they will have the right to be heard in an asylum application in 1997? I am worried about that group of people. I understand the problems that arise from considering that matter. Some people may demonstrate or become involved in finding a way round the Government's nationality proposals. They may believe that by becoming involved they can find another way of getting a right of abode elsewhere.

If some way could be found to assure those people that if they are politically active and their livelihoods, lives or security is endangered, they have at least an opportunity to have their cases for asylum heard, it would do much to mitigate the problem.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman begs his own question. How does he suggest that that problem can be solved? He has a fair point that if someone is indulging in democratic protest in Hong Kong at the moment that might be anathema to the Chinese authorities when they take over. We should perhaps consider that. However, as the hon. Gentleman said, that might provoke other people into going over the top because they are not allowed in under the existing rules. They might protest and seek asylum that way. How would the hon. Gentleman solve that difficult and proper problem?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is why I deployed the counter-argument during my comments. I entered the caveat that I understood other hon. Members might want to enter. I recognise the difficulty and I do not know the answer. Ministers should be aware of the problem. If there is to be full democratic debate in Hong Kong over the next six years, we must accept that certain people in that society will inevitably have to expose themselves to potential penalty from the Chinese authorities in 1997. I hope that the Minister will consider my points.

Mr. Marlow: This is a very sensitive issue and we have had a valuable debate. The Opposition are to be congratulated on their new clause. I do not say that I agree with it, but we must carefully discuss the issue. I am sorry that there are so few right hon. and hon. Members in the Chamber to carry the debate forward.

I do not want to repeat the points that have already been made. I was interested in what the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) had to say about the problems facing refugees, and I shall be interested to hear what the Minister has to say about that. I do not often agree with the hon. Member for Bradford, West. However, obviously people in Hong Kong will be deeply concerned and influenced by the way in which we deal today with people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom.

The Bill's objective is to keep people in Hong Kong. As I have said, I do not believe that it will achieve that objective. It will have the opposite effect. However, I accept that it is the Government's objective to keep people there. If that is what they are trying to do, how sensitively and fairly the problems set out by the hon. Member for Bradford, West are dealt with by the agencies of Government will be noted in Hong Kong.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): The hon. Gentleman is making a speech.

Mr. Marlow: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman that was a percipient and perceptive comment. That is what I thought that I was doing.

Things in Hong Kong are bound to be sensitive and people in Hong Kong will be looking to this country to see how we deal with immigration and asylum issues because that will have an impact on how they react to the confidence-building measures that the Government intend for them.

There are other aspects of asylum of which even now we should take account. I suspect that I will part company with the hon. Member for Bradford, West in my next point. Most people are aware that there is a growing phenomenon throughout the world: the world is becoming

[Mr. Marlow]

a smaller place as radio and television transmitters receive and transmit news from one part of the world to another. People in the poorer parts are becoming increasingly aware of the relative wealth and good fortune of those in the wealthier areas.

There is a growing phenomenon, which has already been noted, of people wanting to move from the poorer parts of the world to the wealthier parts. We have seen it happen, and we are seeing it happen at the moment. Of course, at the same time travel is becoming more readily available. There are many benefits from that—for example, it is cheaper and more people can avail themselves of it. Also, people have already made the transition and migrated from the third world to Europe and to America. Having arrived in Europe and America, they acquire adequate wealth to remit some of their money to friends and relatives in the third world. There is a growing and accelerating tendency in this ever-smaller, growing world for people to wish to come and join us in our good fortune in the United Kingdom, Europe and the western world.

Stories have been written and scenarios have been presented. About 10 years ago, a book was written about people from Indonesia. There had been some devastation in Indonesia. People were chartering hulks—old leaky boats—and arriving in their tens of thousands, if not in hundreds of thousands, off Marseilles, leaving their boats and effectively marching into France and daring the authorities to do anything about it. I understand that there was a television programme quite recently about the poor and the oppressed of north Africa—I am not saying that they were oppressed by Governments, but they were oppressed by famine and their circumstances—wishing to migrate northwards into Europe. The problem of migration and the granting of asylum related to the desire for migration will become a much greater political issue in the western world, in the European Community, and certainly, I believe, in the United Kingdom.

When we are addressing this interesting new clause, we should bear the wider issues in mind. I do not know how Opposition Members view the matter at the moment but, at the back of their minds, they must be aware of the potential problem—I do not say that in a pejorative way—that will almost overwhelm western democracies unless we have an adequate but, at the same time, sensitive way of dealing with it. Millions of people are suffering from starvation, millions of people are suffering from deprivation, and millions of people are suffering from a lack of civil liberty and from political harassment in the countries in which they live. Many of those millions are seeking and will continue to seek to migrate.

When my hon. Friend the Minister responds to the debate, I hope that he will address not only the short-term aspects of this issue and the very real importance of the Government's assessment of the issue with regard to the future of Hong Kong, given what the Government are trying to do—and with good motive are trying to do—but the potential problems of the long-term and escalating issue of large-scale migration.

New clause 3 states:

"The Secretary of State shall by direction given to the Governor make provision for him to consider applications."

I assume that "by direction" means writing a chap a letter and telling him how he should do it and what powers he has, or did the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) have it in mind that it should be written into an Order in Council that the House should address at a later stage? Is it a matter for the Secretary of State, or is it a matter that the hon. Gentleman considers is proper for the House to have——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I suspect that the hon. Gentleman might be trying to delay proceedings on the Bill. I hope that he is not doing that.

Mr. Marlow: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman is of that opinion. It would be totally inappropriate and wrong for any right hon. or hon. Member to seek to delay the proceedings on the Bill. I am sure that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would take appropriate action were that to arise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am listening with great care and apprehension to the hon. Gentleman's speech.

Mr. Marlow: I am grateful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your great courtesy in listening to my speech with such care.

The new clause includes the words,

"to consider applications for asylum".

Will the Governor decide or recommend? Who is to make the final decision? The new clause goes on with the words, "in respect of any person who, by virtue of his"——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman will carry on as long as he wants. He could cut his comments quite short if he were just to read what is on the amendment paper. All the answers that he wants are set out in the new clause.

Mr. Marlow: That is the hon. Gentleman's view. I have read the new clause several times to myself, but I shall read it out aloud if the hon. Gentleman would be more convinced by it.

The new clause states that the Governor should consider applications. Who is to make a decision on those applications? Is it the Opposition's intention that, yet again, the Governor should have the power effectively of deciding who should get citizenship in this country, or do they believe that the matter should be referred to my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary?

8.45 pm

After 30 June 1997, people who belong to a certain race—however that is defined—or religion, splinter group from a religion, nationality or political opinion might be in danger of persecution in Hong Kong. That could be a great number of people. Hong Kong is a haven—thank goodness for that—for capitalism. It is a very successful capitalist economy. Although there has been some change in the economic policy of the People's Republic of China over the past few years, there has not been a great change in political policy—there is great repression there. We have noticed in the not-too-distant past, Mao Tse-Tung and the great revolution—I forget its name at the moment.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Not the long march?

Mr. Marlow: No, not the long march. It was 15 or 20 years ago—the cultural revolution. Who is to say that, in 1996, there will not be another cultural revolution—perhaps a more vigorous and violent cultural revolution than before? Is it not possible in those circumstances that any shopkeeper, share owner or anybody in a position of management or authority within Hong Kong could

maintain the risk after 1997 as the Chinese authorities take over? Is not that in a way opening the door even wider than the Opposition might intend to open it? As a result of the Government's proposal, there is a possibility of 250,000 or more Hong Kong Chinese coming to this country.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Rubbish.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman says, "Rubbish". Does he want to sustain that point?

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): What about the statistics?

Mr. Marlow: The immigration statistics over the past six years are significant. Over the past three years, for example, the number of immigrants to this country from the third world would be sufficient to populate a whole parliamentary constituency. Between the two previous elections, the number of immigrants from the third world —people with different cultural backgrounds and people with largely poor backgrounds—who have come to this country has been sufficient to populate a town the size of Northampton. That is a great number of people.

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): Does my hon. Friend agree that, although the number of people whom he describes coming to this country is considerably lower, thankfully, than it has been under socialist Administrations——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We are talking about people seeking political asylum from Hong Kong. I hope that we shall stick to that topic.

Mr. Marlow: I am sorry about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) was seeking to lead me down a road that I was originally dragged down by the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing). The fault is not my hon. Friend's. It rests with the Opposition.

Should a regrettable event take place—I do not know whether an event can be regrettable before it happens—such as a culutural revolution squared or a cultural revolution with knobs on in China and if the new clause is passed—I understand why the Opposition have tabled it and to a certain extent it does them credit because it shows their civility and decency—there must be a risk—there are emotive considerations to any word one chooses and I do not use "risk" in a pejorative way—or a real possibility that, whatever the number of immigrants resulting from the Government's details in the Bill, the number of applications for asylum as a result of the new clause—I am still in the dark about whether the applications would be granted by the Governor or the Home Secretary—could be 10,000, 100,000 or 500,000. There are 6 million people in Hong Kong now and many——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is the hon. Gentleman competing with Norman?

Mr. Marlow: If the hon. Gentleman is saying that numbers are not important and are not an issue, let him stand on his own two feet and tell the House that the number of immigrants is not of interest or concern to the British people. If that is what he is saying, let him say it loud and clear. I am happy to give way to him.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Under the next amendment.

Mr. Marlow: It may be out of order to say so, but the hon. Gentleman says from a sedentary position that he will deal with the matter under the next amendment.

If events go wrong in China and the black and gloomy scenario, the Gotterdämmerung or——

Mr. Foulkes: The Armageddon.

Mr. Marlow: —the Armageddon—I thank the hon. Gentleman—develops, and if the new clause is accepted, well intentioned though it is, there is a real possibility that 500,000 to 1 million Hong Kong Chinese would reasonably feel that they were in danger of persecution in Hong Kong after 30 June 1997.

I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister is aware of the general feeling on Conservative Benches about the measure. He will not be unaware of the anxiety on these Benches should such a new clause be passed.

Mr. Maclennan: I hoped that a new clause such as this would not be necessary, because the practice of British Governments in dealing with asylum cases would have given security to and assured those who might be apprehensive of their political position following 1997.

The hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), rightly, raised the case of the 33 Chinese people who came from Hong Kong and sought political asylum. It casts a lurid light over the practice of the Home Office in dealing with asylum cases. I too have made representations to the Home Office about it, but the questions raised by the case have not been answered. Many of those people undoubtedly have a strong case for political asylum. That they should all have been made the subject of summary proceedings and that passages should have been booked to send them back to a country where they were fearful for their future does not conform with the best British methods of dealing with asylum. Therefore, the case is pertinent background to the new clause which, as I have said, I had hoped would not have been necessary.

The new clause would be difficult to operate, if it were enacted. It would be operated against the background of tight controls over immigration and of many people, dissatisfied at having been excluded on other grounds from the United Kingdom, looking increasingly desperately as the 1997 deadline approaches for some other way out. To impose on the Governor the responsibility for evaluating the claims of those people ahead of that time would be an onerous burden.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: We have some experience of screening in Hong Kong.

Mr. Maclennan: We do not have experience of screening on the scale that might develop if there were no amelioration in Peking. I would prefer to hear the Minister say that the Government will look seriously at all cases of asylum as and when asylum is sought. That must be the right way to proceed. That assurance could be backed up by a clear sign of the Government's rethinking of the case of the 33 Chinese. Without some sign on that score, any assurances given will sound rather empty.

Although there may be insuperable problems with the new clause, I am extremely symapathetic to the Opposition's purpose in tabling it because I hope that it will elicit from the Government how they intend to deal with these problems as they arise. People such as Martin Lee are undoubtedly exposed, as many others who are courageously seeking to lead the country out of the period

[Mr. Maclennan]

of colonisation towards the objective of one Government of two systems in one country through democratic processes. One does not wish to name names or to single out people. Martin Lee has singled himself out. There are many such people, and the number will increase.

If the Government's purpose of maintaining the population of Hong Kong and the stability of the political situation there is to be supported, the question of asylum cannot be ducked. It is not dealt with directly in the Bill, and the Opposition are right to raise it in the new clause.

Mr. Tebbit: We need not detain ourselves much longer on this new clause. I do not want to delay matters because I sense that the Opposition, who are whipped to vote against the Bill, are melting away every moment. I hope that many of them will join me in the Lobby tonight, if we reach Third Reading, to reiterate the Labour party's opposition to the Bill, as stated by its Front-Bench Members, if not its Back-Bench Members, on Second Reading.

Some important issues are raised by the new clause. They can be dealt with quickly. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) took a lengthy walk around some of the problems that are raised by the new clause, but no one can be in any doubt that he pointed to some serious problems which will arise in the future.

Those of us who watched television the other evening and saw pictures of even internal refugees in the Soviet Union pleading that they were starving in Moscow following their flight from ethnic and political problems cannot doubt that far larger numbers of people around the world will seek to leave countries which are deep in ethnic, political and economic problems to go to countries which are more peaceable.

9 pm

One cannot assume that everyone who arrives at the shores of Great Britain saying, "I am in difficulties with the Government of the country in which I live," or, "The country in which I live is suffering from civil war," or all people whose countries are afflicted by some other form of violence can properly be admitted. We simply cannot do that. We would have to consider that danger if we legislated in the manner suggested in the Bill.

I may find myself in complete agreement with the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire, North (Mr. Maude). At present we have a system that has been operated by successive Governments, under which those who are regarded as political refugees can be given asylum in the United Kingdom. If we opened that up in terms such as those suggested in the amendment, even if only for Hong Kong, which might set a precedent for other areas of the world, we should have opened a door which would be so wide open as to be unacceptable.

Not everyone who is in political difference with his Government is necessarily a desirable citizen to admit to one's country. Not everyone whose country is suffering from civil war can be admitted. We could not easily admit to Britain the entire people of the unfortunate country of the Lebanon simply because a civil war was raging there.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will not accept the new clause and will say that he and the Government will abide by the rules and arrangements which have been in use for many years, to which we should stick, even in particularly hard cases.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Francis Maude): This is a serious subject and it is right that the House takes it seriously and gives itself the opportunity to debate it in the context of the new clause.

I had a good deal of sympathy with the point made by the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), who, sadly, has left the Chamber. He spoke of the need for debate in Hong Kong to be open and full and not constrained by the unique circumstances in which Hong Kong finds itself. It is important that the Hong Kong Government and the British Government operate in such a way that people do not feel that they are under such a constraint. That would be bad for Hong Kong.

Traditionally, Hong Kong has had a spirit of open and free debate. Those of us who have been there and faced the massed ranks of the Hong Kong media know that Hong Kong does not feel like a closed, repressed society where comment is constrained. While occasionally, I, like many of us, have been victim of that open and free comment, none of us would want it to be quelled in any way. It is important that we should do what we can to ensure that that spirit remains. It is essentially a part of the way of life of Hong Kong, which the joint declaration commits both China and Britain to preserve after 1997.

I understand the spirit that lies behind new clause 3, but it is fundamentally misconceived. Although there are unusual circumstances in Hong Kong, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) correctly stated, arrangements are in place whereby after 1997 signatories to the 1951 convention on refugees will operate in respect of people in Hong Kong in precisely the same way as they operate now.

Several hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), took the opportunity to talk about specific cases and, in the context of those specific cases, to dwell a little on the way in which asylum policy operates in general in this country. It is not for me to comment on the general operation of those provisions or on the specific cases. The hon. Gentleman is an ingenious parliamentary operator and will be able to find plenty of opportunities to question my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, who has specific responsibility for these matters.

However, the hon. Member for Bradford, West will know that it is customary international practice to regard the most appropriate country to consider a claim for asylum to be the signatory country of the 1951 convention at which the applicant first arrives. Panama is such a signatory and it has been decided that Panama is a safe third country in the normal sense. I stress that that has been decided not by us but by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Panama is safe, in the sense that it can be expected not to reject genuine applicants for asylum.

I hope that that deals with the hon. Gentleman's point. It is a fundamental misconception for him to believe that we unilaterally decided that Panama is a safe country. That is not a decision that would be taken by one country on its own.

Mr. Madden I am grateful to the Minister for his kind remarks, and I accept his point. However, I hope that the impression that he is seeking to leave—that in some way Britain would be required to deport those young people to Panama—is wholly untrue. At the core of our concern is the fact that the Home Office is refusing to allow a judicial review of decisions in this case, while halting deportation to enable proper judicial reviews to take place.

As the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department is now sitting on the Treasury Bench, I should be grateful if the Minister would take the opportunity of this debate to make it clear that, if those young people come out of hiding and if a judicial review is applied for, no action will be taken to deport them to Panama or anywhere else.

Mr. Maude: I shall not be drawn into commenting on that specific case any further, because it does not fall within my responsibilities; nor does it arise—except tangentially—from this debate. However, the hon. Gentleman's points will have been heard and will no doubt be properly dealt with. As I have said, he will have opportunities to raise this matter in the ordinary course of events.

The new clause is fundamentally misconceived because, even if it were included in the Bill, it could not operate after 1997 because it gives the Home Secretary the power to direct the Governor of Hong Kong to do certain things —and the Governor of Hong Kong will not be the Governor of Hong Kong, and will certainly not be subject to directions from the Home Secretary, after 1997. Therefore, the provisions could apply only until 30 June 1997.

Those who have reason to believe before 1997 that they will be subject to persecution after 1997 for any of the reasons set out in the new clause are entitled, under the sensitive services scheme provided by the Bill, to apply for consideration. As was said in Committee, that is not limited to Crown or to Hong Kong Government servants. It is open to those in the private sector and to those who may have been commentators on or participants in the political process. Therefore, there are specific provisions for those who believe before 1997 that they may be subject to persecution after 1997.

For those who cannot anticipate that, or who become subject to persecution after 1997, the ordinary procedures of the 1951 convention would apply in any event. I do not foresee that, after 1997, people in Hong Kong will be subject to persecution.

Mr. Darling: I accept that those in the sensitive services may be entitled to apply under the scheme; whether they succeed is another matter. My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) and others were saying that there will be ordinary citizens, not people in sensitive services, who for various reasons have done something that may lead them to believe that they have reason to fear after 1997. We are concerned about those people, and they do not qualify under the special scheme.

Mr. Maude: The sensitive services scheme, despite being described in that way, is not limited to Crown servants or to Hong Kong Government servants. It is open to private citizens who are not Government employees and are not connected with the Administration in any way. There is scope for journalists, perhaps, and private participants in the political process who have expressed themselves in a way that may lead them to have fear of persecution after 1997, to apply under the scheme.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It might arise that some people's political activities are recognised by the Chinese authorities only after the final tranche has been allocated.

Mr. Maude: That is, inevitably, a possibility. The hon. Gentleman is correct to raise it. The Bill has been introduced with the constraint throughout, and rightly so, that there is an absolute limit of numbers. It does not provide any open-ended commitment. There is a strict limit. The House would not permit us, even if we wanted to, to bring forward a scheme that would inevitably involve that which the hon. Gentleman seeks.

Mr. Tebbit: Perhaps my hon. Friend is sliding slightly away from the heart of the argument. He is saying that there would not be admission under the Bill, which does place a limit on numbers. There would be admission, if it were thought appropriate, under the normal practice of admitting refugees. That would mean that there would be no limitations.

There is a danger, against which none of us can guard, of people who think that they will be disadvantaged economically behaving in a politically outrageous way that is clearly grossly offensive to the Chinese authorities to try to get themselves admitted. They would be economic migrants, a category which is well known in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong authorities have a particularly tough and ruthless way of dealing with those who come within that category.

Mr. Maude: The House will have heard what my right hon. Friend has said, and will be able to judge whether what he suggests is a likely eventuality. I think that there is adequate scope within the Bill for those who can envisage that they may be subject to persecution and for those who, after 1997, find themselves subject to persecution. It is then that the convention will apply. I do not foresee that people will be subject to persecution. Many hon. Members from both sides of the House have urged upon the Government that we should have faith in the commitment of the Chinese Government to the joint declaration, and I do have such faith.

Mr. Wareing: Can we have faith after Tiananmen square?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman makes neither a new nor an illuminating observation from a sedentary position. He asks whether the same faith is possible after the events that took place in Tiananmen square. It is precisely because confidence has been affected in Hong Kong as a result of those events that we have introduced the Bill, and I believe that it will be effective in restoring some confidence. It does not radically alter the commitment which the Chinese Government have made to the joint declaration. Since the Tiananmen square events, they have put an enormous amount of work into framing the Basic Law and making arrangements for elections within that law. They are not in every respect arrangements with which we are content, and we shall have the opportunity to talk about that later.

The Chinese Government's approach, however, is an odd one for a Government who do not intend to be bound by the provisions of the joint declarations. If they were a

[Mr. Maude]

Government who were proposing to tear up the provisions after 1997, it would be odd for them to devote so much energy and effort to getting the provisions in a form with which they are content. I believe that there are grounds for being confident that the joint declaration will be respected after 1997. That involves a clear commitment to civil rights, which will be incorporated in both the Basic Law and the Bill of Rights that the Hong Kong Government are bringing forward.

9.15 pm

Mr. Darling: I hope that the Minister is right, and that there will be no need for anyone to seek asylum under this or any other scheme. Surely, however, he accepts the possibility that one or more people may be at risk. Our suggestion is that there should be a special scheme to deal with the special circumstances in Hong Kong. What is his opposition to that? He must accept that the possibility exists; we would not be discussing the Bill tonight if we were not afraid that things might go wrong. What is his difficulty?

Mr. Maude: One difficulty is the fact that asylum cannot operate except in respect of someone from a foreign country, and Hong Kong before 1997—which is when the provision will apply—is not a foreign country. The concept of people from Hong Kong seeking asylum in the United Kingdom is an absurdity.

Mr. Darling: I can see that argument. The Minister is effectively saying that, if there are people in Hong Kong who have reason to fear for their safety now, or at any time before 1997, the Government will say, "Tough luck: you can apply for asylum only after 1997, when you may not even be able to get outside, let alone do anything about it."

If the Minister accepts that there are special circumstances in Hong Kong, surely we must cater for those who may be at risk, and the Opposition are merely suggesting that there should be some system to do that. I do not accept the special services scheme, because I do not think that it is wide enough to deal with anyone who might be in difficulty as a special category.

I am beginning to think that the Government are concerned only about people with an economic need to get out of Hong Kong, and have no great regard for those who may genuinely fear for their lives. Those, however, are the people whom the majority of people in this country would like us to look after.

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman demonstrated earlier that he had not grasped the essential point that I made both in Committee and earlier in the debate. The sensitive service scheme provides for private citizens in precisely that category. His new clause proposes that the Governor should be required to give special consideration to applications for asylum. There cannot be applications for asylum from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom before 1997. That is why the provision is both unnecessary and inherently absurd.

Mr. Marlow: I think that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) was talking about the difficulties of getting out of Hong Kong after 1997. If an adverse regime in China had taken possession of Hong Kong, how would the citizens of Hong Kong be able to apply for asylum?

Mr. Maude: They would be in the same position as asylum seekers anywhere. People can seek asylum only when they have left the place that they wish to leave, and have arrived in the country in which they seek asylum.

Mr. Darling: The Minister is getting into some difficulty. If he examines the provisions relating to the sensitive service section, he will see that the people concerned are those who have

"been exposed to special considerations and special factors during the course of their duties."

Those claiming admission under that section would have to prove that whatever they were doing was in the course of their duties, or their employment. It does not take account of someone—for example, a stallholder—who for one reason or another took part in a demonstration or some other political activity, as that activity would not be carried in the course of his duties. In addition, such people would have to be

"in the course of serving Hong Kong or United Kingdom interests in either a civilian or military role".

The provision does not take account of the ordinary man in the street.

That is our objection to the Minister's assertion that we do not have to worry because the sensitive sevice section will take care of things. He knows that it concerns people who—because of the nature of their employment—may be at risk, and not people whose contact with political activity is entirely ancillary to their normal work.

Mr. Maude: I do not know what the hon. Gentleman is reading from, but I can assure him that it is not intended that the scheme should be limited in that way. It is intended that the scheme should operate in precisely the way that I and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department have set out. Commentators, journalists or participants in the political process who fear that they may be subject to persecution will be entitled to apply under the scheme. Therefore, provision is properly made.

Mr. Tebbit: The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) read from the explanatory memorandum which I had sought to incorporate in the Bill in order that we could be certain about the Government's intentions. But my hon. Friend has just told the House not to worry about that; that that is not what it will be like when it comes to the point. What credence can we put on any of the explanatory memorandum if that bit does not apply?

Mr. Maude: I make precisely the point that my hon. Friend made earlier—that it is precisely to enable the House to express its views about what is in the explanatory memorandum that we published it in the way that we did at this stage.

In those circumstances, new clause 3 is not appropriate. It would not be workable in the context of the Bill, and I invite the House to reject it.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 180, Noes 289.

Division No. 231] **[9.21 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Armstrong, Hilary

Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carr, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. James Dunnachie.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael

Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and Mr. Michael Fallon.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 4

REGISTRATION OF SPOUSES OF BRITISH CITIZENS

'The Secretary of State shall register as British citizens the spouses of British citizens resident in Hong Kong at the time of the coming into force of this Act.'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Paul Channon (Southend, West): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take the following: new clause 5—*Registration of widowed spouses*—

'The Secretary of State shall register as a British citizen a widowed spouse of a British citizen resident in Hong Kong who dies after the coming into force of this Act.'.

New clause 10—*Regulation of Spouses*—

'(1) The Secretary of State shall register as British Citizens, any persons, resident in Hong Kong, who have been married to British Citizens for at least three years and who would qualify for British Citizenship if they had been resident in Britain for three years after their marriage.'.

Amendment No. 9, in clause 1, page 1, line 16, leave out subsection (4).

Amendment No. 29, in schedule 2, page 5, line 3, after 'shall' insert 'not'.

Amendment No. 30, in page 5, line 8, leave out paragraph 2.

Amendment No. 31, in page 5, line 11, leave out 'whether the' and insert 'whose'.

Amendment No. 32, in page 5, line 11, leave out 'or after'.

Amendment No. 33, in page 5, line 12, leave out from 'above' to end of line 14.

Amendment No. 34, in page 5, line 25, leave out paragraph 5 and insert—

'5. For the purposes of this Schedule the spouse or child must be settled in Hong Kong and must not have citizenship or nationality other than under the principal Act.'.

Amendment No. 35, in page 5, line 7, at end insert—

'1A. The Secretary of State may register a child recommended to him by the Governor in circumstances where that child is dependent on his parents registered under this Act or where there are other reasons that in the Secretary of State's view justify the registration of such a child.'.

Mr. Channon: These amendments deal with a small group of people in Hong Kong and raise important principles that the House should consider. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) has added his name to one of the amendments. I have no objection to the wording that he adopted, and claim no credit for my own.

On Second Reading, my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary gave assurances about what would happen to the non-United Kingdom spouses of United Kingdom citizens. He said:

"There is no difficulty, provided that their husbands are still alive. Wives of British citizens will have an absolute right to come here under the immigration rules."—[*Official Report*, 19 April 1990; Vol. 170, c. 1574.]

That is not exactly the case. No doubt my right hon. and learned Friend was speaking off the cuff, and I do not blame him for that. However, I should be grateful if my hon. Friend the Minister would set out the true position.

The whole purpose of the Bill is to anchor in Hong Kong United Kingdom and Chinese Hong Kong citizens of a crucial nature. It is also important to anchor there a

number of United Kingdom citizens, many of whom are in the police and senior ranks of the civil service, apart from those engaged in commerce. I understand the problems of precedent that my hon. Friend the Minister may explain to the House and the argument that if we made such a provision for Hong Kong, we would have to do so in other cases. I do not accept that. Unless Hong Kong were a special case, there would be no need for the Bill. If the Government did not consider Hong Kong a special case, why are we wasting our time?

It seems only reasonable that the small number of non-United Kingdom spouses of British citizens should be allowed to come to this country without all the difficulties that attend their efforts at the moment. After all, in Hong Kong we are dealing with a Crown colony that we are returning to Chinese rule against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants. I cannot think of a single precedent for that in British colonial history, so I urge the House not to rely on the argument of precedent. It is a very strange situation.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Will the right hon. Gentleman fully explain that?

Mr. Channon: I will come to that point. If I can get the hon. Gentleman with me, I shall be very pleased.

There is a strange anomaly in what is being proposed, in that residents who are not United Kingdom citizens but who are offered passports will as a right be able to bring their spouses and children into this country, and they will get proper United Kingdom passports as part of the Bill's arrangements. At the same time, United Kingdom citizens already living in Hong Kong and who may have married Hong Kong Chinese or citizens from other countries will not have a right to a British passport in the same way as those who are privileged under the Bill. I find that very odd.

Mr. Skinner: Will the right hon. Gentleman be pushing it to a vote?

Mr. Channon: If I have the hon. Gentleman with me, I know that I will win.

The numbers involved are very small—I suspect, a few hundred at most. Probably no one knows exactly how many, but is is unlikely that they number more than a few hundred. Such a provision would almost certainly not result in any increase in the numbers who come to this country as British citizens because eventually, I accept, most will manage to achieve entry anyway. But the process through which they will be put is unfortunate considering what will happen to the Hong Kong citizens who will receive one of the 50,000 passports.

In any case, it is not true to say that the spouses have an absolute right to come here. They have to fulfil certain conditions before being admitted to this country. They have to show that they will not be a burden on public funds, which could sometimes cause serious problems. If someone loses his job in Hong Kong and has no job to come to here, how can he or his wife prove that his or her spouse will never become a burden on public funds? He or she may become such a burden precisely because the British Government—probably inevitably—are going to return Hong Kong to Chinese rule in 1997.

Settlement clearance has to be obtained, too. Indeed, some such cases have been turned down, as the Minister told me in a parliamentary answer not so long ago. Perhaps he could say a word or two about those cases—I concede that they may not have been on all fours with these—but in the absence of further explanation it looks as though there have been some cases of non-United Kingdom spouses of British citizens living in Hong Kong being refused admission to this country—and that cannot be right.

If the political emergency about which most people in Hong Kong are worried arises, I believe that quite a number of expatriates living in Hong Kong will think it much safer to leave Hong Kong before 1997 to be sure of getting their spouses into this country. That is contrary to the whole point of the Bill which, after all, is designed to anchor people in Hong Kong so that its economy does not collapse before 1997 because of a lack of people with necessary expertise. These expatriates are clearly worried about their spouses' position—rightly or wrongly—and I urge the Government to do what they can to help.

Some people have already left. I know of people who have left because of their fear of not being able to get their wives into this country; some are seriously thinking about the future and are likely to leave in the coming months and years.

The Government have made a concession on widows, but it does not go quite as far as it seems to: it applies only to widows with no other nationality. Some people are married not to Hong Kong Chinese wives or husbands but to Thais, Filipinos or Japanese. They may not have been in contact with their country for many years. Many of them, typically, have children at school in this country and own a house here. Nevertheless, they will have no right of entry even if their husbands have British passports. Is it any wonder that husbands—we are talking overwhelmingly of husbands—are seriously thinking of leaving Hong Kong instead of taking the risk of leaving their families in this position in the next few years?

Under the law—I do not refer to widows who have another citizenship—most widows will have the right to enter this country, but they will then need three years' residence before being entitled to naturalisation. Why cannot it be arranged, in these special circumstances, that the three years be served in Hong Kong?

There is no way of telling, merely by looking at a Hong Kong British dependent territories citizen's passport whether he has any connection with the United Kingdom. There is no way of showing that a person is married to a British citizen, and there is no way that such a person can be sure, despite what the Basic Law says, that she will be able to get out in 1997. So many of them will not take the risk, and will come here. I do not believe that that is what the Government want.

If my new clause cannot be accepted—it should be—can my hon. Friend say anything further tonight that might help those people? Could they not serve the three years residence in Hong Kong? Could a stamp be put on the passports of spouses who have British dependent territory passports to show that they have a connection with the United Kingdom? Is there any merit in the voluntary registration scheme, whereby the British authorities in Hong Kong would know who these spouses were and could help them?

The House must understand—I think it does—that we are living in volatile times in Hong Kong, and an emergency there cannot be ruled out. If, in the next few years, the Chinese regime remains hostile and is thought to

[Mr. Channon]

be damaging to the future of Hong Kong, many expatriates will leave because of their worries about their spouses.

I cannot believe that it is right, when we are giving special privileges to 50,000 people of Hong Kong citizenship, that we cannot give an assurance to a small number of United Kingdom citizens who have spouses, lives and careers that they want to look after and foster in the next few years. If they are in doubt, of course they will go now. Why take the risk of waiting until 1997 to see what happens?

9.45 pm

What reassurances can my hon. Friend the Minister give those people? I ask him to think seriously about their position, because they are worried about their future and spouses. If we do nothing to reassure them in legislation or by some other means, there is a risk that many will leave. That will be damaging for Hong Kong, for the Hong Kong police, for the civil service and for attempts being made by the Government to anchor key people in the colony.

I ask my hon. Friend to give the new clause serious consideration. Few people are involved, but it is an important point of principle.

Mr. Marlow: How many?

Mr. Channon: I think 200 or 300, but it may be 400 or 500; no one knows exactly. We are talking not about thousands of people but about a small number.

I urge the House to give the new clause serious consideration and to join me in pressing the Government to do more to reassure those people.

Mr. Maclennan: I support the purposes of the right hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) in tabling the two new clauses, which seek to achieve the same ends as my new clause 10. Like him, I am not certain that the method that I have advocated to achieve those ends is right, and I would happily support his new clause if he decided that it was appropriate to divide the House.

The primary purpose of the Bill is to offer British citizenship to a select number of people, thereby offering an incentive to the people on whom Hong Kong depends. I am concerned that the treatment of spouses, with which the new clauses deal, contradicts that policy. As long as a couple manage to persuade the immigration authorities that the primary purpose of marriage is marriage and not an attempt to get a passport, citizenship is won after the spouses has been in Britain for three years. But with the uncertainty in Hong Kong, many British residents who may have been working there for years and regard it as their home may feel forced to leave for the safety of their spouse. Furthermore, the most concerned people are most likely to be the business and professional people whom the Government want to remain in Hong Kong.

There are also people who are not catered for by the scheme set out in the Bill. The crucial Act is the British Nationality Act 1981, which establishes the three-year residence requirement. My drafting would seek to go with the grain of that Act and to cater for the needs of spouses. It does not therefore go quite as far as the new clause moved by the right hon. Member for Southend, West. It would simply allow residence in Hong Kong to be the equivalent of that in Britain—to acquire citizenship through one's spouse.

In Commitee, the Minister said:

"There is no practical difficulty about the position of the partners of British citizens when the citizens are still alive. Such non-British spouses can accompany their husbands or wives to the United Kingdom for settlement at any time. Of course, they do not get British citizenship immediately; that is governed by the normal rules under the 1981 Act."

That is the exact point. They had to leave their homes and businesses to secure the future of their spouses. That runs counter to the Bill's purposes. The Minister continued:

"we want to keep as closely to that Act as we can and have acted differently under the Bill only when there was a special and compelling reason to do so."

New clause 10 would keep within the requirements of the 1981 Act.

One of the most compelling reasons for people wanting to leave to ensure that their spouses are registered is the fear that something might happen to them and place their spouses in an untenable position. The Minister addressed that point in Committee and said:

"We accept that in such unique circumstances, it is natural that the expatriate community should be particularly anxious about widows—as they will be in the majority of cases—after 1997. Because of that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary gave a new assurance on Second Reading. He said that the widowed spouse of a British citizen who was resident in the territory at the time of the death would be allowed to settle here as a concession outside the immigration rules. That assurance will certainly be honoured by this Government."
—[*Official Report, Standing Committee A*, 10 May 1990; c. 94-5.]

That is of some value, but it is certainly not an assurance that leads directly to citizenship. It may well be that the widow or widower would have strong domestic and economic ties with Hong Kong and would therefore be in a dreadful dilemma as to what to do. New clause 10 would ensure that that dilemma did not arise in most cases. The Government accept the need to encourage people to stay to ensure that there is a viable Hong Kong between now and 1997. I therefore commend my new clause to the House.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Steven——

Several Hon. Members: Norris.

Mr. Speaker: Steven Norris.

Mr. Steve Norris (Epping Forest): It is terribly off-putting to have one of those faces that is so instantly forgettable. Quite apart from having dined within 6 ft of you this evening, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that in these circumstances it induces a certain sense of personal humility of a new order, even for those of us in this profession, and I shall remember this long after you have forgotten yet again, Sir. I remember what happened in 1983 when I was the Member for Oxford, East and you looked across at me and said, "Morris Oxford." It was not right then and it is not right still. That apart, I am grateful to you for calling me, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: I apologise. I was thinking what a nice wife the hon. Member has.

Mr. Norris: That is typically gracious of you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that my wife will be delighted to hear that. Of course I entirely agree, and I hasten to place it on the record.

I recall that on Second Reading my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) raised the matter which is the subject of the new clause with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, who used the words of which my right hon. Friend reminded us. He said that spouses in this position have an absolute right to enter. That remark was repeated more than once. I share the reservations expressed by my right hon. Friend and by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) about the validity of that remark. Those of us who have experienced the difficulties of our constituents who are in the position described by the Home Secretary will know that the process is far from easy. It is particularly difficult if one's face is not white and if one is not obviously of British stock.

One thing on which we can agree with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary is that the position of spouses in both categories covered by my right hon. Friend's new clause is no different from that of spouses in any other country. That may or may not reflect well on our immigration procedures. My experience in my previous constituency—not so much in my present constituency—is that it does not reflect well, But we shall pass over that because it is a subject for another occasion. The inequity that we are discussing is not an inequity as between spouses in Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world. It has to do with the extraordinary proposition that if an ethnic Chinese obtains a passport under the scheme and his ethnic Chinese wife obtains a passport under the scheme, his ethnic Chinese wife is in a substantially better position than the ethnic Chinese wife of a British citizen.

What are the practical consequences of that extraordinary proposition? I received the introduction of the Bill with considerable scepticism, my initial observation being that it was difficult to see why, under a scheme designed to keep people in Hong Kong, a large number of passports should be issued to enable them to come to Britain. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to go to Hong Kong to see what the place and the people are like. It was a refreshing experience.

Mr. Skinner: Who paid?

Mr. Norris: My visit was paid for entirely by the Hong Kong Government, and in my case, at least, they made a spectacularly good investment. I came away convinced that, whatever else the package may be, it is not an immigration package and that, if anything, it should be broader. My right hon. and very dear Friend, my next-door neighbour in Chingford, will probably be deeply disappointed with me—among other things—when I say that it is rather embarrassing to be a British Member of Parliament visiting Hong Kong. Surveys have been conducted to discover where the Hong Kong Chinese want to go if they have to leave. A survey of surveyors showed that 48 per cent. wanted to go to Canada; 32 per cent. to Australia; 8 per cent. to the United States; and 1·8 per cent. to Britain. Incidentally, 1·1 per cent. of those who wanted to come here wished to use Britain to go elsewhere in the European Community.

It was my first visit to Hong Kong. As ever, the Hong Kong people were extraordinarily courteous and polite, but they said, "You really must be mad—not to say a little arrogant—to imagine that we would ever, in a thousand years, really want to come to live in Britain, although it is frightfully nice of you to be so considerate." Clearly, what the Hong Kong people want is an anchoring package. That became clear to me. If one has to say that one's initial reservations were wrong, I am glad to say it because it was certainly true in my case.

In the context of anchoring, what is depressing——

Mr. Janman: My hon. Friend referred to anchoring. Did he have the opportunity to read an article in *The Sunday Times* supplement some months ago? In the last paragraph, the correspondent wrote:

"Every Hong Kong immigrant I met in Canada raised two points with me. The first was to stress that no one they knew back home trusted Beijing or wanted to stay on after the handover to mainland China in 1997. The second was to ask when I thought Britain would open its doors to admit the 3·25 million Hong Kong Chinese who are currently entitled to that famous blue passport."

How do the comments of that correspondent, who has been to Canada and spoken to many immigrants from Hong Kong, fit in with the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris)? The two points seem to be in conflict.

Mr. Norris: My hon. Friend's intervention demonstrates the wisdom of taking the advice that I once read in a business guide about managing a business. Under advice on the composition of the board of directors, it stated that it was useful to have someone on the board who knew where the factory was. I have always believed that, in that context, the best thing to do——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), again considered.

Question again proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Norris: The best thing to do is——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Norris: I will be infinitely more polite than my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) and give way in a second.

The best thing to do is to go and look for oneself. If we do that, we must weigh the conflicting opinions. One opinion is that we cannot trust Peking and that anyone with any sense wants to get out of Hong Kong. According to that opinion, there are 3·25 million people waiting to sweep across the border.

The conflicting opinion was the recurring one that I heard in Hong Kong. In fact I heard this from many people who have no direct interest in the matter because they already have British passports. They had absolutely no axe to grind. The conflicting opinion is that people accept that times will be difficult, but times difficult or otherwise are nothing new in Hong Kong. They lived through 1967. I do want to make a Second Reading speech, although I am in danger of doing so in response to the intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman). Suffice it to say that the conflicting opinion is that times might be difficult, but

[Mr. Norris]

people are happy to be in Hong Kong. They believe that what they want and what Britain will want to facilitate, in view of the substantial financial commercial interests in Hong Kong—interests that are infinitely understated—is an anchoring package.

It is ironic that the Bill anchors a substantial number of vital people, but in the group of spouses highlighted in the new clause tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) there is a fatalism about the necessity to leave Hong Kong.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Will my hon. Friend give me one good reason why, if those people are so uncomplimentary about this country, we should make any effort on their behalf, as opposed to the very honourable people who are wives of British citizens who have more right to come here? Why should we bother about the others—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Norris: My hon. Friend and I may have to disagree about the merits or otherwise of the package. I would be straying into a Second Reading debate if I was to give my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) a full answer. However, I am glad of her support, as I understand it, for the new clause and the amendments.

Both my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland highlighted an important lacuna in the present proposals. We should consider that point for three reasons. First, the numbers involved are tiny. We should be clear that we are talking about 200 or 300 or perhaps a few more.

Secondly, the vulnerability of the widows is something that we should be prepared to recognise because they are widows of British citizens. Finally, it is nonsense to produce an anchoring package in which the one group of people who will not be anchored are, ironically, British citizens with ethnic Chinese spouses.

Those people have told me time and again—perhaps my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock can take some comfort from this—that they will have to leave Hong Kong because they cannot trust to fate and assume that their wives will be able to enter as conveniently as my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary suggested, and will be able to obtain citizenship and be hale and hearty throughout.

For those reasons, we should support the measures. I hope that the opinions expressed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West will find favour with the Home Secretary. If I were to choose between the measures, I would favour that in the name of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland, because the introduction of a time period to eliminate the artificial marriage—clearly the device marriage could be used in this context; it is not an unknown technique—is valuable. We should pursue that matter, and perhaps the compromise of a time being served in Hong Kong rather than here, or a simple eligibility period based on the durability of a marriage, would suffice.

With those comments, I strongly commend the principle behind the new clauses to the House.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I wish to speak to new clause 5, which was moved by the right hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), but before doing so I shall comment on some remarks that were made by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Morris), who may have harboured the same reservations about this matter as I did before I went to Hong Kong.

Mr. Skinner: You went on a trip, did you?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I went to Hong Kong to find the truth and to establish in my mind that what I was doing here in the House of Commons was the right thing to do in all the circumstances. That is why I shall speak on several amendments and voice the concerns that were expressed to me by people in the colony.

During my recent visit, one of the groups that I was able to meet was an organisation called the Concerned Expatriates Society. That group of people came to me in a most distressed state, worried about undertakings that had been given to Parliament by Ministers, expressing the view that those undertakings were insufficient in so far as they might not fully realise or deal with their concerns. I asked them to set out a statement that I could bring to the House, setting out their reservations in their words. That statement is expressed in the most moderate language, and I hope that the Minister is willing to consider it.

The group said:

"Under current legislation our spouses lose even the 'right' to enter Britain for settlement purposes should we die whilst still in Hong Kong. The risk exists therefore that families could be separated as a result of our death since any children would of course be full British citizens. The Home Secretary has however recently made an announcement that he recognises this particular situation and is making 'special provision for people in such circumstances'".

They say:

"We assume that this means that in the event of our death our spouses will in theory be permitted to settle in Britain. However, we wonder what procedures would be necessary before the surviving spouse could exercise this option, and how long would it take before the paperwork would be completed? We wonder what the situation would be in the case of an emergency. For example, if a British husband dies leaving a widow in Hong Kong with the children at school in Britain would the widow have the absolute right to return immediately to Britain to be with her children and to deal with necessary arrangements? What assurance could be given that she would not under any circumstances be denied entry in such a situation and that she would not need to rely on the discretion of the duty immigration officer. Would she be forced into the position of having to claim she was a tourist in order to ensure entry, but put herself at risk by not having disclosed her true intentions at immigration?

It is not clear whether this 'provision' relates only to spouses who hold BDTC or BNO passports. Hence those spouses of other nationalities may be denied even this encouragement."

They go on:

"After our death the risk of prejudice, or worse, exists against a surviving spouse"—

this is an important matter—

"and possibly the children, as a result of their connection with Britain.

The very real concern remains that any 'concession' granted now may subsequently be modified, restricted or reversed by the current or future Government and hence that there is no reliable assurance that our spouses really will be permitted to enter Britain after our death.

As a result of our anxieties . . . British subjects in this position are reappraising their commitment to Hong Kong and are considering whether the risks of staying here are worth taking. In many cases the decision will be that it is in the best interets of the family to leave, while they can, and (subject to the vagaries of the settlement clearance process . . .) resettle in Britain in order that the three year qualifying period can take place. Hence, even though the Official position is that our spouses have the 'absolute right' to enter

Britain during our lifetime, and even though after our death they may be eligible for some 'provision' to enter Britain, the reality is that . . . few people in this position will feel assured that their spouses really will be protected in any eventuality.

Whilst the 'provision' referred to by the Home Secretary was no doubt an attempt in good faith to provide adequate assurance to those of us in this position we are afraid that it will most likely have a counter productive effect. Whilst many families in this position have already made the decision to return to Britain in recent year, many of us have remained in the hope that some real, irrevocable and totally reliable assurance would be given to us. Now that we know that this is not the case we know that more and more of us will reach the reluctant conclusion that, for our families' sake, the risks are not worth taking, and that hence a growing number of families will return to Britain over the next few years."

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I am not sure whether in the letter from concerned expatriates, the hon. Gentleman was referring to widows or the perceived difficulties of bringing a non-British wife home. If it was the latter, it seems illogical to bring a non-British wife to Britain in case one cannot bring a British non-wife to Britain. If it is the former, an assurance has been given that the non-British wife of a British expatriate will be admitted to this country.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Minister's words in *Hansard* will be scrutinised closely by people in Hong Kong, particularly the group to whom I have referred. I shall pass the Minister this document after the debate and perhaps he could write through me or directly to them, setting out the position in detail. If he could give me that undertaking now from the Dispatch Box, it would do much to allay the anxieties of people in Hong Kong.

Mr. Lloyd: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary saw the chairman of the British expatriates and a couple of his colleagues yesterday and undertook to write to him on this subject, so it would probably be more useful if the letter came from the Home Secretary than from me.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I give way to the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris).

Mr. Norris: While the hon. Gentleman listened to the Minister, did he understand that the points made by the expatriates has been satisfied, or did he share my understanding, which may be deficient, that the Minister spoke about rights of entry, not rights of citizenship? Does he agree that, if the Minister spoke about rights of entry, we are back to what was said on Second Reading, which, evidently, is so unsatisfactory?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Minister seems to be indicating that, on the question of citizenship, some concession has been made. I am sure that he would wish to clarify that position. The Minister has shaken his head. He has not done so. I am sure that whatever letter he writes will be studied closely by the people of Hong Kong.

I hope that the anxieties expressed by people when we were in Hong Kong are noted by the Minister. The people who came to see us were distressed and worried. They were few in number and they need reassurance.

10.15 pm

Mr. Tebbit: I should begin by saying what an interesting speech we heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris). I think I am right in saying, Mr. Speaker, if I may introduce you to my hon. Friend, that my hon. Friend is a car dealer. I thought that car dealers usually sold things to other people rather than being sold things as easily as he appears to have been sold the idea. The next time that I wish to sell a car, I shall go to him, although I might have to go via Hong Kong to make the deal.

Mr. Norris: I should rather describe myself as one of the last honest stockbrokers left. I hope that my right hon. Friend accepts that, in essence, that is what we do. We broke stock between people who do not want it and people who do and make an honest return on it. In that context, it seems perfectly reasonable that those of us who are capable of being persuaded by the silken words of my profession might occasionally be vulnerable to listening to logic and learning something from it.

Mr. Tebbit: I hope that my hon. Friend has not been sold a pup, as sometimes happens in the trade.

As I look at the general shape of the Bill, with my objections undiminished by anything that I have heard, I would regard it as monstrously unfair if the new clause was not accepted by my hon. Friend the Minister. First, the numbers are relatively small and, as the new clause is drafted, the numbers would fall within the total of 50,000 which is written into the Bill. We should not worry unduly about the numbers point one way or the other. The question that we must consider is whether the Government are being fair to these people.

There is an element of equity in the new clause towards people who are British subjects and British citizens. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Channon) said, if the purpose of the Bill is to persuade people to stay in Hong Kong, one can be darned certain that the new clause is the one part of the Bill that will work. I do not believe that the rest of it would work, but this part is essential if that is the object of the Bill.

Yet my hon. Friend the Minister seems to find difficulty in agreeing to it. The argument against the new clause which my hon. Friend will probably adduce is that the position of wives and widows of British subjects in Hong Kong would be put on a basis different from that of similar people in other places overseas. My hon. Friend the Minister nods his head. I am glad that I understood him correctly.

We are not talking about people throughout the world. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East said, we are dealing with a special circumstance. If we intended to deal with people in Hong Kong in the same way as we deal with people in the rest of the world, we could pack up and go home without bothering to reach the dubious stage of giving a Third Reading to the Bill. My hon. Friends on the Front Bench are creating a special deal, a special package, a special way of dealing with people from Hong Kong. That deal is so special that, under these provisions, a bunch of people in Hong Kong who are not responsible to the House will be franchised to fulfil the role of the Home Secretary in granting citizenship. If we are going to go that far, can we not make a teeny-weeny little exception for those British people and their spouses of non-British origin? The Government seem to have swallowed a whole legion of camels and yet are now straining on a gnat—and in any event, the gnat was far more worthy than the camels that are being driven through by the Whips Office tonight.

Therefore, when it seems that the House is united—right across the political spectrum and both political parties, and when even I can agree with the hon. Members

[Mr. Tebbit]

for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and with the Labour Front Bench —I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will consider whether it is possible or conceivable that they have got it wrong and the rest of us have got it right.

I hope that they will not test this matter in the Lobbies, because even if they win tonight—and they might—after the arguments that have been put, I believe that, by the time the Bill gets to another place, my right hon. and hon. Friends may suffer the humiliation of having to return to this House with their tails between their legs to ask the House to undo an amendment made in another place as a result of tonight's debate.

Finally, we are not really anxious about which of the amendments my hon. Friend accepts or about whether he simply says that he entirely and absolutely accepts their purpose and that he will draft a better amendment. We are not fussed or worried about that, because, when the Bill comes back at a later stage and on another day, as I am sure is the Government's intention, a better amendment could be tabled. However, as the amendments stand at the moment, I prefer those which have been tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West to those tabled by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland because by setting the operative date—indeed, the deadline—as the date on which the Bill will come into effect, they obviate any problems about trying to judge in future whether a marriage has been made for the primary purpose. That would be helpful.

Therefore, I hope that, when my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department makes his speech, accepting the view of the House on these amendments, he will say that that will be the shape of the amendment that the Government will bring forward.

Mr. Janman: I begin by referring to the recent exchange between my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) about what a car salesman or his customers should or should not buy. I must advise my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest that if he were to write to me, inviting me to visit his showroom and telling me that he would pay my fares to his showroom and back to my home, and that when I got there he would show me a draft design of a car on a piece of paper but say that the factory that would make the car would not be built for another seven years, I would have some serious doubts about the product that he was trying to sell me——

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): That is scurrilous.

Mr. Norris: I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) is not implying that whoever financed my visit to Hong Kong would have been capable of influencing my opinions for that reason. If he is, I hope that in the next few moments he will construct a form of words that makes it clear that he withdraws any such imputation, because I not only reject but resent what he has said.

Mr. Janman: All that I am saying is that—

Mr. Sedgemore: Withdraw.

Mr. Janman: I shall certainly withdraw those comments if my hon. Friend has taken offence at them or has slightly misunderstood them. What I am trying to say to my hon. Friend is that there is a certain analogy. If any hon. Member chooses to go to Hong Kong at the invitation of the Hong Kong Government, it is obvious that the Hong Kong Government are asking that hon. Members go there to show or to tell him or her things —and the Hong Kong Government will decide what is heard and seen—that they hope will be a factor when the hon. Member makes up his or her mind about how to vote on the Bill. I do not think that that is an unreasonable assertion and I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest will not have a problem with it.

I welcome and support the new clauses which have been tabled and introduced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon). I agree with the argument advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest that an ethnic Chinese person who has an ethnic Chinese wife will be eligible under the Bill to gain citizenship while a British citizen who has an ethnic Chinese wife will not.

There are other amendments in the group of new clauses and amendments before us which are designed to highlight to the House, which is already aware of the fact, and to the British people as a whole that the Bill is not, as is sometimes described or sometimes perceived by my constituents, at any rate, about giving citizenship to 50,000 Chinese. In fact, it is about citizenship for, on a conservative estimate, 225,000 Hong Kong Chinese. Given the age profile of the 225,000 who will take up the scheme —under the selection procedure extra points will be given to those aged between 30 and 40 years while points will be taken from those who are under 30 or over 60—I suspect that within 10 or 15 years of taking up the scheme we shall see the Hong Kong Chinese population increase to about 400,000 or 500,000. I ask the House to bear with me in the sense that I wish to assume that there will not be an anchor of the sort that my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest postulated.

It is worth referring again to the article that appeared in the supplement to *The Sunday Times*. It described in some detail——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman is among the very few in this place who persist in pushing the myth that all of the 225,000 will come to Britain. They will not come to Britain. It is clear to those of us who have been to Hong Kong that they will not come. I regret that the hon. Gentleman and some of his hon. Friends did not enjoy the experience of those of us who went to Hong Kong and heard the case of the Hong Kong Chinese. If he had had that experience, he would not be making his speech this evening. He is provoking unnecessary hysteria among the public in an absence of knowledge of the truth and the reality.

Mr. Janman: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will see some irony in what I am about to say. I was not invited to go to Hong Kong. I hope that that fact will neutralise any offence that was not meant to my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest. If I had been invited, I would have gone. I was not criticising my hon. Friend for going to Hong Kong. Similarly, I was not criticising the terms upon which he went. If I had been invited to go there to see what the Hong Kong Government wanted to show me and to

hear what they had to tell me, I would have gone. I hope that I have reassured my hon. Friend that my previous remarks were not meant to offend him in any way.

It has been said already that these matters are for individual opinion and judgment. Many hon. Members share my view about what will happen. I remind the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) of the remarks that I quoted earlier from the article that appeared in the supplement to *The Sunday Times*. A correspondent went to Canada and spoke to many Hong Kong Chinese who had recently lived in Hong Kong, who still had relatives there, and who were in constant communication with Hong Kong. They told him that basically no one in the colony trusted the regime in Peking. They said that most people wanted to get out of Hong Kong as soon as possible. They all wanted to know when Great Britain would legislate to admit 3·25 million people.

Mr. Marlow: I listened carefully to the intervention of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours). He may be right—circumstances in China may change—or he may be wrong. What we should consider is the potential liability that may arise from our passing the Bill, and my hon. Friend is, I think, right to address himself to that.

10.30 pm

Mr. Janman: My hon. Friend is echoing comments made on other occasions by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford. If we are to issue an insurance policy, we must be prepared to underwrite that policy in full.

The 1981 Act already allows considerable flexibility in regard to Hong Kong: the £200,000 rule, for example, would let in, at the Home Secretary's discretion, a considerable number of people with the ability to make substantial investments in this country, and section 4(5) already caters for senior Crown servants. By passing the Bill, however, the House will put into law a cast-iron guarantee. Although I respect the analysis of the hon. Member for Workington—after all, he has spent a few days in Hong Kong, and I have not been there at all—I cannot, on the basis of what I have heard and read, agree with his assessment of the position.

Two Canadian cities, Vancouver and Toronto, have accepted large numbers of economic migrants from Hong Kong. According to Wolfgang Lippert, general manager of the National Real Estate company in Vancouver,

"The middle class in Hong Kong are wealthy people as fare as Canadians are concerned. A million dollars in family assets is the bottom end of the white collar range."

That wealth has led to an extensive buying up of property, which in turn has meant a 50 per cent. rise in the price of property on the west side of the city over the past 12 months. The resulting major distortion of the housing market has not gone down at all well with the residents of Vancouver.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford hinted earlier, the way in which the Chinese like to do things sometimes clashes with the customs of the indigenous population. The article quotes Mr. Jonathan Chin, a Chinese Canadian, as saying:

"Canadians still believe in honesty in business."

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The new clause deals specifically with spouses. The hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) may wish to raise other matters, but will you ensure that he does not raise them on this new clause?

Mr. Speaker: My attention was temporarily distracted while I was looking at the next group of amendments. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will stay in order.

Mr. Janman: I think that I am in order, Mr. Speaker. Some of the new clauses and amendments seek to highlight the fact that the Bill is not simply about 50,000 heads of household being given passports; it is about their spouses and families as well. Far more people are involved, and that is the issue that I am addressing.

Another Chinese Canadian is quoted as saying:

"In Hong Kong there is no sense of community. There is money and family and that's it."

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Gentleman leave this to me? The hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) has tabled a group of amendments, and he is addressing himself to them.

Mr. Janman: The problems that I have been describing are causing a number of difficulties in Canada. It is fair to say that the Canadian people have always had a long tradition and history of tolerance, but that tolerance is being strained.

The article quotes a number of people expressing a great deal of intolerance and frustration about the effects of this large presence of Hong Kong Chinese in Canada and, in particular, Vancouver and Toronto, and the effects that that is having.

Sandra Wilking, the first Chinese alderman ever to be elected to Vancouver city council, was quoted as saying:

"Immigration is the most volatile issue in this country."

Mary Lavin, a previously apolitical office worker, started the Residents Save Vancouver Please group in early 1989 in a bid to modify Canadian policies on immigration policies towards Hong Kong. She said:

"What is happening in Canada has not been matched since the white people took the land from the Indians . . . We think we are about to become Indians."

That woman is a reserved and delicate young woman who, according to the correspondent who wrote the piece in *The Sunday Times*, is a long way from being the closet racist that one feared to meet.

Betty Tangye is a soft-spoken piano teacher without a mean, let alone a racist, bone in her body. She is one of the leading campaigners against the effect that Hong Kong immigration has had on middle-class housing. I have already outlined the distortions in the housing market that are happening.

What has been happening in Vancouver and Toronto will happen on a much larger scale in our towns and cities, particularly in the south-east of England. If 225,000 people take up British citizenship and come here, the political reality is that there will not be a corresponding relaxation of our planning laws and green belt restrictions in London and the south-east. Distortions similar to those that occurred in Vancouver and Toronto will occur in the housing market in London and the south-east.

For those reasons, I support new clause 4 and the new clauses and amendments grouped with it.

Mr. Foulkes: It now falls upon me to say a few words on behalf of the official Opposition.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Speak up.

Mr. Foulkes: I have never had that complaint before. It must be irony, even at this late hour. I had not expected the debate to be this late, but here we are.

First, on behalf of the Opposition, and I am sure on behalf of all hon. Members, I sincerely congratulate the right hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) not only on tabling the new clause but on speaking so passionately and in such an informed, relevant and convincing way, which is much more than we can say for the speech of the hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman).

I also congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the almost unique feat of uniting the official Opposition, the Liberal Democrats, the liberal Tories and the not-so-liberal Tories. If I were the Minister, who sat tolerantly and patiently through the Committee's proceedings, I would feel that not just the arguments, but the weight of support for those arguments is on our side—or, I should say, on the right hon. Gentleman's side.

The Minister may recall that in Committee the Opposition tabled a number of amendments along the lines of the new clauses and the amendments. My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling), who is taking a well-earned rest, argued the case convincingly. I thought that the Minister had taken the arguments and had understood and appreciated the concern among hon. Members on both sides of the Committee, now expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House.

The Opposition did not table the amendments on Report because the right hon. Gentleman was in before us and we thought that a former Cabinet Minister, a distinguished member of the Conservative party, would have greater weight with the Home Secretary and the Government.

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): Stop buttering him up.

Mr. Foulkes: I try my hardest—we want to win something. We hoped that the arguments of those hon. Members would have some effect upon the Government.

We went through all the arguments in Committee and we got some assurances, but like the right hon. Member for Southend, West we do not consider those assurances adequate, and nor do concerned expatriates and the other groups representing widows or potential widows in Hong Kong.

Mr. Marlow: I hope that I am not interrupting the flow of the hon. Gentleman's speech and that I have intervened at the right time. It will be interesting for the House to know at this stage whether the hon. Gentleman will be voting for the amendment and, if so, will his party be with him?

Mr. Foulkes: I am hoping that there will be no need for a vote. I hope that the weight of the argument and the force of the speech by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris)—who put a convincing case in an honest and sympathetic way—and the arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Southend, West, the official Opposition and the Liberal Democrats will convince the Government, and that there will be no need for a Division. It seems wasteful when the arguments are so overwhelming.

The essential point is that people are still worried. Despite the assurances, or because of the specific and limited nature of the assurances, given by the Minister and repeated again today in an intervention in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), hon. Members are still worried that those widows, who are vulnerable in a number of ways, will still have to go through the hoops of the primary purpose rule to obtain entry to and citizenship of the United Kingdom.

If that is not the case, it is up to the Under-Secretary of State to say so, because that remains our understanding of the position. If widows are going to be accepted, there is no reason why the Government should not accept new clauses 4 and 5.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Let us suppose that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary is unable to accept the amendments. Why is the hon. Gentleman unable to bring his party with us through the Lobby to ensure that this valuable amendment is made?

Mr. Foulkes: We shall have to wait to see whether a Division is called. If the Government are not convinced, we shall see what happens. I am surprised that a Conservative Member with such a distinguished military tradition should be giving in so easily, and that he should be so unwilling to press the case on the Government. I am surprised that an hon. Member who is normally so loyal to the Government should be so desperate or worried that the Government will not accept the logic and sense of the arguments, and that they will not recognise the overwhelming support for the new clauses.

We are talking about a small group of people—a few hundred. Hong Kong is a territory—I prefer the word, although some people use the term "colony"—for which we have a special responsibility. We are testing the sincerity of the Government over this group of widows, who have more right than any other group of people included in the scheme to entry into the United Kingdom and to citizenship. They have supported their husbands, often in the service of the Crown and the territory of Hong Kong. They are worthy of our support.

I hope that the Under-Secretary is feeling some unease at the way in which he has been criticised from all sides today, and at the fact that pleas have come from both sides of the House for him to accept the new clauses. With the Home Secretary beside him, I hope that he has all the authority and approval that he needs to be able to say that he accepts the new clauses. Then some honour and dignity will have been sacrificed—[HON. MEMBERS: "Sacrificed?"] It is late. I shall try again. Then some honour and dignity will have been salvaged from this debate.

10.45 pm

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) are both proposing, albeit in different ways, that spouses and widows of British citizens resident in Hong Kong should be granted British citizenship, but I am afraid, as they expected and as I explained in Committee, that the Government do not believe that such a provision in the bill could be justified.

It is central to our proposals that existing nationality principles should continue to operate normally, except in relation to the 50,000 key personnel selected under the Bill and their immediate families. On that point, at least, my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) was right in predicting my reaction, but no doubt he had read what I said in Committee.

The whole basis of the British Nationality Act 1981 is that the acquisition of citizenship should normally involve a period of residence in this country. For the spouse of a British citizen, that period of residence is three years instead of the normal five. It is designed to ensure that the non-British spouse has some links with the United Kingdom, independent of marriage. The amendment would represent a fundamental departure from that principle.

My right hon. Friend suggests that there is cause for concern about the position of non-British spouses in Hong Kong. I listened with great care to what he said. Yesterday my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary and I met my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West and the chairman of the Concerned British Expatriates Society. I regret to say that I do not think that they made out a case for British expatriates in Hong Kong to be regarded as a special case compared with British expatriates elsewhere in the world.

Mr. Foulkes: There are two overwhelming arguments why their case must be considered separately. First, the Bill deals specifically with Hong Kong. Secondly, it is a dependent territory, not a separate country. Surely those two arguments must convince even this Government.

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think that they do. The only distinction that can be made relates to those expatriate citizens in Hong Kong who are married to non-British wives. They are concerned about their widows, should they die, because Hong Kong's status will change in 1997. That is why my right hon. and learned Friend gave the assurance that he did on Second Reading.

We understand and sympathise with the very natural anxieties that have been expressed. I say again that, after careful consideration, we are sure that the expatriates' anxieties are groundless. I should like to take a few moments to explain how the position of spouses of British citizens is safeguarded. The spouse of a British citizen can accompany the British partner to the United Kingdom for settlement at any time. Of course they have to satisfy the requirements of the immigration rules, which include the primary purpose and the maintenance and accommodation requirements, but it is wrong to suggest that these reasonable and universal requirements under our immigration laws pose a significant difficulty for Hong Kong's expatriate families.

We have done some research, and the figures speak for themselves. Last year, for example, according to the most recent statistics, 269 spouses of British citizens applied for settlement from Hong Kong; only four were refused. None of those four was the spouse of a British citizen who was resident in Hong Kong.

The Government accept that there is legitimate concern that spouses having no right of abode in a third country might become stranded in Hong Kong in the event of the death of the British partner. In the unique circumstances of Hong Kong, it is natural that the expatriate community should be anxious about the position of widowed spouses, and with some reason. My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has therefore given an assurance that applies specifically to British citizens in Hong Kong, that the widowed spouse of a British citizen who was resident in the territory at the time of his or her death will be allowed to settle here as a concession outside the immigration rules.

The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) asked about the primary purpose test. As the spouse will have died, the ordinary primary purpose rule could not apply, and we would not seek to apply it. So the concession is there for widows who fall into that category.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is the Minister saying that there will be no problem in the case of the widowed spouses to whom we are referring, that they will be allowed freely to enter the United Kingdom to settle, and that there will be no immigration problems?

Mr. Lloyd: That is the undertaking. The only question may be whether the spouse is the widow of a British expatriate citizen. The identity of the person and their relationship by marriage to a former British citizen will be matters that it would be reasonable of an immigration officer to ask to be demonstrated. But there should be no difficulty with that.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is the Minister saying that all that those widowed spouses will have to produce, in effect, is proof of marriage?

Mr. Lloyd: Proof of marriage and proof that the person to whom they were married was a British citizen resident in Hong Kong.

Mr. Channon: My hon. Friend's remarks will be studied with immense interest in Hong Kong, so I would like to get this straight. Is not his assurance limited to widowed spouses who have no other citizenship? Therefore, in the case of a United Kingdom citizen having a non-United Kingdom spouse who is not Hong Kong Chinese but who might be Japanese, Filipino, Thai, or whatever, that spouse would not be covered. What assurance is there for those widows?

Mr. Lloyd: My right hon. Friend is right. Such widowed spouses were not included in the assurance given by my right hon. and learned Friend. However, we should like to consider some of the further points that my right hon. Friend has raised.

Mr. Foulkes: We welcome the Minister's assurance that such widows will have to produce proof only that they were married to a British citizen—such as a marriage certificate—and a death certificate. That presumably means that the Government have abandoned—we welcome this—the primary purpose test. It will be interesting to know what powers the Government are using to do so.

Mr. Lloyd: It would be difficult to apply the primary purpose rule if the lady's husband has died. The authority lies with my right hon. and learned Friend, under the 1971 Act, to use his discretion and to allow entry outside the rules. Helpfully, the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) echoed that undertaking, saying that it would be carried forward if there was another Labour Government.

Mr. Madden: May we be clear whether the widowed spouses in question will be allowed to enter the United Kingdom for settlement, or merely permitted to enter and be required subsequently to make an application for indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Lloyd: I am trying to remember the exact terms of my right hon. and learned Friend's undertaking, but I believe it is for settlement. Within a certain period those people will then be able to apply for British citizenship, and there is no question but that their entitlement will be to come here and stay here.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: In answer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) the Minister appeared to say that this would not apply to widows who had another citizenship. What will happen to someone who has children at school in this country and who has had no connection with Indonesia, Thailand or wherever? He or she will be cut off and stranded.

Mr. Lloyd: If such people have another citizenship, they will have that connection. As I told my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West, that is a point which my right hon. and learned Friend and I want to look at again. I have been trying to make it clear that the assurance that my right hon. and learned Friend has given applies only to whose who have no citizenship other than British dependent territories or Hong Kong—and hence Chinese —citizenship.

Mr. Marlow: The intention behind the Bill is to anchor people in Hong Kong, and the intention of the new clause is to anchor some worthy but potentially unfortunate people in Hong Kong. If people are given their British citizenship now, they know they have it, and whatever else happens, they will be able to use it. But if a spouse were to die after 1997, when a Chinese regime was running the country, they might fear some difficulty in acquiring British citizenship at that stage. Thus the desire of the Government and of my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) to anchor these people in Hong Kong will not be achieved unless the new clause is accepted.

Mr. Lloyd: If I understand my hon. Friend aright, my answer is that there is no limit to my right hon. and learned Friend's assurance: it will apply up to and after 1997.

Mr. Wells: Just for the sake of clarity, will my hon. Friend reiterate that this will not apply in other dependent territories, of which there are quite a few in the Caribbean?

Mr. Lloyd: It applies only to Hong Kong, for which we make this exception because we understand the worries of expatriates in the colony who fear that their wives may be stranded there after 1997. Hong Kong is a special case in that respect. I could not concede the earlier amendments because I do not believe that Hong Kong can be described as a special case before 1997, in respect of living British expatriates and their wives.

Mr. Tebbit: I ask my hon. Friend to contemplate the arguments that he has been deploying this evening. In response to many points put to him, he has argued that the Bill is designed not to bring immigrants to the United Kingdom but to give them an assurance that will obviate the necessity for them to come here. But on this particular point, my hon. Friend says that we cannot give these people the assurance of a British passport while they are still in Hong Kong; we must make them come to Britain and live here for three years before they can apply to get one.

Does not my hon. Friend realise that, with each word he has said while defending himself against the reasonable points put to him today, he has hammered another intellectual nail into the shabby coffin of this rotten Bill?

Mr. Lloyd: Of course I do not accept that. British expatriates, confident in their British citizenship, are not in the same position as those who are not British citizens but will become so under this Bill. I recognise that the Bill, in granting immediate access to British citizenship to the spouses of the 50,000 key persons, would be treating them more favourably than the spouses of other British citizens, but it is inherent in our proposals that the beneficiaries of the Bill will receive favoured treatment.

11 pm

I can appreciate the understandable irritation of British citizens with non-British wives that the normal rules should continue to apply to their wives when there is an express service for the spouses of those chosen under the selection scheme, but the House will be familiar with the justification for it. I have said several times this evening, and it was said in Committee and on Second Reading, that the Bill is an exceptional measure directed at a specific group of people, who by definition are essential to Hong Kong and are leaving in large numbers. Those people, unlike the spouses of existing British citizens, have no well established route to the United Kingdom or anywhere else. We feel that a different approach is justified.

If spouses and existing children are excluded from the assurance package, as proposed in some of the amendments, some recipients would still feel the need to emigrate to secure the position of their families. Some of the amendments make illogical suggestions that would drive away those whom we wish to remain in Hong Kong. The rules applying to the non-British wives of expatriates would not do that.

Mr. Norris: Will my hon. Friend confirm that it is clearly implied in the scheme for 200,000 passports that it would not be enough to grant only the head of household a British passport and expect the rest of the family to rely on the rules that he has outlined as they apply to non-British spouses, and that that rule will apply to one category of people—those who are now British citizens? If that is indeed the Government's position, it is extraordinarily anomalous.

Mr. Lloyd: It is not extraordinarily anomalous because, as I said earlier, the expatriate British citizen will have the confidence of the British citizenship with which he was born and the knowledge that British citizens, as long as they satisfy the normal immigration rules, can bring their

wives here. There is no such confidence among people who have been given citizenship under the scheme, and to protect the investment that we are making in them, we are extending it beyond the normal rules to their wives and children.

Even my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) would accept that, although those who obtain British citizenship through the selection scheme could, like a British expatriate, bring their wives under the same terms, it does not apply to children who have been born to them when they were not British citizens. Somehow we must deal with that. The good sense of what we are proposing is to make a clean sweep, to enable them to be confident that their family has British citizenship, and to give them the confidence they need to remain in Hong Kong.

The Government are approaching this logically. The under-age children of people who obtain British citizenship through the selection route would, unless citizenship were granted to their families at the same time, be tempted to move here to ensure that their children earn British citizenship by being here for sufficient time before they reach the age of 18. After 18, under our normal rules, they would not be eligible.

Mr. Marlow: Will my hon. Friend make the position tatally clear to the House? There are two gentleman, one of whom is a British citizen with a non-British wife and the other, who will be given one of these passports by the Governor and will become a British citizen, who also has a non-British wife. Both couples have no children. Is my hon. Friend saying that the wife of the first gentleman will not automatically become a British citizen, whereas the wife of the second gentleman will automatically become a British citizen?

Mr. Lloyd: My hon. Friend has followed the argument reasonably well and I am glad that he has been able to demonstrate that fact. I said—my hon. Friend did not repeat this part of the argument—that this legislation is a special enactment for a unique set of circumstances. It cannot follow our normal nationality rules, and that is why it is different. The same rules apply to people in Hong Kong who have been born British citizens and have moved abroad as apply to those who live in Borneo, Indonesia and the United States. I do not believe that the case has been made for treating them differently. I am afraid that I must therefore urge the House to reject the new clause.

Mr. Channon: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister and my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary for receiving the deputation. It was very helpful, and my hon. Friend will have been made aware of the worries that still exist in Hong Kong. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks about widows, which may foreshadow some concessions.

I think that I carry the House with me when I say that no hon. Member supports the Government's view on spouses. On the Conservative Benches, those who support the Bill and those who are against it are against him. Everyone on the Opposition Benches—Labour Members and the Social and Liberal Democrats—is against him. I shall be surprised if this matter is not fully debated in another place.

My hon. Friend said that this was a unique set of circumstances which justifies the wives of these people getting passports too. I claim that it is a unique set of circumstances for British citizens and their non-British spouses. I have failed to convince my hon. Friend, which places me in a difficulty. I have no particular desire to divide the House or rebel against the Government, but I am in the hands of the House. If hon. Members wish to press the motion to a Division, I shall join them.

Question put, That the clause be now read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 98, Noes 253.

Division No. 232] **[11.07 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alton, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beckett, Margaret
Bermingham, Gerald
Bevan, David Gilroy
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Butcher, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carr, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fearn, Ronald
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Gill, Christopher
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janman, Tim
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leighton, Ron
Livsey, Richard
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclennan, Robert
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Quin, Ms Joyce
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Rhodri Morgan and
Mr. John Hume Robertson.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin

Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 9

Universal Franchise

'The Secretary of State shall not register any British citizens under this Act until such time as the membership of the Hong Kong Legislative Council is elected by universal franchise of all Hong Kong citizens over the age of 18 years.'. —*[Mr. Foulkes.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider amendment No. 50, in clause 5, page 3, line 19, at end insert—

'(4A) The Secretary of State shall not make such an order until after an election has taken place in Hong Kong for the Legislative Council in which over 50 per cent. of the members are directly elected, by adult universal suffrage.".

Mr. Foulkes: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

This new clause is completly different from the other measures, which were intended to try to bring some much-needed improvements to a bad scheme in a bad Bill, as my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) amply demonstrated earlier. The new clause is a device to initiate a debate on democracy in Hong Kong. It serves to reaffirm our view that the Government are approaching the matter of confidence, stability and prosperity in Hong Kong in entirely the wrong way.

We do not accept that giving a bolt hole to an elite group in any way resolves the fundamental problem of confidence, which affects all the people of Hong Kong, whether they are British dependent territory passport holders or whether they are covered by the scheme. The Government should approach the matter in an entirely different way.

The correct approach is to deal with the matter as a foreign policy issue, as a diplomatic issue, and not one of nationality or of immigration. A full, vibrant and active democratic system in Hong Kong is one of the three essential elements to our approach. I shall return to that point in a moment, because it is the substance of our new clause.

We should also work for a reaffirmation by China of its belief in one country, two systems. We and the Chinese should remember that that means communism and democracy—not just communism and capitalism. Democracy is an essential part of the other system that will continue in Hong Kong as part of the one country, two systems process. The Government of China must be encouraged to indicate by their words and, more important, by their deeds over the next few years that it remains in their interests for Hong Kong to be in much the same form as it is now—a gateway to the western world. That must be the case, whatever the complexion of the Government of China.

Recent signs of internal conflicts among the octogenarian leadership in Peking increase the prospects of changes between now and 1997, almost any outcome of which is likely to be helpful to Hong Kong. However, we recognise that, should that not be the case, we must have a fallback position. Should a crisis develop in Hong Kong, there will be an international responsibility to find a haven for Hong Kong citizens in countries that have traditionally received immigrants from the territory. Britain, however, must take the lead in ensuring the effectiveness of such a safety net provision.

At a time when democracy has replaced the tyranny of dictatorship in most Latin American countries, and when universally in this House we greatly welcome democracy replacing the oppression of communism in eastern Europe, is it not absolutely outrageous and ridiculous that the British Government are resisting the introduction of full democracy in a territory for which we have direct responsibility? As my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) conceded in our debate on 19 April, successive Governments of both parties are culpable in this matter. Some cynicism from China about our motives, or those of some of us, for being enthusiastic about democracy is understandable.

It is true that for some time the majority did not demand democracy in Hong Kong, but that does not diminish or detract from the case for full democracy or from the strong and overwhelming desire now within the colony for full democratic development. That was already growing when I visited in 1988. The Government's failure then to respond to pressure from Hong Kong and from the Labour and other opposition parties gave the wrong signals to Peking. Instead of asserting our right to govern until the end of June 1997, we were perceived to be willing to kow-tow to the Government of the People's Republic of China. The Minister denied that in Committee, but, whatever he says, we were seen to be giving the Government in China an effective veto over our decisions in a territory for which we have responsibility until the end of June 1997.

At times, the Government have suggested that the people of Hong Kong are not sophisticated, intelligent, able or articulate enough for full democracy. That has been suggested from the Dispatch Box and from the Conservative Benches. It is manifest nonsense to anyone who has visited Hong Kong or who knows of the vibrant democracy of the local elections for councils which have relatively little power—indeed, even less power than councils in Britain have under this Government.

The Government have argued that the joint declaration does not give a specific guarantee of full direct elections. However, it says, even in respect of the special administrative region after 1997, that the legislative council shall be constituted by elections. What do we understand by elections, other then direct elections and the universal franchise of all adults over 18? The device of functional constituencies is a mere fraud on real democracy and involves only a small percentage of the people of Hong Kong.

There was also a widespread perception within the territory after the signing of the joint declaration that there would be a start made to direct elections in 1988. That did not take place. Yet in Committee the Minister quibbled about whether the figure should be 18 or 20 out of the 60 seats, arguing that 18 was nearly 20 and that the difference was neither here nor there.

In February, the Foreign Secretary spoke of a substantial element of democracy which can endure and further develop after 1997. The Opposition believe that all members of the Legislative Council should be directly elected as quickly as practicable. Indeed, that was the recommendation of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs chaired by the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell).

We also believe that the Chief Executive, who is effectively the Chief Minister of the Hong Kong Government, should also be elected by universal adult franchise. He or she and the Government should have their responsibility directly to the legislature clearly spelled out.

11.30 pm

We also believe that political parties should be not merely allowed but encouraged to operate freely in Hong Kong as quickly as possible. Incidentally, we deplore the recent arrests of political activists involved in demonstrations for democracy in Hong Kong. I hope that the Minister will say that the Government also deplore those arrests and are taking action with the Governor and the Government of Hong Kong to secure proper justice for those people.

We also see no reason why the franchise should be limited to people over the age of 21 when the voting age in Britain, throughout the European Community and in most democratic countries is 18. As we heard in an earlier debate, it is the age accepted for categorising dependent relatives. We would like to see the voting age for Hong Kong elections reduced to 18.

We would also like to see constituencies of roughly equal size. At present, one constituency is twice the size of another because of some arithmetical division.

Mr. Maude: What about Scotland?

Mr. Foulkes: In Scotland, the constituencies are all roughly the same size.

Although I personally warmly welcome the decision that the voting system for the colony is to be similar to our own, that might not find favour with all my colleagues.

Democracy in Hong Kong is vital to give new, deep, long-term confidence to all the people of the territory. It is necessary to provide the balance to and control of the capitalist system. It is an essential element of the second

[Mr. Foulkes]

system within the one country, two systems set-up of China after 1997. Democracy in Hong Kong is essential to provide maximum protection of the freedom and liberties of the people.

We believe that the Government are heading down the wrong road with the Bill. I have outlined again today, as my colleagues did on Second Reading, a positive alternative to deal with confidence in Hong Kong. The new clause seeks to postpone the introduction of the Bill's provisions until an essential element of democracy in the territory is tackled. I have pleasure in commending it to the House. Even more, it provides us with an opportunity to discuss an important element for the future of Hong Kong —the establishment of a full, vibrant, active democracy essential for its future.

Mr. Wells: Both China and the British Government are treaty bound to introduce elections to the legislature and elect the chief executive by 1997, so the introduction of democracy to Hong Kong has been settled despite much objection from some of my hon. Friends who claim that it is not necessary. They say that Hong Kong has existed without democracy, has been successful without it and needs to continue without it. I believe that a moment's thought given to that idea will dispell it.

The hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) set out the reasons why democracy should be by universal sufferage. I entirely agree with him. However, without delaying the House too long at this time of night, I want to take the argument a stage further. The fact is that in Hong Kong we must replace the British Government and its officials in the form of the civil servants who play the role of Ministers in the legislature and we must make certain that all the instruments of democracy are in place so that the capitalist system can be controlled.

However, I further believe that, without the democratic process being in place, capitalism will not work; it will descend into monopoly, corruption and chaos. Only with the accountability that is necessary to and imposed by a democratic system will Hong Kong continue to work after 1997. I believe that, with democracy firmly established, there is every reason to be confident that after 1997 Hong Kong will be successful.

However, we in this House should know that democracy is one of the hardest systems to make work. It demands some commitment from every single elector— even if only putting a ballot paper in a box every five years. If that was all that democracy was, of course, it would not be sufficient for Hong Kong, which must develop ways to gain support for measures taken by the legislature. The idea must be established that when a majority in the legislature is in favour of a particular item, the minority who fail to win—as it looks as though those of us who hold these views will fail to win tonight—will accept and abide by the majority decisions and the rule of law.

Such concepts take a great deal of time to root. I have had experience overseas and have found that many educated and privileged people—those principally to whom we are seeking to give 50,000 passports, and many more—are the most reluctant to take part in democracy or to breath life into the democratic institutions that must be established. That is because previously they have been privileged and have had access to powerful positions and they do not know how to proceed. They are afraid of going out to do what we do quite naturally—knocking on people's doors and asking them to vote for us; taking account of their views and reflecting them in the legislature; and trying to gain the consent of the community for the actions that we wish to be taken.

That process must take place as soon as possible if those institutions are to have enough credit and respect, and be cherished by the people of Hong Kong and made to work. Unless we get that system of democracy firmly established —and the earlier, the better—there will be every reason to lack confidence in the future of Hong Kong after 1997. That future will depend on whether the institutions that I have described have been put in place, have support and are working. If that happens, it will give us confidence to believe that the two systems and the second—the capitalist —system can work in Hong Kong.

That is why it is essential that we urge, push, barge and do everything that we possibly can to get my hon. Friend the Minister to go back to the Chinese and say, "This is essential. We agreed it in principle way back in 1984 and we are telling you that unless this is established and unless we agree with the pace at which it will be established"— now agreed by OMELCO in Hong Kong—"you are putting in serious jeopardy confidence in Hong Kong up to and beyond 1997."

There is much more to the democratic system than I have spelt out in my short speech, and I shall list only some of its facets. We need a Bill of Rights in place. We need to make certain that the legal system in Hong Kong is truly independent of the Executive and is independent of the People's Republic of China. There must be the right of final determination of the rule of law and of the matters that arise in Hong Kong at a democratic level. We need to ensure that in Hong Kong the Chief Executive is not a creature of the People's Republic of China. He must be genuinely elected and independent. He should be accountable to the legislature and able to be dismissed by it. There is a necessity for the Chief Executive, under the treaty, to be approved in Peking, but unless he is Hong Kong's man through the democratic process and not the man of the People's Republic of China, there cannot be confidence that Hong Kong can be truly independent of the People's Republic of China and able to run a capitalist system without interference.

There is much more to be said on this subject but the hour is late and I intend to be brief. I urge my right hon. and hon. Friends, the People's Republic of China and all those in Hong Kong to cherish democracy and the capitalist system. There will be 5·5 million who will stay in Hong Kong whether or not the Bill is enacted. For their future, for confidence in Hong Kong and for business men there, we must establish democracy. The purpose of my amendment is to bring that democracy into line with the OMELCO wish that at least 50 per cent. of the legislature should be directly elected. The functional constituencies that are proposed will represent only 1 per cent. of the electorate yet they will have a majority in the proposed legislature up to and beyond 1997.

For those reasons I welcome the assurances that were given in Committee and those given by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary that he would try to get further progress on these matters from the Chinese before the election in 1995.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): It is a pleasure for me to take up the remarks of the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells). Like the hon. Gentleman, I am a member of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, and I agree strongly with the views that he expressed. We may have disagreed about some aspects of the Committee's report, but on the matters that are now before us there was virtual unanimity among members of the Committee.

It was a privilege to be a member of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs under the chairmanship of the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howells) and to visit Hong Kong and China at a crucial moment. Our visit took place a year and a month or two ago, when many of the issues that we have been discussing were on the boil. We were able to hear the line of the Hong Kong establishment on democracy. We were told that the people of Hong Kong were not really interested in democracy. That was the fundamental message. It was said that they were interested in making a living, economic activity and entrepreneurial activity, and were not really interested in the concept of democracy per se and the idea that they might take part in a direct and westernised way in the democratic affairs of society.

That seemed not to accord with the views of many of the people that we, the members of the Select Committee, met. I am talking not of OMELCO or of the establishment but of a considerable number of people, including young people, who had served or were serving at local level. They sensed and felt that there was a democratic spirit and a growing desire for genuine participation in political activity within Hong Kong in whatever peculiar form that might be discovered by Hong Kong. There was something much better and more important than the establishment line that we were being sold from the highest level.

We might—even then—have felt some doubts about how far the argument would prevail, and about the extent of the spirit of democratic involvement in Hong Kong. All the myths were finally exploded, however, when the people of Hong Kong associated themselves with the students in Tiananmen square. Already we had seen the awakening of democratic participation, but, after Tiananmen square, no one could continue to argue that Hong Kong's political society was wholly inert.

11.45 pm

The Government's response to some aspects of the Select Committee's report—not those concerning issues in the Bill, such as immigration, but those raised in the new clause—was pretty banal; disgraceful, indeed. The Select Committee made two unanimous recommendations which proved to be the main areas of contention. First, it recommended the establishment of a series of safeguards to protect many of the agreements that would make the special administrative constitution so special. The Government have not dealt with that recommendation: they did not establish constitutional courts, for instance.

At least the Government could defend themselves in that regard by arguing that the matter was part of the Chinese Basic Law, and that all that they could do was to make representations. In my opinion, they did not make enough representations, but they have, as it were, an alibi. They have no such alibi to justify their failure to develop a democratic system in Hong Kong between now and 1997.

We do not need to obtain agreement from the Chinese Government to decide the percentage of people who are directly elected to the Legislative Council in the next seven years. That is the joint responsibility of the Hong Kong and British Governments. Other aspects of our recommendations required skills of persuasion and negotiation to achieve changes in the Basic Law. There again, the Government failed. The Minister shakes his head, but there were several unfortunate failures. The achievement of democracy in Hong Kong, however, is not a function of the Chinese Basic Law; it is for Parliament, following the agreement between Hong Kong and Britain, to decide how democratic Hong Kong's institutions should be between now and 1997.

The Government's loss of negotiating nerve will, I fear, have tragic consequences. We saw the courage of all those young people who, in Peking just over a year ago, took on the might of the Chinese authorities and suffered for it. We have seen that courage repeated a year later in Chinese universities. What guts it must have taken for hundreds of students to stand up and be counted a second time. I am sorry to say that the Government have been gutless. They completely lost their negotiating nerve when it came to developing democracy in Hong Kong between now and 1997.

Mr. Walden: Let me put to the hon. Gentleman a question that I asked earlier. How can he reconcile the accusation of gutlessness over democracy with the accusation of recklessness vis-a-vis Peking over 50,000 Chinese citizens?

Mr. Rowlands: I make the simple point that one area in which we do have power over the affairs of Hong Kong between now and 1997 is in deciding how democratic its institutions will be. For us to sell the pass so badly is an act of gutlessness.

The fundamental reason given by the Government was the so-called mirror imaging and through-track that they wanted. They wanted events and institutions after 1997 to be akin to the events and institutions before 1997. I must tell the Minister that, from the Chairman downwards, the Select Committee rejected that philosophy completely. We argued strenuously that there were genuine areas where we should not attempt mirror imaging or a through-track, and that there were areas where we should establish bridgeheads of responsibility so that after 1997 the Chinese Government would have to decide whether they wanted to dismantle or change the system and its institutions. One area where we could have established a real bridgehead between now and 1997 was in the democratic institutions in Hong Kong. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman's point is fairly irrelevant.

Mr. Walden: The hon. Gentleman says that my point is irrelevant, but my point is fundamental and it has been consistently evaded by the hon. Gentleman. It concerns the power relationship between Britain, as represented by our responsibilities in Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China. The hon. Gentleman's entire speech has been delivered in a political vacuum. It is not simply a matter of what Britain wants. All hon. Members know that we want democracy in Hong Kong. But we cannot have the sort of democracy that we want as soon as we want it because of the power relationship between China

[Mr. Walden]

and Britain. There has been no hint in the hon. Gentleman's speech of that reality. Therefore, it is completely without interest or relevance.

Mr. Rowlands: The hon. Gentleman reflects the Foreign Office establishment. He prompted me to make that remark. I would not have done it otherwise. But as he wishes to exchange an insult or two, I shall give him one back. If the hon. Gentleman had given me a couple more minutes, I was about to say that we are in a strong position when it comes to democratic institutions. There was a loss of negotiating nerve. If a system of democracy far greater than the one proposed by the Government and accepted in the negotiations with the Chinese had been accepted, it would have put the Chinese Government on the spot in 1997.

However great their power, would the Chinese Government in 1997 signal to Hong Kong, to its capitalist system, to the international community and to everybody outside China, that it wanted to dismantle the democratic structures in Hong Kong? What sort of signals would have gone out? How much would confidence be shaken if the Chinese Government were to say in 1997 that they would dismantle the democratic structures that had been created in Hong Kong? The British Government are in a much stronger negotiating position, as they will be between now and 1997, if they decide to establish a wider democratic system within Hong Kong, with the support of the Hong Kong people.

The hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) is wrong, because although the Basic Law is within the powers of the Chinese Government and we would have to make representations to try to change such laws, this arrangement is within our power. It can be decided by the Hong Kong and British Governments. Therefore, the Government are in a stronger position.

The answer to the intervention by the hon. Member for Buckingham is this: if we establish a more powerful and a better democratic system in Hong Kong, will it be in the interests of a Chinese Government to signal to Hong Kong, Britain and the international community in 1997 that it does not believe that those democratic institutions should exist? Would they reverse decisions taken by the British Government and the people of Hong Kong? That is why we have every right to say to the Government and to Ministers that between now and 1997 they should for goodness' sake change their minds, and have some courage and some guts, at least as regards establishing democratic institutions in Hong Kong.

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): Of course I am in favour of democracy, but it is worth recalling that the British Government, soon after the second world war, had plans for introducing democracy into Hong Kong. The moment the communist armies reached the frontiers of Hong Kong, those plans were put on ice, and they have never been revived by any British Government.

The plans were put on ice for one good reason: if there were democratic elections in Hong Kong, it would put the Government in Peking into a difficult position. They would either have to accept a democratically elected anti-communist Government in Hong Kong, or they would have to use their best efforts to ensure that communists were elected. Therefore, democracy was put on ice for years. That holds true for the position now, post-Tiananmen square.

If we accept new clause 9 and move rapidly to full universal democracy in Hong Kong, the Communist Government in Peking would have to use their best endeavours to ensure that communist and pro-communist candidates were elected. Otherwise, it would be an intolerable loss of face. At the same time, the Government of Taiwan—I am chairman of the Anglo-Taiwan parliamentary group—would, I suspect, be using their best efforts to ensure that anti-communist candidates were elected.

Far from producing stability, which is what hon. Members who support the amendments want, the introduction of universal democracy in Hong Kong at the moment would bring universal disorder and would set back the cause of stability.

Mr. Budgen: On a point of order Madam Deputy Speaker. I ask for your permission to move, That the debate be now adjourned.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. It is not a point of order. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to be called. I shall certainly look his way.

Mr. Budgen: I beg to move, That the debate be now adjourned.

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is not a motion that I am prepared to contemplate at this stage.

12 midnight

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): These are important matters that deserve the fullest consideration. Earlier in the debate, an hon. Member declared an interest as an officer of one of the parliamentary groups. I should therefore declare that I am the vice-chairman of the British Hong Kong parliamentary group.

I support amendment No. 50 and new clause 9, which I prefer. I agree with what has been said about the new clause and the amendment. Most of the points have been made, but one significant point has not yet been made: that the Government are planning to sell Hong Kong down the river in 1997. The purpose of the Bill is to enable the Government to retain some semblance of order and government in Hong Kong until 1997 when they will cheerfully be able to say, "We are lowering the union jack, we have all our boats ready to sail away, our aeroplanes are ready to fly away from Kai Tak airport and we will have nothing further to do with Hong Kong." In decades to come, it will be seen as one of the most shameful episodes in British colonial history. We are preparing to hand over 5 million or 6 million people to a totalitarian, non-democratic Government, to shed a lot of crocodile tears and to excuse ourselves by saying that we can do nothing about it. We cannot allow ourselves to be duped in that way.

All that we can do is to support amendment No. 50 and new clause 9 and to give self-government to Hong Kong straight away. We should allow them to negotiate with Peking. There is no substitute for democracy and free expression—whether for the people of Hong Kong or China, or for the people of Lithuania and Latvia. I find it

difficult to understand how some Conservative Members can justify their stance on independence for the Baltic states, in view of their craven stance on Hong Kong.

Other hon. Members share my views. Therefore, I ask the Minister to take note of what hon. Members who have spoken in favour of the new clause and amendment No. 50 have said. Under the Basic Law, as drafted, the chief executive will be a puppet of Peking. The legislature will be under Peking's control. If hon. Members care to read the small print of the Basic Law, they will find that that is so. The only way to get round the problem is to have self-government for Hong Kong as quickly as possible so that the people of Hong Kong can decide either whether they wish to be just one part of China under its present non-democratic system or whether they wish to negotiate a slightly different form of agreement with China. That should be done by the people of Hong Kong; it should not be done by us.

Above all, we should not be prepared—which is what the Bill is all about—to sell Hong Kong down the river in 1997, with as little fuss as possible for the United Kingdom. It is absolutely shameful that the Bill is before the House tonight.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I support the new clause and the amendment to which my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) spoke so ably.

I pose this question to the House: what value democracy? I entirely endorse the views of the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek). We on this side of the House eulogise democracy, promote democracy in central and eastern Europe, and encourage President Mikhail Gorbachev to implement a meaningful democracy in his country. We sought to aid the Filipino people in getting rid of their ex-president, President Marcos—now deceased—and we encourage that part of the world to adopt a proper, meaningful, democratic parliamentary system—full adult suffrage.

What is the difference between some of those countries and Hong Kong? For years, I have urged the South African Administration to urge all the population groups in that country to adopt a one-man, one-vote system. Whether that is done in a unitary state or in another system does not matter.

I believe in full adult suffrage, and I am amazed, saddened and personally disgusted that we, the British nation, are prepared through our Parliament to hand over a country for which we have been responsible for many decades to—as the hon. Member for Wrexham rightly reminded the House—a totalitarian system, with the memory of Tiananmen square still very fresh in our memories.

I personally believe that the best way of guaranteeing the future for all the people now in Hong Kong is to give them a full, 100 per cent. democratic system well before 1997. I support the views expressed by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands), who is a member of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. I share his belief that the Chinese Administration is unlikely to seek to reverse what we have done. As he reminded the House, we have the authority and the right to implement a democratic system in Hong Kong. One hundred per cent. of the Legislative Council should be fully elected by 1997—in my view, by 1995. Why do I say that? How do I justify that belief?

I do not believe that the People's Republic of China can do without the technology of the western world. It cannot do without the investment that the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Japan and other countries are prepared to pour into it, if it is to survive and make progress. I say exactly the same thing about President Gorbachev.

When my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made her statement yesterday, I was fortunate to catch Mr. Speaker's eye to ask a supplementary question. If perestroika and glasnost are to survive, and if President Gorbachev is to survive to carry through those policies, his country's economy must be put in order. President Gorbachev cannot do that without the assistance of the western developed nations. The Chinese leadership also need the help of the western developed nations to take their country forward.

We have the authority, the opportunity and the moral duty to ensure that the people of Hong Kong have a system of full adult suffrage, so that they can elect 100 per cent. of the membership of the Legislative Council by 1995—well before the date in 1997 when we hand over their sovereignty to the People's Republic of China.

Can my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench say where else we have given, as it were, independence or relinquished responsibility for a country, and not sought first to put in place a proper democratic system and grant the vote to its adult population? I find it difficult to do so. I remind the House that we have handed over power in many countries where the people were far less able to exercise the vote in a responsible and knowledgeable way than the people of Hong Kong.

We are using double standards. I share the views expressed by the hon. Member for Wrexham: we are indeed selling out the people of Hong Kong. I am ashamed to be involved with a Government who are taking this action. Why do we want to get rid of what we see as an unpleasant responsibility? The only reason for introducing the Bill, which, sad to say, I fear will become an Act, is to get out of a difficult situation with a minimum of honour. This is a disgraceful way of handing over the sovereignty of a country—of a colony that has been very loyal to this country and whose people look to us for the lead and the example that we have given the rest of the world for so many years.

The people of Hong Kong are disgusted by the treatment being meted out to them. The Government can boast of the discussions that they have had. When I was last in Hong Kong, the people told me that they had had no meaningful consultation at the grass roots with any Government of the United Kingdom. They said that the Government did not want to talk to the millions of ordinary citizens. They are prepared to talk to one or two selected establishment figures, but to imagine that they speak with the true voice of Hong Kong is to live in a different world.

My colleagues on the Government Front Bench may sit there smirking, thinking of the majorities that they have notched up so far during the passage of the Bill, but I still believe that there is some honour left in this House. I shall not mention colleagues by name, but I prefer to match my votes to the words that I utter during a debate. This place derives its credibility and the respect that it has enjoyed in the past precisely from that. We undermine respect for this place by not speaking our minds and then by not voting along the lines of what we have said.

[Mr. Nicholas Winterton]

It is odd to find myself sharing almost entirely the views of Opposition Members, although my views are also shared by one or two of my hon. Friends. This is a shameful incident in parliamentary history in this country. We are passing a Bill that will affect the lives of 5·5 million people virtually without their having had any meaningful say in what will happen to them. As a result of the Bill, most of the 50,000 heads of families—225,000 people in all—will leave Hong Kong and come to the United Kingdom. Some will also go to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan and a number of other countries.

I should have been much happier if we had implemented full adult suffrage in Hong Kong before we handed over sovereignty. That would have given the people in the colony, who are concerned about their future, a say in it. It would have been the best safeguard to ensure that the vast majority of them—including those in commerce and education, and the high fliers and entrepreneurs—stayed in Hong Kong, thus guaranteeing the future of all the people, their prosperity, and their contribution to the People's Republic of China, and preserving the major role that the territory has played in the far east for so many years.

12.15 am

Mr. Maclennan: When the hon. Member for Macclesfied (Mr. Winterton) speaks about honour, I am reminded of the words of Tennyson:

"His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."

The hon. Gentleman's wrapping of the union jack around himself and the proclamation of his commitment to democracy carries little weight when he is not prepared to respond to what the people of Hong Kong have asked for.

The people of Hong Kong have a more realistic assessment of what democracy means as defence against tyranny. They have seen other countries trampled under foot. They remember, if the hon. Gentleman does not, how the democracy that was coming back to life in Czechoslovakia was rolled out by the tanks from the east. There was an elected democracy in Czechoslovakia when Jan Masaryk was thrown from the windows of his Foreign Office. To talk of democracy as a defence against the People's Republic is total self-deception.

The reality is that new clause 9 is the fig leaf put forward by the Labour party to cover the nakedness of its response to the demand from the people of Hong Kong for the security that they thought they would enjoy by being British citizens, albeit cut-down British citizens, as holders of British dependent territory passports. They thought that it would be reasonable to turn to this honourable country to see those passports made good and for a right of full British citizenship. If the hon. Member for Macclesfield had been prepared to support the people of Hong Kong in that plea, we might have listened to his jingoism and plea for democracy with greater enthusiasm, and perhaps even sympathy.

The reality is that the Government have chosen to look not at the symbols but at the power structures in the orient. They have tried to decide what they can do to move Hong Kong towards a more democratic system of government than there has been in the colony under successive parties in this country. They have made a cautious judgment that they can move at a certain rate, with the acceptance of the Peking Government. They are also trying to hold out the prospect that Hong Kong will be a prosperous nation in 1997.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: With all its people here.

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman should have listened to the hon. Member for Epping when he spoke of evidence that he had seen in Hong Kong, which revealed that 1·8 per cent. of the people of Hong Kong wanted to come to this country. They are not interested in coming here, save as a last resort.

Mr. Winterton: My hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) did not vote.

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman can carry his quarrels with Conservative Members into another forum. I do not propose to intrude on them.

The evidence given by innumerable hon. Members, in debates which the hon. Member for Macclesfield did not attend, was that the people of Hong Kong are not seeking to flock here. The argument of the Liberal Democrats is that we should respond to the demands of the people of Hong Kong, not because they would take up these passports but because they want security in the event of the catastrophe of 1997. If the hon. Member for Macclesfield wants an honourable solution to the problem, he should listen to that argument.

I will not detain the House at this late hour, because these arguments have been trawled before, but I cannot support new clause 9 or amendment No. 50, which are merely a diversion designed to deflect attention from the unwillingness to offer the people of Hong Kong that which they want—the right of British citizenship. The fact that these proposals are made with such vehemence will not divert people from the reality. If the new clauses were accepted, they would postpone, beyond any realistic date, the possibility of any scheme being introduced to establish the security of the people whose presence in Hong Kong is so necessary to its commercial and industrial strength. In that strength lies its only hope of salvation from takeover and subjection.

Mr. Maude: I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) spoke in those terms and tones. He rightly reminded us that these matters are of profound importance for the future of the nearly 6 million people who look to us for help and support and for whom we in the House are responsible. It is therefore too great a matter for large phrases to be thrown round quite as lightly as my hon. Friend did.

The Government have at no stage pretended or argued that our proposals in the Bill are the sole answer to questions about the future of Hong Kong. We have always agreed with the view, which has found consensus in the House, that democracy matters to Hong Kong, that we want the process of democracy to be advanced and to take place more quickly than was generally believed to be the case a year or even two years ago. To argue, as my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) did, with a casual disregard for the realities, and to say that there is an easy, quick answer, that we could move rapidly to total democracy, that all the problems would be solved and that the Hong Kong people would rise up in gratitude

to a large-minded House of Commons, is the cruellest deception that could be practised on the people of Hong Kong, and we will have no part of it.

Of course we agree that there should be further democracy. We argued strongly that the Basic Law, which will come into effect on 30 June 1997, should include more democracy than the previous draft, and it does, although not dramatically so. The argument in the new clause is that we should move immediately to introduce 100 per cent. democracy. In a way, I agree with the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) that the matter is entirely within our sovereignty. We have no alibi. The People's Republic of China has no power to veto it. Of course we could have done this and of course we still can. We could introduce those elections in 1991 or 1995, and it would make us feel terrific about ourselves. Playing it over in my mind, I can imagine how the hon. Members for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney and for Wrexham and my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield would laud us and say how courageous we had been for standing up to China. But it would not make the slightest difference to the reality, because the law that will operate in Hong Kong in July 1997 is not a law introduced by the House of Commons but one introduced by the People's Republic of China. There could have been this brief orgy of full democracy for seven years, brought in in the certain knowledge that it would be immediately dismantled by the People's Republic of China. If we had done that, I do not believe that we would have done any service to the people in Hong Kong who look to us for a reasonable approach, and we shall not do it.

Mr. Wells: With the leave of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, I should like to make two points before we finish the debate.

First, it is clear from the arguments of my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) that there are difficulties in the introduction of direct democracy, as my hon. Friend the Minister suggested. But Hong Kong is committed to elections; it is committed to democracy by the treaty that we signed in 1984. Perhaps events will turn out as they certainly would have done in 1955, when I first lived in Hong Kong and when the nationalists and the Chinese communists were fighting in Nathan road, Kowloon and I had the misfortune of trying to part the two warring camps. But I think that the present situation is different: the People's Republic of China has made a commitment to democracy in Hong Kong and will permit it to work. The Chinese said as much to the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee when we visited Peking.

That means that there is no question of there not being a democracy, and a democracy of a kind has been agreed anyway. The first direct elections will take place next year; further elections will take place in 1995, and they will carry Hong Kong, through 1997, to a further election. We are in the process of establishing democracy anyway. What is important is that we should establish it early, to allow it to take deep enough roots to minimise or preclude the type of influence to which we have referred.

Secondly, the Bill seeks to give 50,000 passports—it will possibly be 250,000 passports in total—to leading members of the Hong Kong community so that we can retain their services in Hong Kong at least until 1997. I believe that British citizenship is a privilege. Those who enjoy that privilege may stay in Hong Kong until 1997; it is more doubtful that they will stay after 1997. During the period in which we are trying to establish democracy so that Hong Kong can continue for the next 50 years as a capitalist democratic enclave in the People's Republic of China, it is precisely those people who must give the lead and create and breathe life into the democratic institutions and make them work. They must make those institutions accountable and make them the bodies that stand against the executive and the other economic powers in Hong Kong. They will create the powerful and prosperous future that I dearly wish Hong Kong to have. The Bill will undermine that process.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): My hon. Friend referred to an "orgy of democracy". We have watched eastern Europe crumble as people have asserted basic freedoms and rights—representative government and the defence of their interests and lives. We have promoted that argument. Foreign Office representatives have gone round cheering for it and the House has cheered for it; our people have recognised the spirit of the claims of the people of eastern Europe and have also cheered for them.

We have no constitutional responsibility for eastern Europe but we have observed and cheered for developments there. I personally cheer for them, and the House—which owes its very existence to those basic rights and freedoms—cheers for them. Yet now the Minister refers to an "orgy of democracy" in a country where we do, indeed, have constitutional responsibility. As my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) said, we are committed to the process, although it will fall outside our competence once we resign our responsibilities, on the accession of that criminal conspiracy in Peking which is called the Communist party.

The one gift from their inheritance that the British Government, British institutions and the British people can pass on to Hong Kong is a respect for the rights of individual citizens to determine their futures—for however long our competence over that may last. I suspect that the conspiracy that we saw march into Tiananmen square last year will also march into Hong Kong if the regime has not changed by 1997. The banner of a free people expressing themselves in their own representative institutions may well do something to help to change the balance of that great and mighty nation, China.

We therefore should not be scornful. The very phrase "orgy of democracy" should haunt us. We should be proud of our inheritance; that is all I argue. I support the Government on the Bill. I do not like the circumstances that brought us to it, and I do not like its consequences, but I argue that the Government are doing the honourable thing by trying to acknowledge that decent and reasonable citizens in peril should be given some guarantee of safety to enable them to continue and to allow the survival of the colony in its present form.

That is why I support the Government. I deeply regret that the Government have not moved to give representative Government to the people of Hong Kong. I regret that, because that is the very spirit of our inheritance and it is the last thing that we can offer to the world.

I will vote against the new clause, because to tie the proposal to another condition is ridiculous and absurd. However, the concept that we should be returning representative government to the people of Hong Kong is wholly honourable and reasonable. That is something that

[Mr. Richard Shepherd]

I would have liked this Government, whom I support, to hold as a constant banner in our arrangements in this matter.

12.30 am

Mr. Foulkes: There could be no finer end to this debate than the speech that we have just heard from the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd).

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend's speech contained no comfort for the Opposition.

Mr. Foulkes: There is comfort for the Opposition in the hon. Gentleman's speech, as the Minister will discover in a moment.

The hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills has great sincerity and shows great courage in the kind of Bills that he brings before the House and in the way in which, on occasions, he votes in the House. We respect him and he was right to take the Minister to task.

We have had an interesting debate and, as the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) discovered, at times quite a passionate one. I intend to deal with two points raised by the Minister. He gave a false account of what the Opposition have said on this issue. He said that we were talking only about democracy and then he knocked that down. Of course, it is easy to knock down something that is one's own account of what was said and not what actually was said.

We did not say that democracy would ensure that all the problems would be solved and that it was an easy, quick answer. If we had said that, it would have been a cruel deception. We said that democracy was one element that is essential in helping to restore confidence. That is not an easy, quick answer. The Minister did himself no credit by criticising us on that front.

The Minister made an astonishing remark. He went further than he did in Committee and claimed that we were pursuing our proposal in the certain knowledge that it would be dismantled by China. How can he say that? He was more cautious and less outrageous in Committee. According to the joint declaration, in the special administrative region, the Legislative Council would be constituted by election. The Chinese have said that. That is a principle about which so many people feel strongly that we should stand by and challenge the Government of China on it. If we had the courage to do that, we would win.

The rather emotional intervention of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland gave us an insight into the conflict over his party's joint agreement, during which he came to blows over the dead parrot of a joint agreement. That is a serious issue and the hon. Member for Macclesfield treated it as such. He made a sensible speech, but was attacked in an emotional and, I believe, unsustainable way. The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland described the new clause as a fig leaf for the Labour party's position. He implied, as the Minister did, that the Labour party was concerned only with the issue of democracy.

If the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland has listened to my speech, he would know that I also spoke about the importance of China reaffirming its commitment to the one country-two systems process. I also described the importance of China retaining its window on the western world. I spoke also about the international safety net if there is a crisis in the colony. In no way is that a fig leaf. It is an element in our alternative plan in relation to confidence in the future of the colony. As it happens, it is also unfortunate that the hon. Gentleman choose the fig leaf metaphor, because I am about to take the fig leaf away.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): What is underneath it?

Mr. Foulkes: I dread to think of the visions that that metaphor conjures up for Conservative Members. *[Interruption.]* The Minister reads my mind. I can only thank higher beings for their existence at the Dispatch Box.

The new clause has well served the purpose for which it was tabled. We have had a good debate on democracy. The purpose of tabling the new clause was to allow that debate to take place. Whatever the Minister may say, the contribution by the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills was not an embarrassment to the Opposition. He rightly said that the new clause is effectively a wrecking measure. It links the principle of democracy to other aspects of the Bill that we have tried to improve. We have deliberately taken a constructive approach in Committee and on Report.

The message about the importance of having democracy in Hong Kong as quickly as possible has got across, so I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Budgen *moved,* That further consideration of the Bill be now adjourned, *but* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, *pursuant to Standing Order No. 34 (Dilatory motion in abuse of rules of House), declined to propose the Question thereon.*

Clause 1

ACQUISITION OF BRITISH CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Marlow: I beg to move amendment No. 3, in page 1, line 6, leave out '50,000' and insert '10,000'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 4, in page 1, line 6, leave out '50,000' and insert '5,000'.

No. 14, in page 1, line 6, leave out '50,000' and insert '20,000'.

No. 15, in page 1, line 6, leave out '50,000' and insert '30,000'.

No. 16, in page 1, line 6, leave out '50,000' and insert '40,000'.

No. 48, in page 1, line 24, at end insert—

'( ) The Secretary of State may by order amend subparagraph (1) by substituting a higher figure for the figure for the time being specified there if the Governor recommends that it is necessary to do so in order to maintain the stability of Hong Kong or the safety of its residents.'.

Mr. Marlow: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a series of amendments—the numbers amendments. On the face of the Bill, the Government have a figure of 50,000 heads of household passports to be issued. The amendments refer to 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 30,000 and 40,000. I believe, because I have read it—I should have found it hard to believe otherwise—that there is also a Liberal amendment to increase the number.

Not long ago we had an important debate on abortion. A series of amendments were called on a pendulum basis —one after the other. I am wondering how we can deal with voting on these amendments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It would be far better if the hon. Gentleman spoke to his amendment. We shall see how we get on during the debate.

Mr. Marlow: I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your undertaking.

Amendment No. 3 is a numbers amendment. A famous parliamentarian once said on the issue of immigration that numbers are of the essence. The Government have plucked out a figure—I am not sure whether it was out of the ether or elsewhere—of 50,000 as being the number of passports that they believe would satisfy the situation in Hong Kong and secure the continuing residence in Hong Kong of people who are essential to the well-being of the colony. As the House will know, it is the view of many of my hon. Friends that the issuance of those passports will not ensure that the people who have them remain, but that they take the first plane or boat out to re-establish themselves, their careers, their families and their financial fortunes elsewhere.

When we consider the numbers, we must take a careful look at the present circumstances in the United Kingdom. The past generation or so has seen a massive immigration of people of different backgrounds, cultures, religions, nationalities and ways of life into this country. I am much the same as many other hon. Members, in that I do not believe that our way of life, religion and culture is any better or worse than that of anybody else. Nevertheless, man is a tribal animal. Labour Members would say that man is a racist animal. They say that I am a racist. I do not know what they mean by that. If I am—and probably 90 per cent. of the population agree with my views—they are saying that 90 per cent. of those whom they want to vote for them at the general election are also racists.

If one brings in people of different races, cultures and backgrounds, to coin the word used by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, one swamps localities with people of different backgrounds and the indigenous population whose families have resided here for generations will feel that their identity is being threatened. That does not happen only in the United Kingdom. One does not need to read the book when one can look at the picture. It is happening now in the Soviet Union.

There is a massive racial strife between the Asiatic republics there, because people from different backgrounds and cultures were put together in republics, to a large extent by the centralised bureaucracy of the Soviet Union. For 70 years they have been suppressed by Soviet communism, and now that that repression is no longer applied the old antagonisms are re-erupting, although they have been living together for two or three generations.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): What is the hon. Gentleman talking about?

Mr. Marlow: If the hon. and learned Gentleman wants to make a speech in a moment, I am sure that the House——

Mr. Carlile: The hon. Gentleman is trying to compare the conditions in the United Kingdom with those in the Soviet Union. Is he not aware that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people were transplanted in the Soviet Union from one part of that union thousands of miles to another and that they were forced on the people in the places where they were settled? How on earth can he make an honest comparison between those entirely different circumstances?

Mr. Marlow: People in the Soviet Union have been transported from one part to another——

Mr. Carlile: Transplanted by force.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. and learned Gentleman is right. They were transplanted. They migrated from one part to another. People of different races and backgrounds have been living in various parts of the Soviet Union not for generations, but for centuries. The German communities in the Soviet Union have been there since the time of Catherine the Great. Although people have been there a long time, the ethnic differences still——

Mr. Carlile: Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that we should send the Welsh back to Caernarvon?

Mr. Marlow: If the hon. and learned Gentleman wants to take part in a debate for children, let him find it elsewhere. This is a serious matter, which requires proper consideration by the House.

Problems arise between proportionately small communities of different backgrounds and cultures. The sum of the parts is greater than the whole because there is an element of cross-fertilisation. If sufficiently large ethnic minority communities, almost colonies, are transplanted or come of their own free will, the indigenous people feel that their identity is being threatened. Before we address ourselves to the number of people whom we allow in—people of different races, cultures and backgrounds, estimable, worthy, successful and articulate though they are and people with whom individually we may get on well —let us consider the present conditions here. It may not worry us here. We may be relatively wealthy, relatively well-off and live in relatively comfortable surroundings, but it worries some of our constituents. We certainly ought to take account of that.

There has been mass migration of people of different cultures to this country, and we all know that the bulk of our constituents resent it. We all know in our bones that we ought to have done something about it, but we all know that to have done something about it at the time would have appeared illiberal, unpleasant and intolerant and therefore we stood back from doing it. We have let communities accumulate in this country knowing that it was against the desires, interests wishes, deep feelings and soul of the people of our country. Yet still we have been negligent enough to let it happen. We shall let it happen again if the Bill goes through the House.

The Government say that 50,000 heads of household will be issued with passports. With families, we can gross that up to 225,000 people—a quarter of a million people perhaps. The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) believes—I do not agree with him—that, if the Bill is allowed to go through, all those people will not come here because all they really want to do is to stay in Hong Kong. He believes that everything will turn out right in China and that they will not feel the pressure to come out of Hong Kong, so they will all stay.

I do not believe that, but even if I did, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) said on an earlier occasion, if one issues an insurance policy one must

[Mr. Marlow]

take account of the fact that one might have to deliver, one might have to pay the bill, one might have to cough up. We are talking about a quarter of a million people. Those people will have friends, relatives and families in Hong Kong, and if things are unpleasant and there are pressures in Hong Kong and people want to get married from Hong Kong they will want to come to Britain.

We know how it is with the Asian sub-continent. We are better off in this country. There is more wealth here than there is in Asia. We know that and are grateful for it. Because of that, there is migration and families come together. But they tend to come together in one direction, quite naturally. They tend to come together in the United Kingdom where the wealth is and where people will be better off and will make better livings for themselves. If dark days surround the future of Hong Kong, the quarter of a million Chinese who come to this country will accumulate here their friends, relatives, spouses and their family from Hong Kong.

So we are talking about not a quarter of a million but perhaps half a million people added to the 4 million people of different culture and ethnic background who are in this country. They are lovely, excellent people, but different people. The indigenous population, rightly or wrongly, feel threatened by that. If we wish well for the future, that is something that we must take into account.

We might like to feel that, through race relations legislation, the Commission for Racial Equality, good will and education, everyone will love one another and come together. That might happen; but it might not. The history of the world to date does not give us great cause for optimism.

I do not want to delay the House for long, but we really ought to look at some of the statistics. I know that it will be greatly offensive to members of the Liberal Democratic party because they do not think that these things matter. It may matter to their constituents, but it does not seem to matter to them.

Let us consider schools. In the Inner London education authority, more than half the children are of non-European ethnic origin. In 1987, in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, almost half the schoolchildren were from Indian sub-continental ethnic origin. They are mainly Bangladeshi, of course. That is not a mixed, thriving, integrated community of people working together; it is a colony. How will the people who live round about react to that? If 50 per cent. of the people who live in the area are from Bangladesh, the people who are not from Bangladesh will move away and more people will move in from Bangladesh. They have large families. Why should they not have large families? The tendency will be that the proportion will increase from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. to 70 per cent. I predict that within a relatively short period Tower Hamlets will effectively have become not a Bangladeshi community, but a colony within the United Kingdom.

How are we going to deal with that? How will we deal with the pressures and problems that have arisen since the Salman Rushdie affair began? I hope that we can, but can we guarantee it, and until we can guarantee it, does it make sense to allow a quarter of a million or half a million more people—worthy, estimable, pleasant, splendid and educated though they may be, but of a different culture, race and background—to come to this country?

I think that that would be madness—I really do. It is irresponsible. We all pride ourselves that through that irresponsibility we are being decent, honest and liberal, but we are not. We are building up a store of problems for our children.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I have been listening closely to the hon. Gentleman. What does he think would happen in Hong Kong if the Government were not to make this concession? What does he think that the impact would be on the professional bodies and the Administration generally? Has he thought about that? Could he make a prediction about that in as informed a way as he has made his most recent predictions?

Mr. Marlow: As I said earlier, although we have responsibility for Hong Kong, our main commitment and responsibility is to the people—the electorate—of this country——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Answer.

Mr. Marlow: I shall answer the hon. Gentleman's question. He knows me well enough to know that I will answer.

As we have said before, we disagree with the Government's proposal to offer people passports because it will encourage them to get out while the going is good and to take their families out early. We have been conned by the sophisticates, the gilded yuppies and the upper classes of Chinese Hong Kong. I believe that they will see themselves right and get out while the rest will have to stay behind. Seeing the privileged and the elite leaving Hong Kong will cause a greater problem for those who remain in Hong Kong and for Hong Kong itself than would be the case if the captains—the leaders—of Hong Kong were to stay. I believe that they will leave. If we did not have the Bill, I believe that they would be more likely to stay.

It was said earlier, "Why leave Hong Kong if you have an income tax rate of 15 per cent. there?" I believe that if we were not encouraging them to leave by this legislation, they might make a go of it and stay——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that when I repeatedly asked people in Hong Kong whether they would come here and they said, "No, we want to stay as long as possible; we do not want to leave," they were deliberately misleading me and that I was conned and fooled by them?

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman had what conversations he had with a lot of people, but it is my belief that, if people in Hong Kong wanted to sell this measure to the British Government, politicians and public, they would not say, "If you pass this Bill, we shall leave Hong Kong," because we would smell a rat. They are far more likely to say, "Of course, if you pass this, you will keep us in Hong Kong." The hon. Gentleman has made his assessment and I have made mine.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Were we conned?

Mr. Marlow: Time will tell—*[Interruption.]* Yes, I think hon. Members were conned——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman is surely naive.

Mr. Marlow: Well, that is the hon. Gentleman's opinion.

The Bill will not do Hong Kong any good. As others have said, it is the only ship on which the captain gets off first and leaves the crew and the women and children behind until last. The Bill looks after those who would otherwise be able to look after themselves, and those who cannot look after themselves will be forced to remain in Hong Kong. In military terms, it is not what one would call "leadership by example".

Although I do not want to detain the House, I shall bore hon. Members with a few more statistics. The latest statistics on births in inner London show that half those births are to people of non-British ethnic origin. In Greater London, the proportion is 40 per cent. of all births——

Mr. Alex Carlile: So what?

Mr. Marlow: The hon. and learned Gentleman says, "So what?" The hon. Gentleman for Workington has been throwing words such as "naive" around, but I am not naive; to say "So what?" to the fact that half the babies born in our capital city are of non-British origin is incredibly naive.

I had a grandfather who was born and brought up in London; he died in London 25 years ago. If he returned to London now, he would not believe the evidence of his eyes. He would not think that he was in Britain. He would hardly think that he was on the same planet. If that has happened over the past 25 years, what will happen to our capital in the next 25 years? What does the hon. and learned Gentleman think will happen? What will be the future stability of Britain? What will happen to Britain's identity? We have mixed loyalties and different cultures. It is true that they are thriving, lively and exciting, but what will they do for peace in our nation? I believe that we have a tiger by the tail, and I am sad that the Government will add to our problems.

Mr. Maclennan: My amendment, No. 48, is grouped with amendment No. 3, which was moved by the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) but the purpose of the two amendments is entirely different. The intention behind amendment No. 48 is to enable the Governor to bring forward proposals to raise the ceiling from 50,000 persons if, in his judgment, it is necessary to do so for the maintenance of stability in Hong Kong or for the safety of its residents.

The Minister will know that I moved an amendment in Committee to seek to give all holders of dependent territory citizenship the right of abode in this country and the right to full British citizenship. That is the basic view of my party and my parliamentary colleagues on how Britain should respond. We have not altered our judgment following the debates that we have heard, but we have recognised that the policy will not be endorsed by the Government. Among the reasons why are the views of those who share the opinions of the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). There is a spectrum of views on the Government Benches, and perhaps the hon. Gentleman constitutes one end of it. It is appropriate that, in a debate on numbers, we should hear the views that are held by the two ends of the spectrum.

Conservative Members found themselves in some difficulties during a debate about the wives of British citizens. It seemed that, in replying to the debate, the Under-Secretary of State conceded that a time would probably come when all the 50,000 passports had been issued and nothing could be done about the wives of British citizens under that head. It seemed that the Government had no means of coping with that problem. Those wives of British citizens would have to be left until the curtain dropped in 1997, when no doubt they would be able to apply for asylum if they felt themselves threatened.

One of the benefits of accepting amendment No. 48 is that it would provide for the possibility of dealing with the problem of the wives of British citizens within the compass of the Bill. I am talking about a few hundred spouses. There are other reasons for seeking to provide a degree of flexibility to the Governor and to the Government. If the scheme is to have a major impact upon public opinion in Hong Kong, it must be introduced quickly. It must be introduced for most of the 50,000 if it is to have any impact on the areas of the economy, which are most threatened by the evacuation of skilled, talented and educated people who are the key to maintaining the economy.

That practical concept has little to do with equity; it has nothing to do with justice. It has much to do, however, with trying to keep the wheels turning in Hong Kong. If it is to have that effect, it must be implemented quickly, and that has been accepted by the Government. Nevertheless, considerable problems will be created. If all the places are allocated and the circumstances change, I do not see why the Government should have to come back to the House to try to alter those circumstances through primary legislation, month—or years—later, when they need only accept the amendment now to ensure that the Bill's purposes are not set at naught.

I am

The Government say that, having taken advice in Hong Kong, they consider 50,000 an acceptable figure because some people have come round to that view. When I was in Hong Kong after the Tiananmen square massacre—along with my right hon. Friend the Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown)—the figures that we heard were nearer 350,000. Different groups have come up with different suggestions, but all the figures have been larger than that proposed by the Government. Given that people are leaving Hong Kong at the rate of about 1,000 a week, I do not think that the Government can be so sure that they have got it right.

All I ask is for the Government to retain the degree of flexibility that will enable them to react to the judgment of the Governor, in whom they have placed so much trust, and to move quickly and appropriately. They need not resile from their view that 50,000 is the right number; they can stick to it, and reassure Conservative Members that they believe it to be right. It would, however, be helpful if they would admit the possibility that it is not right.

If further primary legislation is needed, I feel that the schemes in general will be brought into considerable disrepute. In any event, I doubt whether such legislation could have the same impact as the Bill.

The hon. Member for Northampton, North made an extremely interesting speech, and I have no doubt that he was sincere, but I cannot believe that he really speaks for Britain. He claims that 90 per cent. of the public agree with him, citing as evidence the divisions in Tower Hamlets. May I remind the hon. Gentleman that an election was held in Tower Hamlets recently, and that the party returned to run the borough is the party to which I have

the honour to belong, and not the hon. Gentleman's party. In the light of that result, the hon. Gentleman's example struck me as peculiarly inapposite.

Mr. Janman: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Maclennan: No; I am dealing with one Member at a time.

I find the views of the hon. Member for Northampton, North about the Englishness of being English singularly provincial. In the mid-1950s, my constituency in the north of Scotland experienced an influx of Englishmen who spoke with accents that seemed more exotic in Caithness than the accents of Hong Kong would seem in Tower Hamlets. They did not belong to the same established Church. They came up to work in a nuclear research establishment and do foreign, exotic and, some thought, dangerous things, for money. They have been assimilated. The accents are a little more alike now. Generations pass.

But it is not only English people who have come up to my constituency and been assimilated. There are some Bengalis too, and the children speak with strong Caithness accents and execute the highland fling with at least as much panache as the descendents of the Mackay of Mackay. The reality is that time is the factor that the hon. Gentleman leaves out of account.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The hon. Gentleman is helping to make the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). The number of English who have gone up to Scotland is comparatively small and, as the hon. Gentleman said, has been properly assimilated. But he might like to reflect on the difficulties in Northern Ireland between the Scottish settlers and the Irish people who were there before them.

Mr. Maclennan: I speak about what I know. The population of Caithness rose substantially and the town of Thurso trebled in size, as a result of an injection of almost entirely English blood in the middle 1950s. That was a sudden demographic change of a massive kind which had the potential to cause enormous disruption, but it did not.

If one is seeking to argue this matter on the basis of culture, one is getting into rather dangerous territory. The reality is that we live in a world that is increasingly small and mobile, where the difference and diversity of backgrounds is a positive advantage. It is a cause not of diversion but of delight. The fact of some tens of thousands of people coming from Hong Kong to Britain cannot be regarded by me or my right hon. and hon. Friends as a tragedy or a threat. It would create a dynamism in those parts of the country which were fortunate enough to be the receiving point which even the Government might welcome.

We approach such matters from a different philosophical and historical point of view. I do not imagine for a minute that I will take the hon. Member for Northampton, North very far with me down that road, but let him not speak as though he spoke for Britain. There are other points of view.

Mr. Janman: I shall not detain the House long. I assure my hon. Friends that I am sincere in that intent. But before I make my two brief points on the amendments, I want to expose the hypocritical drivel of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) when he referred to Tower Hamlets.

Members of the Labour party in the borough of Tower Hamlets are most irate and sincere in their criticism of the local Liberal party for the racist campaign that they consider the Liberals have fought on more than one occasion in borough elections in Tower Hamlets. I believe that I am right in saying that the Liberal party in Tower Hamlets has been taken to task by the Commission for Racial Equality for its housing policies. There has certainly been wide criticism of the Liberal party in the borough of Tower Hamlets, basically because the Liberal council puts Bangladeshis at the back of the housing queue. Many accusations have been made against the Liberals, so let us not have any more of that convenient principled Liberal party purporting to the House that it has a consistent view on such matters. One has only to go to Tower Hamlets to see the true face of the Liberal party.

Mr. Alex Carlile: The hon. Gentleman is not noted for his ready acceptance of propaganda coming from the extreme left, not just the extreme left of the Labour party but from extremes far to the left of that. Why does he now choose to believe extreme left propaganda, as opposed to the verdict of the electors of Tower Hamlets who have supported a Liberal Democrat council which in extremely difficult circumstances, with strong Bangladeshi support, has managed to build a community which he would have sought to send back to the Indian sub-continent?

Mr. Janman: I was not seeking to criticise the electorate of Tower Hamlets, and it is not only the Labour party in the borough which has made such criticisms—there have also been criticisms of the housing policy there from neutral quarters—[HON. MEMBERS: "Where? Name them."] I am seeking to expose the hypocrisy of the comments of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland, given the policies that his party has pursued in Tower Hamlets. If the people of Tower Hamlets wish to endorse those policies, I do not criticise that. It is a matter for the electorate there.

Amendments Nos. 3 and 4 seek to reduce the number of passports being issued to heads of households to 10,000 and 5,000 respectively. The first point, which has been made at considerable length by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North, is that, frankly, the number of 50,000 in the Bill is totally unacceptable to the British people. I put it on record that I endorse a great deal of what my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North said.

The second point is that there is a logic to the amendments. Section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981 rightly gives a clear commitment to senior Crown servants in Hong Kong, who could potentially be at risk after 1997 if things turned sour in the colony. Therefore, if a Bill is passed by the House to amend that Act, it is not inconsistent to refine, guarantee and restate a commitment in law to a number of people which arithmetically would be roughly equivalent to those who are already covered by section 4(5) of the 1981 Act.

I briefly endorse the accurate remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North. I believe that he speaks for the vast majority of people in this country. Certainly the vast majority of my constituents hold the same view. It will not surprise the House to hear me standing here tonight to support those views and to put forward the fears of my constituents.

The hour is very late, but I urge the House to support the amendments in the names of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North and other hon. Members.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I shall intervene for a few moments in the debate because I have some sympathy with the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan). It is not an amendment which I would have supported a month ago, but I feel in principle that one could support the amendment today, if one has talked to people in Hong Kong about these issues.

As so few hon. Members have had the opportunity to discuss with people in Hong Kong what their real intentions are, the House is perhaps not in a position to make a valid judgment on these matters. The truth is that many people do not wish to leave, will resist leaving until the last minute and will do so only in the most extreme circumstances.

In the course of one conversation, I found myself asking someone what kind of conditions would have to exist for them to finally want to leave. The scenario that they painted was one that even I found quite inconceivable. It seems that most people believe that the Chinese Government will seek to find some accommodation with the people in Hong Kong, if only to safeguard their commercial interests over the border in China, where a huge economy has developed in the special economic zone which has been set up by the Chinese authorities. It is utterly reliant on Hong Kong for the export of goods and their shipment to the rest of the world. The special economic zone provides substantial revenue for the Chinese Government.

Exactly the same happened in Macau. It was put to me when I was in Macau that the Chinese may want to develop support there, too, by giving Macau an element of independence so as to secure their own commercial interests. The Chinese are thoroughly pragmatic. They take a sensible view of what is in their best commercial interests. All I can do is to pass on what I was told while I was there. Even people who previously took a hard line found that their view had substantially changed after meeting people out there.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Does the hon. Gentleman not think it peculiar that, after having made this enormous trawl, he did not find a single person who would leave now, even though thousands are leaving every week?

1.15 am

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I referred earlier to the reasons why many of them are leaving now. Some countries have set up reception arrangements that require people immediately to take up the right of abode in the receiving countries. It is not that they want to move; it is that, if they accept the right of abode in Canada, they have to exercise it within a matter of a few months. Many of them would much prefer to stay in Hong Kong for many more years, having established a right of abode in Canada, and to exercise that right of abode only in the very worst conditions.

I drew the House's attention to the fact that a class of people are developing in Hong Kong who are called the astronauts—people who have immediately accepted the right of abode in Canada because of the nature of the offer. They have moved their money, in part, to Canada, but they have left much of it in Hong Kong. Having set up businesses in Canada, they have returned to Hong Kong to manage their businesses there, in the hope that one day they may be able to return to Canada. They have located their assets outside Hong Kong in such a way as to secure their assets for the future.

That is a perfectly human response. The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland referred to the fact that 1,000 people are leaving Hong Kong each week. I hope that hon. Members will not therefore conclude that they are necessarily leaving because they are desperate. In the main, they are leaving only because of the offers that have been made, not only by Canada, Australia and New Zealand but also by a number of other countries in south-east Asia. The most liberal country in south-east Asia in terms of acceptance arrangements is Singapore. The Government of Singapore have offered flexibility. People drew my attention on a number of occasions to the Singapore arrangement, since it provides for a delayed right of abode.

The problem is that many people have not, unfortunately, had the opportunity to discuss these matters in detail with the people who live in the colony. The majority want to remain there and are determined to do so, but they are worried about losing their assets. They also hold a social position in the colony. People aspire to a social position in all societies, and very often it is underpinned by their personal wealth. Having acquired that position, they are unwilling to lose it. Those in Hong Kong are simply trying to establish a bolthole, to secure their assets outside Hong Kong, while at the same time providing a reasonably secure future also for their families.

I wish that more people had had the opportunity to share my experience, for it would have greatly affected their contribution to this debate. I am not bought off with trips. I went to Hong Kong holding a fairly hard line, and during my visit—for which the Hong Kong Government paid—I argued the case made by the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow). Wherever I went, I pointed to the debate in this country based on an interpretation of the issue in terms of immigration as against assurance. I confess that, after a week out there, I had to change my view. There, the question is not seen in immigration terms but in terms of consolidating the residents' position and making sure of their futures.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The remarks of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Cambell-Savours) were very perceptive and showed why the Government believe that the legislation is not to do with immigration but designed to give key people who have an opportunity to leave Hong Kong the confidence to remain there. That is the Bill's objective, and the hon. Member for Workington summed it up very well.

It is clear that there is no particular logic in the different figures that my hon. Friends suggest should be inserted into the Bill. They have not argued for any of them, except perhaps those relating to Crown servants. I suspect that they merely sought an opportunity to argue that the Government simply plucked the figure of 50,000 key people out of thin air, but they did not succeed.

As the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland surmised, the Government held extensive consultations with the Government and people of Hong Kong, and

[Mr. Peter Lloyd]

many in the United Kingdom who know Hong Kong made representations about the form that the assurance policy that the Bill represents should take.

Of course those in Hong Kong want the Bill to allow for a much larger number, and that is understandable. We looked at rates of immigration within the occupational groups and examined the evidence supplied by many of the groups themselves. Having carefully studied the occupational profile of Hong Kong's working population and the balance between the public and private sectors in the colony's economy, we then had to make a judgment.

The assurance package had to cater for a significant proportion of Hong Kong's key personnel, and thereby make a real impact on the level of emigration from the colony. At the same time, the figure had to be one that Britain could honour if, against all our expectations, those granted citizenship decided to come to the United Kingdom to live. If they did, their contribution to the United Kingdom would be immense, as it has been to Hong Kong. I am saddened that, in the excitement of his verbosity, my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) did not find a moment even to consider that aspect when he expatiated on the arrival of former Hong Kong residents in this country.

There is no precise science behind the 50,000 figure. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary explained on Second Reading, it was necessarily a compromise. We have to balance our duty to Hong Kong and to the United Kingdom, and we also have an ineluctable duty to both. Nothing that I heard today persuades me that the figures proposed by my hon. Friends are in any way an improvement on the Government's judgment. There would be no merit in a scheme that offered assurances to such a small number of people that there was no impact on the level of emigration and no spin-off in terms of confidence within the colony.

Mr. Marlow: What, in the Government's judgment, is the number of people who have been given these passports who will migrate to the United Kingdom, assuming that the relationships between Hong Kong and China, and between China and the United Kingdom, stay the same as now?

Mr. Lloyd: I think the number will be very low, as the hon. Member for Workington said.

Mr. Marlow: How low?

Mr. Lloyd: We have no precise figure, but it is small. Presumably my hon. Friend thinks that all 50,000 will come here, but if he talks to some of the people who would be in line for British citizenship under the scheme, he will find that they do not want to come here; they want to stay in Hong Kong, but they want the assurance that, if things go wrong, they will have somewhere to go. They do not want to spend time in Canada or Australia if they can have the confidence to remain in Hong Kong with British citizenship.

Mr. Tebbit: Let us suppose that things do not go quite as my hon. Friend expects them to. In this world it is possible that even a Minister in a Conservative Government can be wrong in some small detail. It is very unusual, but the Bill shows that it is possible. Indeed, the Minister has admitted that he has been wrong on a number of occasions this evening.

Let us suppose that a large number of the people who are protected by British citizenship granted under the Bill decide to leave Hong Kong in the next three or four years. Can my hon. Friend assure me that under no circumstances will the Government come back to the House and say that another lot of people are now in the posts vacated by the first group, and that it is essential that they be maintained in those posts for the benefit of Hong Kong—so they would like to give a few more people citizenship? If the Bill fails in its intention of keeping these people in Hong Kong, will my hon. Friend assure me that he will not then ask the House to reinforce failure by granting another wodge of people British citizenship under this shoddy mechanism?

Mr. Lloyd: My right hon. Friend knows that we intend to grant the 50,000 places in two tranches, so there will not be a "wodge" in the next year or two; some will be held in reserve. My right hon. Friend knows perfectly well that the Government can give him only one assurance: it is that they have no intention of coming back to the House to increase the number, but that if they ever thought that the number should be increased or decreased, they would have to return to the House, and the House, not the Government, would decide in the end.

Mr. Tebbit: If my hon. Friend finds that the first tranche results in people leaving Hong Kong with their British passports, will he persist with the second tranche?

Mr. Lloyd: This Bill will then be on the statute book and we shall judge carefully how it is working out in practice and then report back to the House. I do not expect the scheme to fail in the way that my right hon. Friend suggests. Like people in Hong Kong and those who have studied the issue closely, I believe that the Bill will make an enormous contribution to confidence in the colony, as is our intention.

Mr. Marlow: The figure of 50,000 is on the face of the Bill. If it becomes apparent that that number is not necessary, will the Government issue fewer passports?

Mr. Lloyd: If 50,000 apply and meet the criteria, 50,000 will be the number. That is set out in the legislation, and there will be no resiling from that. I know that my hon. Friend is extremely worried that they will come here, but I do not expect them to do so. The majority in the Conservative party, and certainly the majority in the House, realise that that would be a tragedy for Hong Kong but a gain for this country.

It follows that the Government cannot accept amendment No. 48, which gives the Secretary of State discretion to substitute at a later date a figure higher than 50,000. We have reached a judgment about the maximum commitment that Britain can honour without the risk of unacceptable strain, and the Bill reflects that.

1.30 am

Doubts have been expressed that the proposed figure is too high. I do not share those doubts, but nor do I think that the House would expect the Home Secretary to have the power to increase the scale of the scheme without further legislation.

Mr. Butcher: If my hon. Friend craves your indulgence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he may wish to make a further observation to those who have listened carefully to his earlier comments. Are the Government, in asking hon. Members to support the Bill, saying that they have no intention whatever of returning to the House with another Bill and further primary legislation if they get their sums wrong about 50,000 people exercising their rights before 1997? I listened carefully to what my hon. Friend said. I think he said that the Government had no such intention, but we know that that phrase cannot be guaranteed. I am asking whether that phrase can be firmed up a little and whether he is prepared to give an undertaking to the House that under no circumstances will that 50,000 figure be exceeded.

Mr. Lloyd: What I said was perfectly clear and there is no need for me to repeat it.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Tebbit: I beg to move amendment No. 6, in page 1, line 9, leave out 'after 30th June 1997' and insert 'before 1st December 1992'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 46, in page 1, line 10, at end add

'or before 1st December 1993'.

No. 13, in clause 5, page 3, line 17, leave out subsection (4) and insert—

'(4) This Act shall come into force on 1st December 1992 if before that date its coming into force has been approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.'.

No. 19, in page 3, line 19, at end insert

', provided that the Secretary of State may not appoint a day before 1st January 1993, and that, before any day is appointed for the commencement of any of the provisions of this Act, such commencement has been approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.'.

No. 23, in schedule 1, page 4, line 30, after 'dates', insert 'no earlier than 1st January 1993'.

Mr. Tebbit: The amendments have been grouped together because they all propose to delay the coming into operation of the Bill, either its taking effect or the issue of passports under it.

Amendment No. 13, although the drafting is defective, would ensure that the Bill could not take effect before there had been a vote in both Houses of Parliament following the next general election. That would allow my right hon. and hon. Friends, and indeed Opposition Members, to include in their election manifestos the pledge that they would enact this legislation, thereby allowing people to vote on it. That would be the decent thing to do and would give greater legitimacy to the Bill, which, as we have all agreed, breaches a solemn undertaking given by the Conservative party, not once but four or five times in consecutive general elections, that it would not allow further large-scale immigration.

My hon. Friend the Minister argued that the Bill would not allow that, that it would not happen, and that he hoped it would not happen, but he cannot, in any circumstances, guarantee that it would not. Therefore, it would be appropriate to allow both Houses of Parliament to vote again on the Bill being brought into effect after there had been a general election.

This would be unique, because it would be the first time that British electors had ever been consulted on large-scale immigration into this country. In the past, they have not been allowed to express an opinion about these matters, except in so far as they have done so by voting Conservative rather than Labour. Those who did so in the expectation that there would be tough immigration controls must be deeply upset and offended today.

One amendment provides that the passports issued should not have validity before 1997. Once again, the logic of my hon. Friend the Minister is followed. He says that the people of Hong Kong have no wish to use these passports and leave Hong Kong, and they would certainly not do so unless things went very wrong when the Chinese took over in 1997. In those circumstances, there is no need for their passports to be valid until then. What possible reason could they have to want the passports to be valid until then? I do not mind them being issued to give an assurance in case a Labour Government might renege on the promises given. After all, everyone knows that Labour Governments always renege on their promises.

What reason could there be for a Hong Kong Chinese citizen to want his British passport to be valid until the day he wants to leave Hong Kong, not for the purpose of business but to establish a new life elsewhere? As the causes that might bring him to that conclusion could not conceivably arise until 1997—because until then Hong Kong would be entirely safe under British colonial rule —why should he need the passport to be valid?

The amendment provides a good, alternative way of assuring the public in Britain that the intention really is to ensure that these people stay in Hong Kong, unless events after the Chinese take over compel them to leave. There may be people who want to use these passports almost as soon as they get them and to use them as travel documents which would enable them to take up residence in other parts of the world, even if not in Great Britain.

Mr. Maude: I understand the argument of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit). It is essentially that the Bill's provisions should not be brought into effect until—depending on the amendment one looks at—two and a half or three years from now. We have introduced the Bill at this stage because there is a problem now. The rate of emigration of key people from Hong Kong is high and continues to rise. That haemorrhaging of talent and skill from the territory is causing great damage. We have judged—opinion in Hong Kong supports this view—that immediate measures are necessary to stem that flow. To delay the ability to award British citizenship for the period suggested by my right hon. Friend would not have stem the flow in the way that the Bill proposes.

My right hon. Friend put his argument tersely, cogently and simply. The House will understand this simple issue. The Bill is an immediate remedy for an immediate problem. In those circumstances, I do not believe that the House should accept the amendment.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend was kind enough to say that I had put the argument tersely, cogently and simply. I must say that my hon. Friend was terse and simple but not very cogent. He made a case against delaying the implementation of the Bill until after the next general election, but he gave no reason whatever why a Hong Kong citizen should wish the passport with which he had been issued, and which he held in his hand, to be valid immediately rather than in 1997. What on earth do these people want the passports to be valid for if it is not to leave Hong Kong instead of being persuaded to stay?

Mr. Maude: They want the certainty that the passports that they hold are valid and will give them the right to leave. An essential part of the argument behind the Bill is that, if people are to have the confidence to remain, they must have the surety of being able to leave. It is not enough to give people a document that does not come into effect until after a general election—with all the consequences to which my right hon. Friend referred. Particularly in the light of the utterances of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) in the summer of last year—which were delphic, to say the least—that would not give them that confidence. Hong Kong opinion is unanimous about that. The purpose of the Bill is to renew and instil confidence in the minds of people in Hong Kong, and my right hon. Friend's amendment would deny them that confidence.

Mr. Marlow: Suppose that the exercise were undertaken. Suppose that the Governor allocated the passports and the Home Secretary accepted that the 50,000 passports—225,000 if wives, descendants and families are included—were valid. If each of them could be stamped with the words "this passport is valid from 1 July 1996", would not that be an adequate reassurance?

Mr. Maude: No, I do not believe that it would. We can argue about whether such as step would have that effect on 50,000 people in Hong Kong, and none of us can be certain that we are right. But I repeat that what the right hon. Member for Gorton said last year destroyed a great deal of the trust that people in Hong Kong had in what might, at some stage, be an alternative Government.

Mr. Tebbit: I can understand why my hon. Friend rests his case on the deviousness of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). On this issue, the only thing on which we seem to be agreed is that the right hon. Member is devious—I would go so far as to say particularly devious. But that is not a good enough argument. I do not believe that even a Labour Government—even a Foreign Secretary or a Home Secretary in the shape of the right hon. Member for Gorton—would withdraw passports that had been issued. My hon. Friend has still not given me an answer to my question: for what purpose would the passports be used before 1996 or 1997 if not to frustrate the purpose of the Bill? By suggesting that the passports should be valid for use before then, my hon. Friend undermines my confidence that even he believes in the Bill.

Mr. Maude: That is not the case. My right hon. Friend may be persuaded that passports carrying a delayed action stamp would instil the same confidence, and he might be confident that they would not be revoked. But all the advice and indications that we have had from those who might be the recipients of the passports in Hong Kong suggest that they do not have the trusting nature of my right hon. Friend. If giving people citizenship would not give them the confidence to remain in Hong Kong, which is the principal purpose of the Bill, there is no point in doing it.

I accept that it is a matter of judgment. Our judgment is—all the evidence that we have from Hong Kong supports it—that to incorporate the amendments in the Bill would be to negate the effect of the award of citizenship.

Mr. Marlow: My hon. Friend the Minister said that the passports would be issued in two tranches. If, after issuing the first tranche, it becomes apparent that people are taking the first plane or the first boat out and taking advantage of the passports to leave rather than to stay in Hong Kong, will the Government not issue the second tranche?

Mr. Maude: As I recall, the same question was asked of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department in the previous debate and he answered it.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I beg to move amendment No. 47, in page 1, line 11, leave out from 'may' to end of line 13 and insert 'direct the Governor to make not more than a specified proportion of his recommendations in a period or periods specified in the direction; and any such direction may make different provision in relation to'.

In Committee I promised the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) to consider clarifying clause 1(3). Amendment 47 is the result, and I commend it to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 48, in page 1, line 24, at end insert—

'() The Secretary of State may by order amend subparagraph (1) by substituting a higher figure for the figure for the time being specified there if the Governor recommends that it is necessary to do so in order to maintain the stability of Hong Kong or the safety of its residents.'.—*[Mr. Maclennan.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 16, Noes 217.

Division No. 233] **[1.46 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Dalyell, Tam
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Livsey, Richard
Maclennan, Robert
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Skinner, Dennis
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. James Wallace and
Mr. Ronnie Fearn.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*

Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Nicholas Baker.

Question accordingly negatived.

Amendment proposed: No. 49, in page 1, line 24, at end insert—

'() Nothing in this Section affects the jurisdiction of any Court to entertain proceedings of any description concerning the rights of any person under any provision of this Act.'. —*[Mr. Maclennan.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 24, Noes 212.

Division No.234] **1.58 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Dixon, Don
Fearn, Ronald
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Kennedy, Charles
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclennan, Robert
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Nellist, Dave
Robertson, George
Skinner, Dennis
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Archie Kirkwood and
Mr. Richard Livsey.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard

Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 3

PROCEDURE

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I beg to move amendment No. 10, in page 2, line 24, leave out paragraph (b).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 11, in clause 4, page 2, line 42, leave out subsection (1).

No. 12, in page 3, line 2, leave out from 'determine' to end of line 4.

Mr. Taylor: I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will forgive me for saying a few words on a matter that involves the dignity and honour of the House and the country during our lengthy consideration of the Bill. Even though my right hon. and learned Friend may be tired and want to go to bed, I ask them to listen as I move a small amendment which means a great deal for the honour of our country and the integrity for which we stand.

The Government propose that the Governor of Hong Kong may by regulations provide for the payment, at a time to be specified, of fees for registration applications. In other words, the potential 50,000 Hong Kong residents who may want to come to Britain, to obtain British passports or to stay in Hong Kong with British passports could be called upon to pay fees. I ask the Government to consider that 40 miles away from Hong Kong there is a place called Macau, where there are 90,000 Portuguese citizens. Those 90,000, under dependence, will be able to come to Britain. They can come here now and work here. they can have full rights of citizenship and access to our social security system, and that will cost them not one penny.

It is not a matter of cash alone. There is also the factor of who those from Macau can bring with them. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will clarify the matter. Whom can a Hong Kong citizen bring with him? The answer is a restricted number of people. He can bring minor children under 18 years or 16 years and a spouse. The Government, in their desire to restrict the number of people coming into the country, have said, in effect, "You can only bring in a few." But what if someone is a Portuguese citizen of Macau? That person can bring a spouse, descendants under 21 years of age and dependants in the ascending and descending lines.

Whether we think the Bill is a good or bad measure —I think that we must proceed with it now that promises have been made—we must have in mind the honour and dignity of the House. There is also the respect that we have for the people of Hong Kong and all that they have done for Britain. We should not treat them less well than we are treating citizens of Portuguese Macau.

Portuguese nationals abroad are treated in the same way as their French counterparts and they have the right of access to this country. For the citizens of Portuguese Macau the position is slightly different and the relevant date is 1 January 1993. Harsh words may have been used during the consideration of the Bill and the Government may not have made many concessions. I ask them to make only one concession for the sake of decency. How is it right to charge Hong Kong citizens a fee but not Portuguese citizens in Macau? It is not right. It is not just. Can they explain to me how it is right that a Portuguese citizen of Macau can bring far more relatives and older children without any restriction while citizens of Hong Kong will have to leave their older children behind? A citizen of Hong Kong might want to bring a son of 19 years with him. That is something that many of us would think about. What about our own families? The Hong Kong citizen will not have a chance of bringing his older children, but the Portuguese citizen of Macau will.

I appreciate that there are much wider issues that come within different treaties and that the Government cannot be asked to make changes for that reason, but surely they

will not enact a clause that provides that citizens of Hong Kong who are to benefit in some way from the Bill will be treated less well, and in a shabby way, compared with citizens of Portuguese Macau.

This is a small amendment and it is not terribly important. It is not an issue that will involve much of a clash with the Government. That being so, I think that they could make a gesture. We have obligations to the people of Hong Kong for the work that they have done for our country and for the help that they have provided. Surely they are entitled to be treated in a way that is not inferior to the citizens of Portuguese Macau. The numbers are different. We are talking about 50,000 in Hong Kong and 90,000 in Macau. I have no doubt that the Minister will say that the people of Macau will not all want to come to Britain, just as the Government have said that the people of Hong Kong do not want to come to Britain. I do not care if we are talking about 1,000, 10,000 or 20,000; we should not treat citizens of Hong Kong less well than the citizens of Portuguese Macau.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to make a small concession on a matter of honour and not of cash. I think that the decency of the British Government will be judged by the way in which they treat the citizens of Hong Kong.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Applicants for British citizenship from Hong Kong will be treated in exactly the same way as any other applicant for British citizenship. It has long been our practice to charge fees to cover the cost, and I see absolutely no dishonour in that. It is possible that fees for Portuguese citizenship are not charged in Macau; I do not know. But I do not see why we should follow the Portuguese in that respect, as in several others: it depends on the merits of the case. I am surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East considers it a matter of honour.

2.15 am

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Surely there is a fundamental difference between these and other applicants. Applying for British citizenship from this country and applying from Hong Kong are rather different procedures. Does my hon. Friend accept that, under the Bill, someone coming to Britain from Hong and someone coming here from Macau will have exactly the same entitlements—that they will have the right to work and receive social security benefits? Surely there is a difference of principle.

If my hon. Friend accepts the amendment, the Government will lose nothing; we shall simply be treating all applicants in the same way.

Mr. Lloyd: People who arrive in Portugal from Macau could, if they were workers, have the right to reside and work here, but they would not be eligible for social security: I should perhaps underline that point, as it seemed to weigh somewhat heavily with my hon. Friend.

I do not think that honour is involved. I think that it is a matter of common practice. For those who apply for British citizenship, there is a scale of fees; a scale of fees would be set in Hong Kong. I consider that entirely appropriate, and I therefore suggest that the House reject the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read the Third time.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

2.17 am

Mr. Darling: In view of the lateness of the hour, I do not feel that I should embark on a long speech. Let me simply reiterate what I said earlier.

We made our position clear on Second Reading, and it was not accepted by the majority of the House. In Committee and on Report, we made a number of attempts to criticise the Bill constructively and, in our view, improve it; our suggestions were not accepted.

I do not propose to vote against Third Reading. I recognise that the Government have made an honest attempt to deal with a difficult position. None the less, I believe that that attempt is fundamentally flawed, and I therefore cannot support it.

I am sorry that improvements to the Bill were not made, but they may yet be made in another place.

Mr. Maclennan: Perhaps the most unsurprising thing about this Third Reading debate is that the Labour party has still not revealed its policy on Hong Kong. However, as the Liberal Democrats have well revealed their policy, both this evening and on earlier occasions, I shall not weary the House by expatiating further.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Coastal Pollution

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lightbown.]*

2.19 am

Mr. Norman Miscampbell (Blackpool, North): I am taking this opportunity to raise the question of pollution of our coasts. It will come as no surprise to the House that I want to concentrate on the coastal area of the Flyde, and I hope that others of my hon. Friends will make contributions on the subject.

Of course, we regret that the state of the Flyde coast has resulted in a decision to take the North West water authority to court. We also regret that there has been pollution for many years and that situation should be changed.

I want to say only this about the manner of pollution and taking us to court. I do not believe that that will do anything to solve the problems in the north-west or in the Fylde. However, I want to take this opportunity to try briefly to put some things right.

There has been a great deal of discussion and propaganda in the north-west about the state of our beaches, and from that one would think that pollution levels had got worse. In fact, with the exception of one blip, they have improved steadily during the 1980s. At the beginning of the decade the bacteria level was more than 4,000—I will not go into the details; I want only to draw attention to the change that has come about—and that is now down to about 1,200. That is better than for many years. It is not good enough and we must do better, but we can at least take encouragement from a fourfold reduction in pollution. I hope that we can get down to the required level within the near future.

I shall be brief so that my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) and my hon. Friends the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) and for Fylde (Mr. Jack) will be able to contribute to the debate. I am happy to give them some of the time that I am privileged to have tonight to allow them to make their points. I shall leave some of the details to my right hon. and hon. Friends. I simply want to draw a broad picture of what has been happening and to try to put right some of the misconceptions in the north-west.

There are two main issues. The first is where the new major treatment works is to be sited and, in addition, we must decide the process whereby water will be discharged. We have a water-borne sewerage system, and at the end of the day large quantities of water will have to be discharged.

Some things must be remembered. First, North-West Water has stopped having the lowest capital expenditure in the country, and now has the highest, because of the improvement in its infrastructure and its investment programme. That is in no small measure due to the fact that the Government, when North West Water was privatised, wrote off £1·6 billion of debt. Therefore, the Government have done their duty and have helped North West Water to face its problems.

There have been active consultations between the water authority and the local authority. They had a meeting two weeks ago when they spoke to the local authorities. What is more, we have had a promise, not from the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, who is on the Front Bench, but from another Minister in the Department, that he will meet my colleagues, who are here tonight, and local councillors. So we have consultation with the Government and we are extremely grateful for their good will and co-operation.

Today we have also had a promise—although we have known of it for a little time—that £300 million will be spent by North West Water over the next three years to improve bathing beaches, and I emphasise that we are talking about bathing beaches. Clearly, North West Water is facing the problem seriously and is actively intent on improving the position.

The likely time scale is that, if there is good will, by he end of this year, and possibly before, the inland treatment works which is necessary now will have been decided upon. It should be said that it is now up to us in the north-west to agree. We have had arguments about whether there should be an outfall and other discussions. But now that we know that we are to have an inland treatment works, with an outfall, if we have the courage to fact up to the difficult decisions that have to be taken, by the end of the year, or possibly by next year, we will have a scheme which can then go ahead. There is every possibility that our problem can be solved, perhaps not in 1991 but possibly by mid-decade.

The Government are determined that we should stop being branded as the biggest polluter in Europe, and we are grateful for the encouragement that we have had from them. Others need to help us now. If we are sensible we can cure our problems, although they are difficult, within four or five years. With the good will of the Government and North West Water, that is exactly what we shall do.

2.28 am

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): I want to make two brief points. The first concerns the European Community. I ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment to tell us now many other European Community countries are being prosecuted. I understand that every other European Community country, apart from Portugal, is in the same situation as this country in respect of prosecution. I want to dispel the impression, which is widespread in this country, that only the United Kingdom is considered by the Commission to be in breach of its directives.

There is also a proposal that polluted beaches should be signposted. Will signposting apply to all European Community countries? I hope that I shall not be told that only the United Kingdom will be obliged to signpost beaches that do not comply with the directive.

We should move forward with all speed to ensure that the bathing water off our beaches complies with the required European Community standards. Two points are relevant in that context. First, let all those in the north-west work together to achieve the objective that has been set before us. We should cut out the politicking; there has been much too much of it. Most of the politicking has come from the Labour leader of the Lancashire county council, Councillor Louise Ellman. I hope that she intends to keep quiet on the issue. Since the abandonment of the plan for a long sea outfall, she has called for a public inquiry. That would be wholly inappropriate; at the moment, there is nothing to inquire into because there is no plan. I hope that on both that point and others she will

keep quiet and that she will co-operate with all of us so that we can make rapid progress towards compliance with the directive.

Secondly, I hope that the Government will investigate the possibility of using disinfectants, either in the long term or in the short term. New types of disinfectants, known as benign disinfectants which do not have adverse spin-off effects, are available. If it is necessary to test them to find out whether they are effective, I hope that that will be done rapidly. I hope to take a representative of a company that manufactures these disinfectants to see the Minister. I am optimistic that their use will achieve the desired results.

2.31 am

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): I thank my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Blackpool, North (Mr. Miscampbell) for allowing me to take part in the debate. I thank also the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory), for the recent decision by his Department to refuse consent for the construction of a long sea outfall at Fleetwood. That has been welcomed by all the people in Fleetwood. Like me, they believe that a long sea outfall, without treatment, is an unacceptable way to dispose of sewage in 1990.

That decision need not delay an eventual solution to the sewerage problems along the Fylde coast. What would have delayed the eventual solution would have been a public inquiry, as requested by Lancashire county council. From what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), I understand that, once again, a public inquiry is being asked for, despite the fact that we do not know what scheme North West Water will devise. I urge the leader of Lancashire county council to consider what she is doing, if it would lead to delaying the opportunity that we have to work together to find a quick solution to the problems on the Fylde coast.

I am encouraged by the attitude of North West Water, now that it is in the private sector. Right from the outset, it has consulted all the interested parties about its proposals. That is a good move. It is also clear that North West Water is no longer under the same financial constraints as it was in the public sector. It wants to get on with the job of devising the right scheme as quickly as possible. That can be done in co-operation with all the other bodies—the county council, the local authorities and other pressure groups. Together they can find a solution to the problem. If there were co-operation, the scheme could be worked up by the end of the year and considered by the National Rivers Authority. Construction could then start in May 1991. Dissension, however, could lead to the scheme having to go to the Department of the Environment. There might also have to be a public inquiry.

The action of the European Commission in taking the Government to court is of no relevance whatsoever to the time scale for the scheme on the Fylde coast. An inquiry would not in any way help to speed that scheme, and the Government being taken to court would not affect its time scale.

If everyone in the Fylde works together with the water company, we shall have an opportunity to find our own solution to the problem—and that solution holds out the prospect of cleaning up our coastline and rivers once and for all.

2.34 am

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): I thank my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Mr. Miscampbell) for allowing me to participate in the debate. May I tell my hon. Friend the Minister that beach and river pollution in the Fylde coast area has cast a blight over that lovely part of west Lancashire. If, as my right hon. and hon. Friends have said, the problem is not addressed quickly, the development of our vital tourist industry may be significantly damaged.

Not only do people question the wholesomeness of an area when there is endless talk of pollution, but it inhibits the development of facilities, such as the riverway marina, which starts in Preston. People wanting to use the water facilities offered by the Ribble doubt whether it is the right place to use while pollution is the subject of so much discussion.

The beaches of Lytham St. Anne's, in my constituency, are affected by the same pollution factors that affect my right hon. and hon. Friends' constituencies in Blackpool. My constituents send a very simple message to my hon. Friend the Minister this evening: they want to see the ending of raw sewage dumping into the Ribble. It is increasing the river's bacteriological load and does not enable it to satisfy European bathing water standards.

The solutions are known. They are the ceasing of sewage dumping from the Fairhaven pumping station and improvements to the sewage treatment works at Preston. Both can be achieved quickly. North West Water has published a study on the river estuary that indicates a time scale extending to 1997. The message that my constituents have sent me is also simple: 1997 is not acceptable.

This is one case where the problems and the solutions are not cash-based. Since privatisation, money has become available to the water companies in large quantities and it can be spent on known technical remedies. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to do what he can to achieve quickly the requirements of the municipal waste water directive, which will finally allow North West Water to undertake the necessary design studies, in order that the resulting sewage scheme meets the entire needs of the Fylde coast area and at the same time cleans up the Ribble.

The argument is not about NIMBY but is about what I call the IMBY syndrome—"in my back yard". We all have responsibility, and I heartily endorse the comment of my hon. Friends that we must all work together.

I have a vested interest. When one is learning to sail in the Ribble, as I am doing at present, and capsizes one's dinghy and has to swim around in raw sewage, it brings home in graphic detail the problem that has to be dealt with.

Mr. Michael Jopling (Westmorland and Lonsdale): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Jack: My right hon. Friend will forgive me, but time does not permit me to do so.

Mr. Jopling: Then perhaps my hon. Friend will come to Windermere instead; it will be more fun.

Mr. Jack: That is the imagery that we must address. That is the kind of tangible factor that must be confronted. The technology and the money are available. I ask for the co-operation of my hon. Friend the Minister in urging North West Water and the National Rivers Authority to

[Mr. Jack]

deliver as quickly as possible a solution for the benefit of our constituents, our constituencies and our tourist industry.

2.38 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): I congratulate my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Blackpool, North (Mr. Miscampbell) on securing this debate and on the way that he forcefully set out the case for a clean and safe coastline for his constituents. I was also interested by the contributions of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) and my hon. Friends the Members for Wyre (Mr. Mans) and for Fylde (Mr. Jack). On this and on many previous occasions, they have made my Department very well aware of the feelings of their constituents and of the need to improve the beaches and bathing waters along the whole coastline, not just that around Blackpool.

This debate is also attended by my hon. Friend the Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale (Mr. Lennox-Boyd) and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Jopling). They have made known to me in private as well as publicly their concerns and their determination that something be done to clean up the coastline.

Nationally, we sometimes paint too gloomy a picture of the state of our rivers and coastal waters. In the United Kingdom, about 96 per cent. of our population are connected to the sewerage system and 83 per cent. of our sewage is treated. That compares well with any country in Europe. The problem for us lies in the discharges of untreated sewage to some coastal waters. Such discharges have a long history. Governments of all parties have received advice that in some cases they are not only acceptable but environmentally preferable. Such advice was given as recently as 1984 by the Royal Commission on environmental pollution, in its 10th report.

It is worth reminding ourselves that there is no method of disposing of sewage that is entirely free of some environmental cost. If we treat sewage, we need to find sewage works. They must be sited somewhere, and that can lead to contentious planning issues. The sewage sludge that results from sewage treatment must be disposed of to agriculture, it must be burned, or it must be land-filled. All those methods can be unpopular and controversial.

Nevertheless, we believe that now is the time to move forward. Following a consultant's report recently received by my Department, the Secretary of State decided, and announced on 5 March this year, that in future all substantial discharges of sewage would be treated. Most would receive secondary treatment, but primary treatment would be appropriate for coastal discharges when there was no adverse effect on the environment. This change of policy has been generally welcomed at home and abroad.

We have since moved quickly to implement this new policy. It will be expensive, but one of the great advantages of putting the water authorities into the private sector was that they now have access to private sector capital. We will take no lectures from our political opponents about this. Under the last Labour Government, capital expenditure on water treatment was halved. The financial position now is good.

We can look forward to a sustained programme of capital improvement. We have heard this evening of the urgent need to deal with the situation around Blackpool. Not only must we take into account the residents; we know that that town and the surrounding towns, have to cope with a huge influx of visitors during the summer months—not to mention a few party conferences in the autumn.

All this puts a considerable load on facilities, and we need to plan for a considerable expansion. So much has been known for some time. In 1988, the North West Water authority, as it then was, submitted plans to the Secretary of State for a scheme based on diverting sewage discharges from all existing sea outfalls to a new long sea outfall at Rossall point. That proved highly contentious, and some doubts were raised about the effectiveness of the scheme.

Following the change of policy that I have outlined, Ministers were not convinced that the scheme as proposed should proceed, and on 10 May my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State refused consent because the scheme did not incorporate treatment and there was no guarantee that a suitable site for treatment works could be made available within the design of the scheme. That rejection is entirely consistent with our new policy.

It is important to get on with the job of submitting a new scheme for treatment. I agree with my right hon. and hon. Friends that calls for a public inquiry are entirely misconceived; there is nothing to inquire into. We need a new scheme to be submitted for planning consent, after which work could start. I hope that the scheme will be completed by the mid-1990s. That must be the priority.

I confirm to my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South that, with regard to breaches of EC directives, we are not the only country to be subject to infraction proceedings. My advice is that all countries, except Portugal, are the subject of infraction proceedings. Britain is not alone in having to appear before the European Court of Justice.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South mentioned disinfectants, which may be a short-term palliative. There is some evidence that they do not destroy viruses, so they are only a short-term measure. As part of our policy, we are encouraging water authorities to consider improved screening and possible use of disinfectants until a proper scheme can be worked out and implemented. I welcome the way in which North West Water has announced that it will be bringing forward proposals, and much of the work that has gone into the design and construction of sewers will not be wasted, because exactly the same sewage collection system will be needed for a future scheme.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South mentioned the signposting of beaches. This is a United Kingdom initiative, but it will be voluntary. We shall not make it compulsory for local authorities to erect signs showing the bathing water quality of their beaches. In line with our policy of free and open access for the public to environmental information, we feel that this information should be generally available.

I hope that in due course, after the scheme is fully implemented, Blackpool and surrounding beaches will not only reach European standards but will perhaps proceed to designation as blue flag beaches, and there is no reason why they should not do so well before the end of the decade. In that context, I should mention that the award of a blue flag for a beach depends not only on the bathing

water quality, which is the duty of the water service company, but very much on surrounding facilities, such as information granted to the public, the fact that dogs are kept off the beach, the fact it is kept free of litter and the fact that other facilities are provided.

I hope that the local authority will use the next few years to ensure that the bathing beaches achieve the correct standards and to put in place the other facilities so that at the earliest possible date it can apply for blue flag status. I confidently expect that, well before the end of the decade, during one of my visits to Blackpool for the party conference, I will see blue flags proudly flying over those bathing beaches. If they are, it will be not because of premature calls, possibly politically inspired, for public inquiries but because of the technical skill and enterprise of North West Water and the political skill and perseverance of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Blackpool, North and other right hon. and hon. Friends who are present this evening, who have consistently argued for measured improvement in the beaches and coastal waters along that coast. Considerable credit must go to them for keeping this matter constantly before not only the water company but my Department.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eleven minutes to Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 14 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*
Order for consideration of Lords amendments read.
To be considered on Thursday 21 June.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [26 February],
That the Bill be now considered.
Debate further adjourned till Thursday 21 June.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

MEDWAY TUNNEL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for consideration, as amended, read.
To be considered on Thursday 21 June.

Mr. Speaker: As the remaining Bills set down for Second Reading have blocking motions, with the leave of the House I shall put them as a single group.

CATTEWATER RECLAMATION BILL *(By Order)*

SHARD BRIDGE BILL *(By Order)*

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

LONDON UNDERGROUND BILL *(By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time on Thursday 21 June.

EXMOUTH DOCKS BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [29 March],
That the Bill be now read a Second time.
Debate further adjourned till Thursday 21 June.

GREAT YARMOUTH PORT AUTHORITY BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

HEATHROW EXPRESS RAILWAYS BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time on Thursday 21 June.

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [10 May],
That the Bill be now read a Second time.
Debate further adjourned till Thursday 21 June.

SOUTHAMPTON RAPID TRANSIT BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

PORT OF TYNE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time on Thursday 21 June.

Oral Answers to Questions

HOME DEPARTMENT

Remand Prisoners

1. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department has any further proposals to bring forward regarding the treatment of remand prisoners.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): On 3 May, in answer to a previous question from the hon. Lady, I referred to proposed changes in visiting arrangements and to pilot schemes to reduce censorship and to provide card phones for unconvicted prisoners.

We are also seeking, through the prison building and refurbishment programmes, to reduce overcrowding and to improve the accommodation in which many such prisoners are at present held. In addition, guidance is shortly to be issued on the limited mixing of unconvicted and convicted prisoners, subject to close supervision, to allow participation by unconvicted prisoners in a wider range of activities.

Ms. Quin: Although I am interested to hear some of the measures proposed, is not it the case that many remand prisoners are forced to share cells with three or more others, are forced to share with convicted criminals and are sometimes kept in their cells for up to 23 hours a day? As the principle of British justice is that someone is presumed innocent until proved guilty, is not this a disgrace?

Mr. Mellor: I very much doubt whether many—if any—prisons run such impoverished regimes as the hon. Lady suggests. But it is clear that there is a problem which we steadily sought to address in the past decade and which we are within sight of resolving. Two thousand prison places have become available over the past two years, a further 1,600 will become available this year and there are 7,000 in the pipeline. Fourteen new prisons are being constructed, nine of which are local prisons or will take remand prisoners. Provided that there is no sudden surge in unconvicted prisoners, that puts us on course to resolve many of the problems. I am sure that the hon. Lady will agree that it was about time that a Government came to power who were willing to put resources into the prisons, and this Government are doing that.

Mr. Hanley: My hon. and learned Friend's answers are most welcome. However, does he agree that, whatever the conditions under which remand prisoners are kept, the worst part of their existence is the length of time before their trial? Do he and his colleagues have any initiatives to reduce the time before trial for remand prisoners?

Mr. Mellor: Yes, Sir. In various parts of the country, courts are now subjecting themselves to the discipline of fairly strict guidance about the time in which certain stages of a trial should proceed. I wholly agree with my hon. Friend that there are twin problems. First, there is the number of people whom the courts—perfectly properly in most instances—decide to remand in custody and, secondly, there is the period for which those people are on remand. We want to ensure that there are no unavoidable delays in the administration of the justice system, and we are doing that.

Mr. Sheerman: The Minister is notorious for being able to slide off the point. He is aware that after the events at Risley in 1989 and after the prison disturbances in 1986 and 1988, strong recommendations were made for different treatment of remand prisoners. Why did not the Government react to those recommendations? Why did they do so little? Is the Minister conscious that Vivienne Stern, the director of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said that if only the Government had acted, Strangeways might not have happened?

Mr. Mellor: That is a superficial and unfair analysis. The hon. Gentleman knows full well that the 14 prisons being constructed, nine of which will take remand prisoners, will make a massive contribution to solving the problem. If the hon. Gentleman wants to initiate a debate on these matters, we shall be only too happy to discuss them with him. If he promises me that he will spend the first 10 minutes explaining the dismal policies of the previous Labour Government, who cut prison building to the bone, I will listen to his second 10 minutes, when he will no doubt tell us how we should run the system now.

Prisoners (Drugs)

2. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will institute a policy of screening all prisoners on a regular basis for the use of dangerous drugs.

Mr. Mellor: All new receptions are seen and interviewed by a member of the health care staff and are asked whether they have ever taken drugs. Indications of the use of drugs by injection are looked for at that time. We are considering whether some form of subsequent screening, whether for clinical or control purposes, should be introduced.

Mr. Butler: Has my hon. and learned Friend seen the study in the *British Medical Journal* of 26 May this year which showed that 66 per cent. of convicted drug addicts had found needles in prison and injected with them? Might not that contribute to riotous behaviour in prisons?

Mr. Mellor: We certainly want to reduce the amount of drug taking in prisons, and I shall happily write to my hon. Friend explaining the large number of measures that we are taking to deal with the problem. I have not seen the survey to which he referred; I shall look at it. Of course, much depends upon accounts given by prisoners, whose reliability may be in question, and the thorough searches that we conduct in a number of establishments do not reveal anything like that picture. But we are by no means complacent.

I should point out to my hon. Friend that we are under pressure to improve regimes and to have more civilised visiting arrangements. The consequence of allowing visitors and prisoners easier access can be an increase in the risk of drugs being passed on. So we are damned if we do and damned if we do not. Nevertheless, we want to solve the drugs problem and we are taking steps to deal with it.

Mr. Hill: My hon. and learned Friend will be as aware as I am that it is common knowledge that drugs are freely available in most of our large prisons. There is a leakage. Whether it is through staff or visitors, or whether the prisoners bring drugs in, there is clearly a great security problem. Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that a thorough survey of the security of prisons in this respect would be advantageous?

Mr. Mellor: I entirely accept what my hon. Friend says, although I think that it is easy to overstate the problem. More than 90 per cent. of the finds involve cannabis and only 3 per cent. heroin and cocaine. I assure my hon. Friend that I hold meetings to try to ensure that we upgrade our activity and that questions such as the extent to which visitors should be searched are under active consideration. We must be careful not to exaggerate the problem, although I am aware that running a disciplined prison is made all the more difficult if there is ready access to drugs. We must do something to ensure that that does not happen.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

3. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to have the results of the Devon and Cornwall police investigations into aspects of the Birmingham pub bombings case.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Waddington): It is not possible at this stage to say when the Devon and Cornwall constabulary will be able to report on the results of its inquiries. I am sure that the whole House would want the inquiries to be as thorough as possible.

Ms. Short: I am grateful to the Home Secretary for his reply, but, with the best will in the world, many of us are worried that we shall never see the report. The best that the right hon. and learned Gentleman can do, on the basis of a report that we shall not see, is to refer the case back to the Court of Appeal, whose record in this case we know: it dismissed serious new evidence when the case was last referred to it.

In contrast, we have the inquiry into the Maguire case, which appears to be collapsing in front of our eyes. Do not we need a full open inquiry in public into the case of the Birmingham Six, so that all the evidence can be properly reviewed?

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Lady will know that I am always prepared to consider any new material that is offered to me which may relate to the safety of a conviction. That is why, when representations were made to me, I thought it right to put certain matters to the chief constable of the West Midlands, who in turn thought it right to call for the assistance of the Devon and Cornwall police. I do not think that the hon. Lady can say that I have been lax in any way in ensuring that there have been proper inquiries into these matters.

Mr. David Nicholson: With regard to the Birmingham case, does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that most Conservative Members—and, I suspect, a number of Opposition Members—are heartily fed up with unsubstantiated claims of innocence and guilt? Does he further agree that if certain Opposition Members, notably the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin), have evidence about those who carried out the Birmingham bombings, they should make that evidence known to the appropriate authorities?

Mr. Waddington: My hon. Friend will recognise that it is up to all of us to exercise responsibility in those matters. I have said what my responsibilities are and I believe that I am carrying them out.

Mr. Hattersley: On a matter which I know the Home Secretary accepts is related both to the initial question and to his answer, will he tell us, in the light of this morning's statement by the Director of Public Prosecutions to the May committee that he regards the convictions of the Maguires unsafe, what steps he now proposes to take on that and related matters?

Mr. Waddington: I should tell the House that this morning counsel for the Director of Public Prosecutions told the May inquiry that, in his view, the convictions of the Maguires and the others convicted of possessing explosives are unsafe and unsatisfactory. In view of that, I should say straight away that I do not believe that the convictions can be allowed to stand. The correct course will probably be for me to refer the case to the Court of Appeal, but I do not think that it is right to do that until all the submissions on that issue have been presented to the inquiry and Sir John May has had an opportunity to respond to them. Once I have referred the case to the Court of Appeal it will become sub judice and it would then be very difficult for the May inquiry to go into those matters any further.

Sunday Trading

4. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received following the decision of Croydon magistrates to dismiss Sunday trading summonses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: One representation has been received. The Government recognise that the interpretation of the judgment of the European Court is causing some difficulty, but this is a matter for the courts in the first instance. Since the defeat of the Shops Bill, the Government have made it clear that, while maintaining our previous views on the matter, we are prepared to consider reform short of total deregulation if a solution can be found which is widely accepted, enforceable, practicable and likely to command a parliamentary majority. No such solution has yet emerged.

Mr. Evans: I thank my hon. and learned Friend for that reply. Does he agree that the law on Sunday trading is absolute nonsense? Is he aware that 13 national opinion polls on Sunday trading have been carried out over the past two years and that 63 per cent. of the people want Sunday trading? When will we listen to the people? When will we get rid of this ridiculous and rotten law?

Mr. Mellor: One or two of us, including my right hon. and learned Friend and I, sought to do that very thing back in 1985. I cannot help feeling that we would have avoided quite a lot of the difficulties that have since emerged had that Bill been permitted to become law. However, it was not and we are therefore in a situation not of our choosing. I have always said from the Dispatch Box

that the criminal law has no place in the enforcement of who can buy what on a Sunday. We must accept that that is the law and live with the consequences. I hope that one of the consequences of the muddle that has emerged is that hon. Members will recognise that Parliament has repeatedly abdicated its responsibility to put the law into a sensible shape and I hope that an opportunity will be found to do that without too much further delay.

Mr. Murphy: Does the Minister accept that there is no muddle over this matter in south Wales? In my constituency this week the magistrate in Cwmbran successfully prosecuted B and Q for illegal Sunday trading. Does he accept now that there is no excuse whatsoever for do-it-yourself stores like B and Q openly to flout the law of the land? Will he urge the Attorney-General to take up this case on behalf of Torfaen borough council, as I understand that B and Q is going to appeal?

Mr. Mellor: Happily, I am not the interpreter of the law of the land. But the hon. Gentleman's self-righteousness might extend to asking himself this question: why does he suppose that so many of his constituents thought it perfectly proper to shop on a Sunday? Does he really think that, whatever the law and its enforcement may be, which is not a matter for me, it is a sustainable basis on which to take British law into the last decade of the 20th century that we should have criminal penalties for people who simply want to sell legitimate household items to other members of the public?

Mr. Stanbrook: Is my hon. and learned Friend aware that the determination to keep Sunday special is deeply rooted among the majority of people and that the Government's failure to appreciate that fact led to their difficulties with the Shops Bill? Will he now advise those who are seeking to subvert the law to wait until the Torfaen case, which was referred to the European Court of Justice and then referred back, reaches the stage of being subject to a judgment by a court of record?

Mr. Mellor: The sadness of the present position is that, in all the debates on this issue during my time in the House —I have attended all of them—not one hon. Member has ever said that he or she accepts the Shops Acts as they presently are. Everyone has said that they want a change, but no one has been able to agree what that change should be. I inform my hon. Friend, who is an experienced lawyer, that of course the law of the land is the law of the land, but he knows that court judgments simply reveal the inconsistency in the law. That means that, sooner or later, Parliament will need to address the issue.

Mr. Randall: Notwithstanding that very flimsy answer, is the Minister aware that there is deep concern in the country about the Government's failure since 1986 to introduce modern Sunday trading legislation? Is the Minister further aware that the Government are now perceived by informed and responsible opinion, through their procrastination, to be encouraging an organised campaign of law-breaking? When will the Government face up to their responsibilities and urgently introduce new legislation? The country wants to know now.

Mr. Mellor: We brought forward a solution that was not acceptable to the House—*[Interruption.]* Will the hon. Gentleman listen to my answer as I listened to his question? He knows that we made it clear that we would be prepared to consider solutions that fall short of total deregulation if those solutions were coherent and workable. Before the hon. Gentleman again speaks in the terms that he did, he might send to me, on however many sides of a piece of paper he chooses, what he thinks the answer is. The Labour party, which is in the pocket of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers Union, has always known what it is against, but it has never known what it is in favour of.

Mr. Janman: My hon. and learned Friend will be aware that Conservative Members—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We often have to listen to things with which we are unhappy. We must listen to each other.

Mr. Janman: My hon. and learned Friend will need no reassurance from me that Conservative Members will not defend people who break the law. Given the comments of the hon. Member for Torfaen (Mr. Murphy) about the events in his constituency, does my hon. and learned Friend agree that the current law is not only totally outdated but is losing the respect of many retailers who wish to open on Sunday and millions of people who shop on Sundays and expect to have the right to do so in a free and civilised country? Will my hon. and learned Friend assure the House——

Mr. Speaker: Order. One question, please.

Mr. Mellor: The sad fact is that the schedule to the Act contains a list of prohibited items that do not reflect the stock held by any shop. Therefore, it is almost impossible to think of any shop that is open on a Sunday and is trading lawfully. That is why I repeat that it is difficult not to sympathise with those who are trying to struggle with the question whether to enforce the law and what the law is when the law has not been modernised for 50 years.

Mr. Speaker: Question 5. Mr. Martyn Jones.

Mr. Ray Powell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. will the hon. Gentleman please sit down?

Mr. Powell: We are not in the pockets of the shop workers.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman will look at the Order Paper, he will realise that there is another question on this matter. He must not seek to be selfish and try to get in every time.

British Summer Time

5. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further representations he has received in respect of proposed changes to British summer time.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peter Lloyd): Representations covering all shades of opinion continue to be received in response to the Green Paper on summer time. The results of the consultation exercise—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us settle down. This question is about British summer time, and it is Mr. Martyn Jones's question. Did the hon. Gentleman hear the answer?

Mr. Jones *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Speaker: Will the Minister please read it again?

Mr. Lloyd: The results of the consultation exercise will be announced very shortly.

Mr. Jones: I thank the Minister for repeating his answer. When the results of the consultation exercise are made known, I hope that the Government will continue to resist any changes to British summer time. Does he accept that such changes would badly affect rural workers in my constituency and in many other constituencies further north?

Mr. Lloyd: The Government are well aware of opinion in Scotland and the north because of the responses to the Green Paper and our regular contacts with the relevant Department at the Scottish Office. We shall, of course, bear all shades of opinion in mind. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will be publishing the results of the consultation exercise and the Government's decision will depend on the general debate that follows.

Mr. Latham: Is my hon. Friend aware that if that change were to take place and we had summer time in the months of December, January and February, it would be absolutely disastrous for the construction industry? Is he further aware that I wrote the building industry's brief on this matter before the debate in 1971? I have not changed my views. The proposal should be strongly resisted.

Mr. Lloyd: We are very much aware of the views of the construction industry. What it urges is quite different from what other respondents have urged. The benefits and disadvantages of each aspect must be weighed carefully and then a judgment made.

Mr. Darling: Will the Minister explain the Government's difficulty over this matter? The Home Office has been considering this for more than two years now and the consultation period ended several months ago. Is the Minister aware that the dubious benefits of double summer time are outweighed by the undoubted inconvenience and possible danger to many people who live in different parts of the country?

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman gives one view, but, as the results of the discussion paper will show, there are many different views depending on which element the respondent thinks is important. Difficult and detailed issues are involved, which is why my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has given them careful thought over a considerable period. I assure the hon. Gentleman that we intend to publish those results before the longest day in the year.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Will the Minister take into account the fact that people involved in business and agriculture in Northern Ireland believe that he should resist any pressure to change the present practice? Will he also take on board the fact that not only is that belief shared by people in Scotland, the north of England and Northern Ireland, but that the original question was tabled by an hon. Member from Wales?

Mr. Lloyd: We shall take all those points into account. The right hon. Gentleman has underlined yet again the fact that there is a great variety of views on this issue, each of which has some validity.

Mr. Andrew MacKay: Is my hon. Friend aware that a significant number of people believe that if we are to take the single European market seriously and compete in Europe, we should have the same time frame as Europe?

Mr. Lloyd: Yes, I am aware of that view, which some people hold strongly while others believe that it is less important.

Terrorism

6. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had on international co-operation to combat terrorism.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: In the past three months my right hon. and learned Friend has discussed international co-operation against terrorism with ministerial colleagues from Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, Portugal and Bahrain, and will be discussing it with colleagues in the Trevi group at meetings in Dublin later today and tomorrow.

Mr. Brown: Why has no one been prosecuted for the Lockerbie outrage, bearing in mind that the Minister's Scottish colleague, the Lord Advocate, promised some time ago that a prosecution would take place? What has gone wrong? People around the world want to know. What is happening? It seems as though the Government are turning a blind eye to an issue which is clearly important to us all.

Mr. Lloyd: What the hon. Gentleman says is a load of nonsense. Investigations are proceeding with great urgency. We are receiving a great deal of co-operation around the world and I have no doubt that in due time arrests will be made.

Mr. Lawrence: Does my hon. Friend consider that the fight against international terrorism is compatible with the removal of all border controls between nation states? Is he receiving support from his Common Market partners in resisting the dismantling of all border controls for that purpose?

Mr. Lloyd: We have made it clear that we intend to keep our border checks and we find that there is increasing sympathy and understanding for our view among our EC partners.

Mr. Cryer: Are not open borders in 1992 and the continued assertion that the Government intend to dismantle all border controls incompatible with adequate controls against terrorism and the illegal movement of arms and drugs? So far, the Government have not told us of even one measure that they intend to take against the removal of barriers in 1992. All that they have done is to make platitudinous assertions.

Mr. Lloyd: We have made it clear that we intend to keep border controls and checks. We can do that in a way that is consistent with easy movement of EC nationals, who merely need to indicate who they are at the border checks.

Active Citizens

7. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent steps he has taken to help promote the concept of the active citizen.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): My right hon. and learned Friend and I take every opportunity to encourage responsible and active citizens and businesses to make a positive contribution to their communities and to charitable causes, particularly through volunteering and charitable giving.

Mr. Taylor: Will my right hon. Friend note the enthusiasm among Conservative Members for the concept of the active citizen, in particular the role that the active citizen can play in exercising his own responsibilities within the family and the community? The community neighbourhood watch scheme and the family can help the Government to reduce the appalling crime figures for juveniles of 15. Does he find that other Government Departments are playing their part in ensuring that the active citizen forms a central part of the Conservative party's next manifesto?

Mr. Patten: I agree with my hon. Friend. Never before in British history have so many of our fellow citizens been involved in voluntary activity. The figure is now about one in four of all our citizens aged over 16. My hon. Friend referred to the neighbourhood watch scheme. Those who run such schemes in this country are the largest group of volunteers anywhere in the western world and they should be commended. Certainly, my right hon. Friends in other Government Departments are keen to promote the concept of the active citizen. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science is doing exactly that with local management of schools. I pay tribute to all parent governors who are helping with the local management of schools.

Mr. Devlin: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the greater accountability brought about by the community charge will give a significant boost to the concept of the active citizen? In cases such as the recent arson attack on a school in my constituency the cost of repairs will fall on community charge payers throughout the borough. We therefore all have a major incentive to do what we can to prevent crimes of that nature.

Mr. Patten: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. I hope that he agrees that we must also diffuse to ordinary people in their communities as much power and control as possible over their lives. We are doing that through local management of schools and by giving tenants more rights to control their own lives, and we intend to continue the process in future years.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

8. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to recover the 2,000 or so non-material statements which were not made available to solicitors acting for the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. Waddington: It has not been established that any relevant evidence concerning the case of the Birmingham Six is missing. Representations about this possibility are among the issues which have been raised by the solicitor acting for the convicted men. I have passed these to the chief constable of the west midlands police, and they will be investigated by the Devon and Cornwall constabulary.

Mr. Banks: May I put it to the Home Secretary that although we all lose things from time to time—the Labour party just lost three elections, but our losing streak is now finished—losing 2,000 statements really seems a bit much? A pack of playing cards on which Dr. Scuse carried out his tests and pages clearly torn out of a notebook have also been lost. It seems either that the police are terminally careless or that a cover up is going on. The Secretary of State recently had to eat some words in relation to the Maguire case, and he will have to eat some words in the case of the Birmingham Six before long.

Mr. Waddington: I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman did not listen to what I said, which was that it had not been established that any relevant evidence in the case of the Birmingham Six was missing. In fact, the alleged failure of the prosecution to tell the defence about the existence of none-material statements was considered by the Court of Appeal in 1987. The allegations are now being considered by the Devon and Cornwall police.

Mr. Shersby: In respect of the Maguire case, which was raised by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), can my right hon. and learned Friend tell us on what basis the conviction is thought to be unsound? Can he confirm that there is no question of any improper activity by the police?

Mr. Waddington: That is my understanding, but I only learnt about the matter this morning. I must read with care the submission made by counsel for the Director of Public Prosecutions. My understanding is that he submitted that the convictions were unsafe and unsatisfactory on the basis of the possibility of the accused having become innocently contaminated with traces of explosives.

Mr. Mullin: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the collapse of the Maguire case this morning makes it two out of three in the cases that I and many others have, for the past seven years, attempted to draw to his attention as examples of miscarriages of justice? Would not it be best to learn some lessons and hold a public inquiry into the Birmingham Six case, and one which commands public confidence? Should not that scandal be brought to an end once and for all? Does the Home Secretary accept my fear that some of the Birmingham Six may die in gaol, as did Paul Giuseppe Conlan, one of those arrested in the Maguire case? We want to avoid that happening.

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman should be pleased that when submissions were made to me that there was new evidence which should be investigated because it might cast doubt on the safety of the convictions, I asked the chief constable of the west midlands whether he would help, and he called in the Devon and Cornwall police. I cannot imagine what the hon. Gentleman is complaining about. Indeed, we might have progressed more quickly with the inquiries if he had revealed many months ago the names of those whom he said were responsible for the bombing.

Mr. Kilfedder: If public inquiries are to be held, can there be one into every atrocity committed as a result of the IRA's shoot-to-kill policy?

Mr. Waddington: I am bound to say that, like the hon. Gentleman, I have often thought that it would be nice to see on television every now and again a documentary

highlighting the appalling atrocities committed by the IRA and the terrible damage that has been done to life in Ulster, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and mainland Britain.

Mr. Hattersley: May I bring the Home Secretary back to the crucial question, which is the status and reputation of justice in this country? Does he not understand that the submission by the Director of Public Prosecutions to the May committee inquiry this morning, and his own wholly proper reaction to it, further increase pressure for a new, thorough and objective inquiry into the convictions of the Birmingham Six? Sooner or later, that new inquiry will have to be held and it would do the Home Secretary's reputation a great deal of good if he set it up here and now.

Mr. Waddington: If the right hon. Gentleman thinks about the matter for a moment or two, I think that he will agree that I am right to say that I shall consider carefully what the May inquiry says about the forensic science evidence in the Maguire case and I shall take fully into account any implications that it might have for the safety of other convictions. The reliability of the forensic science evidence in the Birmingham Six case was fully examined in 1987.

Remand Prisoners

9. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current number of remand prisoners held in police cells; and what the figure was one year ago.

Mr. Mellor: On Wednesday 13 June there were 887 prisoners held in police cells in England and Wales, compared with 218 people on 13 June 1989; 825 of them are being held in the north-west of England and are in police cells as a result of industrial action by the Prison Officers Association at some establishments in the north. I am most grateful to the police for their assistance in this matter.

Dr. Twinn: I thank my hon. and learned Friend for that answer. I am sure that we are all grateful to the police, although hon. Members who have fewer policing hours available for policing their constituencies must be concerned about the situation. Will the Minister get together with the POA as soon as possible to find a solution to the problem?

Mr. Mellor: A meeting took place between Home Office officials and representatives of the POA in the north-west today. I have yet to receive a full report of the outcome. Obviously, at a time when the prison service is striving to cope with the aftermath of Strangeways and when we have announced a major refurbishment of that prison, as well as seeking to honour our commitments to upgrade other prisons, it is dreadful that as a result of industrial action we are having to pay the police service £180 per night to accommodate prisoners when there is plenty of room in the prisons in the north to accommodate prisoners there, where they should be.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I thank the Minister for his contratulations to the police and I join him in congratulating the Greater Manchester police on the tremendous job that they have been doing in looking after remand prisoners since Strangeways. Is he aware that it is totally unacceptable for the police at police stations such as those in Stockport to have to go on looking after remand prisoners? It is also totally unacceptable to the prisoners and to their families. Will the Minister make it clear that this state of affairs cannot continue and that we must achieve a situation in which those remand prisoners can go back to prison and the police stations can get back to their normal functions?

Mr. Mellor: I am in the happy position of agreeing with absolutely every word that the hon. Gentleman said. That is why we have sought to persuade the POA to accept a common-sense solution. For example, Preston prison—one of the major prisons in the north—has a certified normal accommodation of 428, but there are barely more than 300 prisoners there at present. Industrial action is preventing the spaces being filled. The public and the House will not understand if it takes much longer to resolve these problems.

Sunday Trading

11. **Mrs. Roe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation in the light of inconsistent judgments on Sunday trading cases now coming from the courts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago to my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans).

Mrs. Roe: In the search for a compromise, will my hon. and learned Friend pay particular attention to the needs of garden centres, the purpose of which is widely recognised as being recreational? Will he bear in mind that some garden centres do as much as 70 per cent. of their business on Sundays and that without Sunday opening they would be forced to close? Does he appreciate that there is great concern in that industry about the continuing uncertainty?

Mr. Mellor: I well appreciate all the points that my hon. Friend makes, and she is absolutely right.

Mrs. Wise: Will the Minister accept that many shop workers are saying loud and clear, "You already take our Saturdays for work—you are not going to get our Sundays"? Will he further accept that shop workers will not believe any offers of protection which may be held out to them by the Government, who have a shocking record of stripping protection from shop workers in relation to wages, hours of work and other matters?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Lady should, in all conscience, recognise that the world has moved on since the days of Mr. Polly and that in reality several million of our fellow citizens—including, I suspect, a good many of us—regularly have to work Sundays but that we manage to do so while having perfectly normal, decent and sensible family lives and being able to follow our religions. All retailers who advocate a change in the law say that it has never been difficult to find people willing to work on Sundays, particularly when supplements are paid.

Crime Statistics

12. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the level of crime in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* each member country of the European Community and *(c)* the United States of America.

Mr. John Patten: According to the recently published 1989 international survey of crime, the overall risk in England and Wales of being a victim of crime is a little below the average for western Europe and much lower for violent crime than in the rest of Europe. The risk is lower than in the United States, Canada and Australia. What matters to our citizens is, quite rightly, crime here.

Mr. Irvine: Does my right hon. Friend agree that those figures show that high crime levels are a worldwide problem, and that we in Britain are tackling them more effectively than other countries? Does he acknowledge, however, that there is no cause for complacency here, particularly in the light of the disturbing and countrywide crime rate figures for the first three months of this year?

Mr. Patten: Those figures will probably not be published for another two weeks. No other part of Government expenditure has had more money devoted to it than the police, where there has been almost a 60 per cent. rise in expenditure in real terms in the past 10 years. There are 15,000 more men and women working in the police service, and with better equipment than ever before. Happily, the recent international survey to which I referred shows that confidence in the police is higher in this country than in any other western European country.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Sayeed:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be hosting a dinner in honour of Sir Sonny Ramphal, secretary-general of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Sayeed: Will my right hon. Friend consider the possibility of the Government establishing a Select Committee charged with the responsibility of examining the cost to the nation of the pledges and commitments made by Ministers and other hon. Members?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend knows, Ministers have to lay their estimates before the House and overall Government expenditure is given in the Autumn Statement, as is the detailed public expenditure survey ahead. It would be a good idea if other people making proposals for extra expenditure also had to lay their costings before the House—including Opposition Members, who recently made 80 new spending pledges in their new document.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister aware that this morning's decision by the Cabinet on the rail link to the channel tunnel means all the misery of prolonged planning blight for the people of Kent, and is a betrayal of the economic and environmental interests of the whole country? When the Prime Minister looks at the problem, as she will have to do again, will she recognise that mixing public and private investment works well for the other countries of Europe, so why does she wish to prevent it from working for our country?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman will recall that clause 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 precludes subsidy for international travel, and the Labour party agreed to that clause at the time. Subsidy is therefore precluded. The joint venture was seeking nearly £2 billion of additional finance for Eurorail—£500 million in Government grant, extra British Rail investment of nearly £400 million, mainly in commuter services, and a £1 billion soft loan, on which repayment of interest or capital would not even start until the year 2010. As I have said, such subsidy was precluded by clause 42.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister so inflexible and myopic as not to understand what every community and every industrialist in Britain understands—that when circumstances change, a realistic Government should change their policy? When the French are already building their fast rail link, why is the Prime Minister not even planning ours?

The Prime Minister: That is another quick £2 billion, just like that. Yet the right hon. Gentleman claims to be responsible. It is absolute nonsense. In fact, nearly £2 billion of public investment has already been committed to tunnel-related transport services in our estimates and in expenditure. I will give the House the breakdown. We plan to spend £600 million on road schemes to allow access to the tunnel, and British Rail will invest more than £1·3 billion on passenger and freight services to and from the tunnel. That is legitimate expenditure and it is being made.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister is seeking to mislead everyone again. Will she not admit that of the sum that she says is committed to railways, £1 billion will be paid for entirely by higher fares being charged to users of Network SouthEast, who already suffer grossly inadequate services at very high cost? Will she not also admit that none of that maintenance work—for that is what it is—begins to provide an alternative to the fast rail link that is necessary? I ask the right hon. Lady again: when other countries mix public and private investment to provide a proper modern international rail link, why is she preventing our people from having the same advantage?

The Prime Minister: The Government are making a greater investment in railways than there has been for 25 years. We have committed and are spending £2 billion of public investment on roads and railways to the channel tunnel. It is not maintenance—it is much more than that, if the right hon. Gentleman will care to look. Out of the blue and in the right hon. Gentleman's usual casual way, he has committed another £2 billion without costings—justifying the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed).

Q2. **Mr. Stanbrook:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. and learned Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Stanbrook: Will my right hon. Friend give some thought this afternoon to the plight of British hostages in the Lebanon? Would it not be helpful to their cause and to the peace process in the middle east if Britain and Syria were to patch up their quarrel and agree to resume diplomatic relations? Is it right that we should continue without proper representation in that very important country?

The Prime Minister: My hon. and learned Friend will recall the very serious circumstances in which we broke off diplomatic relations with Syria, when we could have lost a whole aircraft full of people over London had the bomb that it was meant to carry gone off. There was complicity with the Syrian embassy in the attempted placing of a bomb on that aircraft, and we cannot ignore that. Any country that can exercise influence in achieving the release of hostages should exercise it. The taking and holding of hostages is totally uncivilised. We have publicly thanked Iran and Syria for the part that they played in achieving the release of American hostages. The central issue is the release of hostages that should not be held by any nation.

Mr. Ashdown: While the Prime Minister is on the subject of expenditure, does she realise that there cannot be any greater indictment of her Government's priorities than that they are prepared to contemplate spending £3,000 million saving their skins over the poll tax but cannot find one tenth of that sum to invest in a decent high-speed rail link for Britain's future?

The Prime Minister: I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman listens to any previous reply. We are precluded by legislation from spending on an international rail link. As to expenditure, we have already committed £2 billion to roads and railways to and from the channel tunnel. A statement will be made on the community charge, but I assume from the right hon. Gentleman's comment that he feels no sense of guilt about very high-spending local councils who put up their community charges to an enormous amount—most of them Labour or Liberal.

Q3. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Dr. Twinn: Will my right hon. Friend welcome the easing of tension between the Soviet Union, Lithuania and the other Baltic states? Does she agree that that welcome development has much to do with the steady pressure applied by the British Government—and other western Governments—to both sides? Will she continue to work hard to bring both sides together for a peaceful settlement in the Soviet Union and the Baltic states?

The Prime Minister: I discussed that problem with President Gorbachev and the Lithuanian Prime Minister, Mrs. Prunskiene, and we have frequently had questions about it in the House. Britain, the United States and other European countries have steadily made known our view that those states are entitled to independence and self-determination, and President Gorbachev has agreed to that.

It looked as though a real blockage was developing in relation to some of the semantics. That was a great tragedy, as obviously it is important to get practical talks and negotiations started. I believe that that is about to happen, and it is a welcome development. Both sides are to be congratulated on removing the blockages, and I hope that the process comes to fruition.

Mrs. Fyfe: Will the Prime Minister tell us what replies she has given to those who petitioned her yesterday on behalf of people living in the Ravenscraig area?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Lady knows, the position on Ravenscraig was governed by a statement made by British Steel. It undertook to keep the strip mill open until 1989, and that date has now been extended to 1991. As for the main mill, British Steel said in its prospectus that if it no longer had any use for the mill it would be offered to a private buyer; I do not think that the position has changed.

Q4. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Townsend: Does my right hon. Friend agree with United States Secretary of State James Baker that the tension in the middle east is as high today as it was in 1967? Does she share his view that the conditions for talks with the Palestinians laid down by the new and extreme Israeli Government need to be changed? Can she assure the House that the British Government will do all that they can to support the American Government's efforts to start some form of talks without delay?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I believe that my hon. Friend is correct. We are doing all that we can to persuade the new Israeli Government to start talks with representative Palestinian people. We are also joining others in pointing out that Soviet Jews who leave the Soviet Union—and we have urged for years that they should be allowed to leave—should not be settled in the occupied territories or in east Jerusalem. It undermines our position when those people are settled in land that really belongs to others.

Mr. Win Griffiths: What is the average rate of inflation in the European Community, excluding Britain? When does the Prime Minister expect British inflation to achieve the European average? Will she tell the House that it will not happen in October, and that Britain will therefore not join the exchange rate mechanism then, as it will not have met the conditions that she has laid down?

The Prime Minister: The average rate of inflation in the European Community is about 5 per cent. If Britain's figure were calculated on the same basis, it would be 6·5 per cent. The conditions for Britain's joining the ERM were laid down at Madrid, and they are precisely the same now.

Q5. **Mr. Churchill:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Churchill: Is it not clear that the socialist policies being foisted on Britain by Commissioner Papandreou, under the terms of the social charter, which requires employers to give a part-time employee all the perks and benefits available to full-time workers, will have a

devastating effect on employment and on Britain's 6 million part-time workers? Will my right hon. Friend continue to resist those job-destroying proposals?

The Prime Minister *rose—[Interruption.]*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Questions are to be answered by the Prime Minister and not by hon. Members on Benches below the Gangway.

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend—the Commission talks in one breath about subsidiarity, and by its actions puts on a whole new load of bureaucratic rules and regulations which are not needed, which would be highly damaging to those who work part-time and would put increasing costs on employers. What the Commission is proposing would be a barrier to jobs, a barrier to business, would cost a lot of women who want to work part-time their jobs, would mean increased national insurance contributions for those who work only a few hours a week, and generally would be damaging to business and people alike.

Business of the House

3.30 pm

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): Will the Leader of the House tell us the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 18 JUNE and TUESDAY 19 JUNE—There will be a debate on a Government motion to approve the Defence Estimates 1990 (Cm 1022).

At the end of Tuesday remaining stages of the Greenwich Hospital Bill *[Lords]*.

Ways and Means resolution relating to the Caldey Island Bill.

WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE—Progress on remaining stages of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill *[Lords]*.

Consideration of Lords amendments to the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill.

Resolutions relating to the Finance Bill.

THURSDAY 21 JUNE—Completion of remaining stages of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill *[Lords]*.

FRIDAY 22 JUNE—Private Members' motions.

MONDAY 25 JUNE—Opposition Day (15th allotted day). There will be a debate on an Opposition motion, subject for debate to be announced.

Dr. Cunningham: Will the Leader of the House reconsider the Government's proposals for the further consideration of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, which is scheduled to go into Committee on 19 June, as that will leave perhaps only 10 sitting days for consideration of a Bill of 60 clauses and seven schedules? It contains a controversial series of proposals, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman knows, as it covers such issues as conveyancing, legal structures, licensing law, divorce law and the law on charities. Is not it clear that the Committee is unlikely to have sufficient time to give full and adequate consideration to all those important matters? Will the Leader of the House withdraw the Bill and reintroduce it in the next Session of Parliament, when the House will be more adequately able to consider all those important measures which affect so many aspects of life in Scotland?

Does it concern the Leader of the House that it is apparently becoming increasingly profitable for Ministers to fall out with the Prime Minister? Is not it time that the House had the opportunity to debate the increasing flow of former Cabinet Ministers into highly paid posts in recently privatised industries? That phenomenon is unlike anything that has ever happened before—*[Interruption.]*—for one thing, no other Government have privatised industry in the way that the Government have done. Secondly, no Ministers in previous Governments have been so closely involved with such a process as the Ministers in this Government have been. As there are rules governing the behaviour of civil servants, why should we not, in the public interest, have an opportunity to debate the matter in Governmen time? In the interests of the reputation of good government, I ask the Leader of the House to provide such an opportunity.

Has the Leader of the House seen the recently published study on urban prosperity in the European Community? It shows that the Government's policies for Britain's towns and cities are failing. Is he aware that only four British towns and cities are included among the top 50 positions in the study: Brighton—Labour—Norwich—Labour—London—mainly Labour—and Edinburgh—Labour? Does not that show that it is nonsense for the Government to claim that Labour is not managing efficiently the affairs of our towns and cities?

Does not it also put a big question mark over the Government's proposals—that we shall soon have to find time to debate—to rate-cap authorities that are trying to administer many important policies that affect those who live in the towns and cities of this country? Will the Leader of the House therefore ensure that when we come to consider the budgets of authorities that may be poll tax-capped we shall have ample opportunity to do so?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I understand that the hon. Gentleman does not intend to be in the House next week. That may explain the length of his interrogation this afternoon. As for the first matter that he raised, the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill is an important measure which is currently under consideration by the Standing Committee. I am advised that the Committee will so organise itself as to ensure that the Bill is properly scrutinised. However, I note the hon. Gentleman's point and I shall reflect on what he said.

As for the appointment of former Ministers to the chairmanship of privatised companies, it ought to be clearly within the hon. Gentleman's recollection that it has never been the practice, under successive Governments of either party, to prevent former Ministers from accepting appointments in areas where they have expertise. It is difficult to see the distinction in principle between the appointments of which the hon. Gentleman has spoken and the appointments of, for example, Lord Robens as chairman of the National Coal Board, Lord Marsh as chairman of British Rail, Lord Beswick as chairman of the British Aerospace Corporation and Lord Glenamara as chairman of Cable and Wireless. The only distinction is that they were appointed to the chairmanship of industries in the public sector that were a great deal less efficient than the privatised industries that are now available to the country.

As for the hon. Gentleman's last point, it is notable that a number of the cities to which he referred—for example, Edinburgh and Brighton—have had long periods of Conservative rule, which no doubt contributed to their present good condition. It is also notable that a number of cities in this country—I note, for example, London docklands at one end and Glasgow, the European city of culture, at the other—have undergone a positive revitalisation during the last 10 years, of which this country can be proud.

Several Hon. Members *rose—*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that this is an Estimates Day, the second of the rare occasions when we have an opportunity to debate Select Committee reports. Moreover, after business questions the Secretary of State for Transport is to make an important statement. Therefore I shall allow business questions to run until 4.15. Hon. Members who are anxious to question the Secretary of State for Transport about his statement will, I hope, impose upon themselves a self-denying ordinance during business questions.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): My right hon. and learned Friend will recall that on 29 March he said that such were the issues raised by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill that the House should have the opportunity to arrive at its conclusions on a free vote. Can he now categorically tell us that that promise obtains for the rest of the Bill?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Bill was introduced as a measure dealing with embryology and not with abortion issues. When it was introduced it was made clear that the key clause on research or no research, on which we offered alternatives, would be the subject of a free vote. When the possibility of the Bill's being widened to include abortion arose in the House, it was made clear, and still remains the position, that matters relating to embryo research or abortion that are matters of conscience will be subject to a free vote.

One matter on which it makes sense to invite the House, with the help of my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary, to conclude the debate, is whether we give the Bill a Third Reading. It was introduced as a Government Bill and will be the result of intense deliberation by the House on the questions urged upon it by my right hon. Friend and others, so it would be foolish for us to neglect passing the Bill on to the statute book when we have completed our considerations.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): Regarding the proposed establishment of a Select Committee on Northern Ireland Affairs, has the Leader of the House had an opportunity to consult the Chairman of the Select Committee on Procedure, following his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) last Thursday?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have not yet taken that opportunity, but I shall bear in mind the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the House is pleased that he has responded to the Procedure Committee's report on European legislation with a White Paper? I congratulate him on that, but it is not enough; we need a debate. We have been promised a debate. Can he tell the House when that will be, and will he consider whether the debate should be on an affirmative motion and not simply a take-note motion?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As my hon. Friend is aware, I have had a number of discussions with right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House and I hope to announce a debate on the matter in the very near future. Of course, without commitment, I shall pay respect to his observations about the form of the debate.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Like the rest of us who observed the exchanges at Prime Minister's Question Time, did the Leader of the House notice the Prime Minister's frustration that section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 was tying her hands and undoubtedly preventing her from providing much-needed funds to the high-speed rail link? Given the fact that the Government have a large majority in the House and that such a measure would get a fair wind from the Opposition, will he set a day aside next week for a simple, one-clause Bill to repeal section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I did not get the impression that that was the ambition of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. If hon. Members wish to explore the matter in more detail, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will answer their questions.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): Does my right hon. and learned Friend expect the embryo research and abortion clauses of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill to be taken on the Wednesday or Thursday? Does he agree that, if there is any timetable problem about the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, the divorce provision could well be dropped?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The precise allocation of business will be for the Business Committee, but the hope is to divide the two topics between the two days.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Will the Leader of the House think again about his answer to the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine)? He is putting a three-line Whip on a Government Bill which deals with life issues. That has far wider implications than he has realised in terms of the Labour party's position on these matters. Will he please reconsider that decision and not proceed on that basis?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Once again, I am glad to have the opportunity of disabusing the hon. Gentleman and the House of an entirely false impression about the way in which the Bill is being handled. First, it is not the function of the Leader of the House to prescribe whipping arrangements for either side of the House. Secondly, I understand that my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary made it clear that matters relating to embryo research or abortion, that are matters of conscience, will be subject to an entirely free vote, as indeed they were. The only question on which there can sensibly be whipping is whether the House of Commons, having spent a great deal of time in orderly debate on the matter, should carry through to the statute book the result of that work. The first part of the Bill, which deals with embryology, is a Government Bill; the second part of the Bill is, in effect, a House of Commons Bill and it is not unreasonable to expect that Bill to be carried through to the statute book.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): May we have an early debate on the important subject of religious education in schools, bearing in mind the serious shortage of religious education teachers and the importance of teaching children the difference between right and wrong? That would also enable the apparently illegal syllabus in religious education of the former Ealing Labour council to be discussed and ordered to be changed. It does not mention God, the Bible or Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, which are required to be at the centre of this crucial subject.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend always has the skill to make his business question almost a mini-debate in itself. He has ventilated the subject with some skill.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): May we have a debate before 29 June on crowd safety at pop concerts? On that date, there is to be the biggest concert of the year, with more than 100,000 young people expected to hear such

aging figures as Paul McCartney and Elton John. We should at least be concerned to see that people are safe when they get there.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am not sure whether the hon. and learned Gentleman will be among the audience there. He would be a man of comparable vintage to the stars he has named. I cannot promise a debate on that topic in the near future.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): I do not wish to overburden our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. However, will my right hon. and learned Friend fill the cup of London's happiness by bringing our right hon. Friend back shortly to make an announcement on the central London rail study, including the Hackney-Chelsea line, which we hope will come south of the river through Wandsworth, and on the public transport elements of the London assessment studies?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has answered questions on both topics in the fairly recent past. He may or may not be in a position to answer such questions this afternoon. If not, I am sure that my hon. Friend will find another opportunity of pressing him on both points.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the Leader of the House arrange an early debate on the cash crisis facing the education service? Is he aware that many schools, including those in my constituency, are facing a cash crisis as a result of inadequate budgets under the local management scheme? Budgets are being returned, teachers are being threatened with the sack and there is a real danger of many schools literally running out of money before the end of the financial year. What are the Government doing to ensure that our children's education is not put in jeopardy in that way? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman arrange an early debate so that the Secretary of State for Education and Science can be told of the reality facing many constituencies?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman will, no doubt, recall that the amount of money per head being spent on children's education is now higher than at any time in the past. He will also remember that the change in school management was intended to secure—and will secure—increasingly efficient use of those resources to achieve the exact objectives he has in mind. He will find the point more elaborately explained in the speech by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to the National Association of Head Teachers a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): May I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on agreeing to reflect on what the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) said about the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill? I speak as a member of the Committee on that Bill and as a supporter of the great majority of its provisions. Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that in light of the excellent speeches on Second Reading by my hon. Friends, the timetable for the Bill is unreasonable and that it would be far better if this important measure were considered next Session by reasonable people over a reasonable time and at reasonable hours?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am still hopeful that my hon. Friend—some of whose remarks I appreciate—will play his part in helping the Committee so to organise itself that it can complete its business in the present Session.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Will the Leader of the House consider my question last week on separating the poll tax orders that must be laid? I notice that they are not down for debate next week, so they could be put down for the week after. My understanding is that the orders may be brought together in two groups. That would be a negation of democracy, both centrally and locally. It would be a kick in the teeth for people such as those in my constituency, where the music centre has closed, 24 teachers have been sacked, two old people's homes have been closed and all the services have been cut. Is not it right for each order to be debated for an hour and a half in the House and for the House to make a decision on each?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have not today announced any arrangements for debating charge capping. Any proposals on that matter are best left for discussions through the usual channels.

Sir John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that we have not had a debate for some time on the workings of the Foreign Office? Does he agree that the cost of the Foreign Office is very low, given the service that it performs? It has one of the lowest votes of any Government Department. Its activities at home and abroad are vital to the country and I hope that they will not be curtailed in any way.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am glad to endorse the tribute paid by my hon. Friend to the efficiency and importance of the Foreign Office. I am sure that, in due course, we shall have a debate on foreign affairs and that my hon. Friend will be able to repeat in more detail the glowing observations that he has made.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): What are the chances of a statement next week on the stalled Cabinet review of the poll tax? I am happy to leave it entirely up to the Leader of the House to sort out whether such a statement should come from the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for the Environment or from the Chancellor, but it would at least give 1·25 million people in Scotland and 10 million people in England and Wales the opportunity to discover precisely the sort of poll tax that we are not paying.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There is no question of any stalling of any review. My right hon. Friends' consideration of the operation of the community charge is proceeding in the ordinary fashion and the outcome will be disclosed in due course.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Has my right hon. and learned Friend any news to give us about when we may have the reform of the private Bill procedure and when the excellent recommendations of the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure may be implemented?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I hope to be able to tell the House something more substantial about that next week.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Will the Leader of the House consider further the need for a statement on the

[Mr. David Winnick]

position of former Cabinet Ministers who have taken posts in private companies? One former Minister had dealings with a company—recently, while he was a Minister—and has now become its chairman. Is the Leader of the House aware that many people regard that as scandalous? We need guidelines for former Cabinet Ministers along the same lines as those for senior civil servants who leave the service, which have not been the subject of any controversy.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I repeat that it has never been the practice, under Governments of either party, to prevent former Ministers from accepting appointments. I repeat that there is a list of distinguished ex-Labour Ministers who have moved on to preside over nationalised companies, while others have taken jobs in the private sector.

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the Montreal protocol meetings, to be held in London and hosted by Her Majesty's Government, are likely to prove a crucial test of the true environmental policies of most major nations? Please may we have a debate on the subject before the meetings take place, so that the Government are aware of Back-Bench feelings?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise a debate on that important subject at a particular time, but I shall bear my hon. Friend's question in mind.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Does the Leader of the House accept that his twice-repeated assertion that the Standing Committee appointed to deal with the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill should "so organise itself" represents a dereliction of duty by the Government? The Government are demanding one of two things of the members of the Standing Committee: either we shall be faced with all-night sittings during June and July or we shall have severely to curtail discussions not only of the provisions of the Bill but of other aspects of law reform in Scotland that we may wish to raise under the long title.

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman undertake not only to have discussions through the usual channels but to meet representatives of the Scottish National party and the Liberal Democrats to discuss the implications of the Bill and the possibility of taking it away and introducing separate legislation in the next Session so that we can deal with these issues as they deserve to be dealt with?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It would not be normal for me to engage myself in managing the procedures of this, that or any other Standing Committee, however important its work may be. I have already undertaken to reflect on the point that has been raised, but I maintain my belief, on the basis of the advice that I have received, that it should be possible for the Committee so to organise itself as to ensure that the Bill is properly scrutinised.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Is my right hon. and learned Friend able to tell the House how long it would take to describe those qualifications which Lord Glenamara possessed before his appointment as chairman of Cable and Wireless? Is it really the case that he was not able to distinguish one end of a cable from the other, either at the start or at the end of his term of office as chairman? Is not it a source of great satisfaction to my right hon. and learned Friend that the new chairman of Cable and Wireless has been appointed from the private sector and not by one of his right hon. Friends?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend's observations are always entirely apt. It is a source of pleasure to Conservative Members, and more importantly it is a source of encouragement and benefit to the nation, that a competent chairman should be appointed to a privatised company of that kind. However, as we consider the proximity of experience, it is interesting to reflect that Lord Glenamara had been Postmaster-General before becoming chairman of Cable and Wireless.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): Has the Leader of the House seen early-day motion 982 about the poll tax and the franchise which shows that there is a shortfall on the electoral register of 600,000 people as a result of the operation of the poll tax?

[That this House notes that under a universal franchise there has correctly been a close correlation between the numbers of people on electoral registers within Great Britain and the estimated equivalent population of those who are 18 years of age and over; is therefore shocked to discover that since the introduction of the poll tax and the interconnections that subsequently exist between electoral and poll tax registration, on the above basis there are over 600,000 people missing from the current and recently used local government electoral registers in Great Britain; further notes that under-registration, is unevenly distributed and that there are certain alarming pockets of non-registration including the parliamentary constituency of Finchley where the electorate fell by 4·6 per cent. between 1988 and 1989 and has fallen by a further 3·9 per cent. in the past year; also notes that the overall decline in electoral registration has not occurred in Northern Ireland where the poll tax has not been introduced; and therefore concludes that the poll tax is incompatible with the operation of a universal franchise and should be abolished forthwith because any attempts to amend its operation cannot overcome its fundamental characteristic which is one of undermining a universal franchise by placing a de-facto tax on electoral registration.]

May we have a debate about the state of the franchise, and can that debate include concerns about expatriate votes so that a fraud squad can be set up to stop electoral fraud in this country?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am glad to take this opportunity to remind the hon. Gentleman that the arrangements for the registration of expatriate votes were introduced and carried through the House with the express approval of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley). If the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) wants to amplify further upon the virtues of that provision, it has been arranged for him to have an Adjournment debate on the subject next Friday.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Will my right hon. and learned Friend reflect on the answer that he gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart)? This plea comes from the hon. Member of this House with more hours in Standing Committee than any other hon.

Member. My right hon. and learned Friend will realise that the distances that we travel and the size of our constituencies place enormous demands on Scottish Members. Consequently, those of us who wish to debate that important measure properly, fully and adequately, believe that there is not enough time left to do so.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am sure that the House will be able to judge how far to acknowledge and hail my hon. Friend as the Stakhanovite of the Scottish Standing Committee. I will continue to reflect, with his encouragement, as I have already undertaken to reflect after the encouragement of other hon. Members.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Leader of the House reflect on the fact that we are to have a debate on defence on Monday and Tuesday? As things are moving very fast, particularly in Europe, and as the estimates White Paper is now really dated, and as we understand that the Minister of State for Defence Procurement has been devilling away in the Ministry of Defence and has produced his own defence review, would it not be in the interests of the House for that to be published and available to all hon. Members so that we can debate the subject adequately and anticipate the cuts to be made by the Government before the Opposition make their own cuts?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is a little impatient and is trying to make now the speech that he wants to make in next Monday's or Tuesday's debate. He will have an opportunity to hear my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement as well as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence in next week's debate.

Mr. Michael Shersby (Uxbridge): In the business statement last week, my right hon. and learned Friend said that he hoped shortly to be able to announce a date for a debate on the Police (Amendment No. 2) Regulations. As he has not announced a date today, when does he expect to do so?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I can confirm that in my next business statement I will announce specific proposals for a debate on those regulations.

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): Will the Leader of the House make arrangements for the Secretary of State for Defence to make a statement regarding matters at Coulport and Faslane? More than 40 men have been denied security passes, and one of my constituents, who is completely innocent of any security breach, has been denied a job and been made unemployed for more than six weeks. That man is desperate to resume working not only for this country but for his family. Will the Secretary of State come to the House and make a statement on that appalling state of affairs?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I certainly cannot promise a statement on the matter. The Defence Secretary will be top for questions on Tuesday of next week as well as taking part in the defence debate on two days of next week.

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): I refer my right hon. and learned Friend to his answer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine). He will be aware that the Government earned great respect for the arrangements that they made for the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware also that the Government earned great gratitude not only in the House but in the country. Whichever side wins, if there is not a free vote on a Bill that will contain provisions that may be deeply repugnant to the wishes of hon. Members, the respect that the Government have so justly won will be needlessly jeopardised.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her tribute to the way in which we have been able to organise that debate. That fortifies me in the conviction that, having been able to organise it with the support of hon. Members on both sides of the House, it is important that the conclusions of such a wide-ranging debate, which were clearly the outcome of very careful deliberation by a large number of hon. Members, should be placed on the statute book if possible.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Is the Leader of the House aware that I share the deep concern that was expressed by his hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) about the Commitee proceedings on the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill? I ask that question because, if the Bill were passed with sensible amendments, we could provide for major developments in child care law in Scotland, especially the provision of treatment of victims of physical and sexual abuse. Although I want no delay in the enactment of such legislation, it requires deliberate and careful concern and scrutiny. I again ask the Leader of the House to take on board the concern that was expressed today.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have nothing further to add to what I have already said on that topic.

Mr. Richard Alexander (Newark): With further reference to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, has my right hon. and learned Friend had time to read clause 46? If he has, as a lawyer he will have seen that it proposes to give the police greater powers of entry to registered clubs than they already have for public houses. May I advise my right hon. and learned Friend that there is no evidence that that clause should have been introduced and that there is great concern that such a provision might subsequently be introduced in England?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am not sure whether business questions is the best time to offer me advice on the contents of a Scottish Bill. In so far as my hon. Friend's observation was valid, I shall try to take note of it.

Mr. John P. Smith (Vale of Glamorgan): Will the Leader of the House find time to review the legislation relating to the protection of historic monuments and our country's heritage? I am deeply concerned that the 12th-century St. Quentin castle at Llanblethian near Cowbridge, which is an area that is familiar to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Leader of the House, is in danger of being lost for ever because the landowner is using current legislation to run rings around the Welsh Office. The latest proposals to protect that monument are the eighth since 1974. If we do not take action, we shall lose that monument and, I am sure, other historic monuments throughout the country.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am sufficiently conscious of the value and importance of Llanblethian castle. I shall draw the hon. Gentleman's point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): Many hon. Members use St. Stephen's entrance to gain access to the Houses of Parliament. St. Stephen's Hall and Central Lobby are often crowded with visitors and, welcome though those visitors are, they none the less sometimes get in the way. In the past few months when coming in to attend Divisions I have collided twice with members of the public. Will my right hon. and learned Friend look at whatever arrangements there are to ensure that hon. Members have unhindered and unencumbered access to this place?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I find it difficult to judge imediately the relative importance of my hon. Friend's access to the House and his continued contact with the electorate.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): With reference to the question of the hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) on the procedures to be adopted when debating the Government's response to Procedure Committee's report on EEC legislation, does the Leader of the House agree that a vote to approve such a response would not give him the opportunity to choose those aspects on which he will table amendments and would decide holus bolus on all its proposals? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that many hon. Members will be grateful for the fact that no fewer than 10 motions on the Orders of the Day relate to EEC documents, some of which are due to be considered in Committee? Will the Leader of the House tell us which orders will be considered in Committee next week.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I take note of the advice offered by the hon. Gentleman and, in so far as it differs from the advice offered by my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), I shall reflect all the more enthusiastically on both pieces of advice. I shall try to meet the hon. Gentleman's request in relation to his second point in one way or another, but I cannot undertake to do so precisely in the way that he asked.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): As the whole of tomorrow may be taken up with the second debate this week on the dreary subject of the Common Market, rather on the much more interesting subject of Church and state, will my right hon. and learned Friend arrange for a debate next week on the subject of the Church and its relations with the state?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I take note of the somewhat frustrated way in which my hon. Friend expresses himself, having drawn the debate that is likely to take second place tomorrow. He may find that his expectations are not entirely unrewarded, but I cannot give him any promise in that respect.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): May we have a debate next week on Lord Justice Salmon's report on the standard of conduct in public life, which was made to the House in 1978 and is still waiting for a debate? We could link that to the standard of conduct of Cabinet Ministers who take part in and vote on legislation but then line their pockets with lucrative jobs, leading companies that have been privatised. Many people regard that as outrageous and scandalous. The Government could then invoke any criticism that they might have and Opposition Members could invoke their criticisms of the way in which former members of the Tory Government have continuously abused their positions by gaining jobs for the boys which are lucrative beyond the dreams of most people in this country.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I come back precisely to the point that former Labour Ministers, of whom the hon. Gentleman was once one—*[Interruption.]*—incidentally, it is astonishing to look back on that—have all taken such jobs and there is no significant difference in principle.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Will my right hon. and learned Friend help the House by stating whether he is contemplating guillotining any part of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill next week?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. and learned Friend has omitted to recollect that the two days' proceedings next week are taking place under the terms of the timetable motion that was commended on most sides of the House some months ago.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Well, then, let us have a debate on outside earnings generally. Let us talk about pensioners, disabled people and others who are on means-tested benefits and who, if they earn any money from outside employment, lose those means-tested benefits in line with the extra money that they have made. If those pensioners and others have to lose money because they are making money through another form of employment, that rule should apply to those ex-Cabinet Ministers, of any Government, who are lining their pockets as a result of the job that they held. If ex-Cabinet Ministers cannot make ends meet on £26,000 per year, that is a poor lookout for the pensioners and others who have to struggle every week.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In the hon. Gentleman's phraseology, let us have a debate, but not in the form of a speech at business questions. He might have the opportunity of raising the topic during the next Opposition Supply day.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): Great anger has been generated by the school transfer procedure chaos in my constituency and, indeed, elsewhere in Northern Ireland. Therefore, will my right hon. and learned Friend the deputy Prime Minister provide time next week to debate that vital issue so that justice can be done for many boys and girls who have been denied a grammar school place as a result of the new system?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Justice in this matter is as important in North Down as in every other part of the kingdom. I cannot promise to offer an opportunity for a debate in the immediate future.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): The Leader of the House will be aware that the English law reform proposals were contained in a separate Bill whereas the Scottish proposals were lumped along with licensing, divorce and other matters. With his Back-Bench Members in revolt, does it not strike the right hon. and learned Gentleman as odd that in order to get the Bill through he might have to use Tory Members who sit for English seats to crush Labour Members who sit for Scottish seats?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There will be no question of anyone crushing any hon. Members in any way on the matter. I hope that a reasoned and well-ordered debate will take the matter to its conclusion.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Will my right hon. and learned Friend refer back to the exchanges that took place during Prime Minister's Question Time about the creation of a new Select Committee? Given that the number of spending commitments made by the Labour party appears to have declined from 140 before the last general election to 81, will my right hon. and learned Friend speculate on how many spending commitments there would be in the next Labour manifesto if they won the coming election and whether they would include a commitment not to staff the boards of nationalised industries with former Labour Ministers?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am not sure that I could speculate usefully on that question.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): Will the Leader of the House give consideration to finding time for a debate next week on the implementation of the Shops Act 1950? Perhaps he would be good enough to read the extracts from Home Office Question Time to find out what the Home Secretary said about implementation and the difficulties that we face? I gathered—I have checked to find out whether it is true—that he was giving licence to B and Q and others who have threatened to continue to open on Sundays, despite a case that was resolved in Cwmbran magistrates court only on Monday of this week. It is necessary to ensure that Ministers, who are here to uphold the law, as we are here to make it, should not encourage B and Q to break the law. We are continually told by the Prime Minister that we should not blatantly break the law by striking or deciding not to pay the poll tax. Why is protection given to B and Q and others who blatantly break the Shops Act 1950?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman referred to the case in Cwmbran magistrates court. He will be aware that there has been another case in the High Court. Taken together, those cases illustrate the problems associated with the present unsatisfactory state of the law on Sunday trading. He will also be aware that the Government invited the House to accept legislation that would have removed many of the difficulties. That was not acceptable to the House. The Government's position remains clear. We are prepared to consider alternative methods of reform which are likely to be acceptable to all who are interested and concerned. The difficulty so far has been finding exactly that balance.

Channel Tunnel (Rail Services)

4.14 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Cecil Parkinson): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the proposals for a new high-speed rail link to the channel tunnel.

The opening of the tunnel in 1993 will provide a major new business opportunity for Britain and for British Rail. Let me first dispel any doubts that we intend to invest in the infrastructure required to service the tunnel fully from the day that it opens. For British Rail, investment in tunnel services will be the largest that it has undertaken this century—more than £1 billion on passenger and freight services. Orders have already been placed for a common fleet of high-speed passenger trains, owned jointly by the British, French and Belgium railway companies, that will link London to Paris in three hours and to Brussels in two and three quarter hours. In addition to the half-hourly services between those three capitals, BR plans through trains from the regions offering 3 million seats a year.

Work has started on improving the track between London and Folkestone and on the new passenger terminal at Waterloo. Last month I announced approval for new electric freight locomotives that will haul channel tunnel freight at speeds just as high as those on the continent. More than two thirds of rail freight to the tunnel will come from outside the south-east and BR is planning through services and freight depots throughout the country. We plan to spend more than £600 million on tunnel-related road schemes, which is about the same amount as the French Government. When the channel tunnel treaty was signed, we undertook that BR would meet the demand for passenger and freight services when the tunnel opened, and those commitments are being fulfilled.

The railway investments will cater for demand in 1993 and for several years thereafter. In the case of freight, there is ample capacity in the south-east outside the commuter peaks. However, all the traffic forecasts show that growth in demand for international rail passenger services and domestic commuter services will eventually outgrow the capacity of the present system. That is why we asked British Rail to examine how best to increase that capacity when the time came. We made it clear that the investment in international services would have to be commercially justified, just as it would be in ferry, in air or in other competing services.

Last November, British Rail selected Eurorail from a field of eight private consortia, and announced its intention to pursue the possibility of forming a joint venture to operate the international services and to construct a new line. Since then, it has identified measures that substantially improve the commercial prospects of the international passenger business. Despite those improvements, the forecasts submitted by the joint venture showed that its costs were likely to exceed its income by a wide margin. To meet that gap, the joint venture first required a capital grant of £500 million towards the use of the line by commuter services. Secondly, British Rail would need to invest up to £400 million, mainly in commuter terminals. Thirdly, it proposed a low-interest deferred loan of £1 billion, which in the case of default would rank below all other creditors.

[Mr. Cecil Parkinson]

I have given careful consideration to the case for a capital grant. We have never ruled out capital grants for improvements in commuter services where they are justified on cost-benefit grounds. I made that clear in the new objectives that I published for British Rail last year. The new line would indeed bring significant benefits to commuter services, but unfortunately the benefits to commuters were not sufficient to justify both the investment by Network SouthEast of £400 million in its own facilities and grant of £500 million towards the use of the new line.

The loan of £1 billion represents public investment already made in international rail services up to 1993, and taken over by the joint venture. The joint venture would get the benefit of that expenditure, but would not make any repayments or pay any interest until 2010. The House will now recognise that the total sums of public expenditure involved are far greater than the £350 million that has been widely but erroneously reported. In the event of cost overruns, the political reality would be that there would be great pressure on the Government to increase their already substantial contributions. I have therefore informed the parties that the proposals that they have made are unacceptable.

In the light of that, British Rail and Eurorail have agreed that there is not a basis for carrying forward the project in the private sector at this stage. The Government remain very grateful to Eurorail for the considerable effort it has put into the development of the proposals, and for the expertise it has shown. BR has informed me that it will continue to work with Eurorail in the development of international services.

The financial case for a new line will improve as demand for travel grows. I have discussed this with BR's new chairman, and British Rail remains eager to proceed as soon as the project is viable. How soon this will be depends, among other things, on the benefits the new line can bring to commuters.

I have already approved investment of more than £400 million on new rolling stock and improved infrastructure for services on the north Kent lines. British Rail has plans for further rolling stock investments of £300 million to £400 million for the rest of the Kent commuter services. That will radically improve the services from Kent.

If demand continues to grow, even more capacity may eventually be needed and British Rail and Eurorail have shown that a new line could transform the slow commuter services from north and mid-Kent by halving journey times. I am not yet satisfied, however, that they have found the best solution and I am therefore asking British Rail to complete its studies with the aim of maximising the benefits to international passengers and commuters alike.

This further work will concentrate on the options for the route from the North Downs to Waterloo and King's Cross, with its efficient connections to the rest of the country. I have considered carefully the views expressed in the House and elsewhere about alternative routes. On the face of it, they are unlikely to be better financially than the Eurorail proposal or to offer a better deal for commuters.

But the new chairman of British Rail is determined to satisfy himself on that and has commissioned a report by consultants on the proposals for routes to King's Cross via Stratford. There seems to be general agreement that any service will need to terminate at King's Cross. In our view, nothing in this statement invalidates the benefits to British Rail of the House proceeding with the King's Cross Bill.

A major civil engineering project of this kind, through this densely populated part of England, is bound to cause great concern to the people who live there. We owe it to them to minimise the uncertainty and to see that, where they suffer financial loss, there is proper compensation. Between the North Downs and the channel tunnel there is now broad agreement on the right corridor for the new line and considerable effort has been put into designing an environmentally acceptable route.

There will need to be further consultations on the engineering details and a full environmental report will be published. But I am satisfied that it would now be right to safeguard that section of the route by planning directions. I therefore propose to consult British Rail and the local authorities about that. British Rail's compensation scheme will continue to apply to the whole of the route published in September 1989.

I began by confirming our commitment to invest in the infrastructure needed to make sure that we reap the benefits of the channel tunnel when it opens in 1993. I have also explained how we propose to carry forward the work needed to plan for increases in capacity. Some argue for vast and premature expenditure that would not be economically justified. International rail services are certainly of growing importance, but there are many other needs for improvements in transport infrastructure, including better public transport services within Britain, improved motorways, better access to airports and ports and better air traffic control.

The Government's aim is a balanced transport policy which allocates investment where it will bring the greatest benefit. Within that framework, we have approved the largest railway investment programme for over 25 years, the largest underground programme for over 20 years, an increase in the road programme and approaching £2 billion worth of investment in the infrastructure to serve the channel tunnel. I commend these policies to the House.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): Today is a sad and bad day for Britain, for it is the culmination of months of indecision caused by the Government's lack of strategic planning, which means that Britain will enter the 21st century with an inadequate 19th-century railway link. We are to spend about £1 billion of British Rail money over four years, compared with the French, who will spend £1 billion every year for the next 20 years to extend their far superior high-speed rail network. That is the result of the Government's anti-rail, anti-passenger attitude. It will condemn Britain to the economic periphery of Europe and ensure that Britain suffers serious disadvantages in the single market after 1992.

Britain's prestige has been damaged. It will not join Europe's fast developing high-speed rail system this century. The decision represents the worst of all worlds. It perpetuates the continuing worries of planning problems, environmental blight and wasteful congestion in the south-east, while denying the economic advantages for Scotland, Wales and the northern and midland industrial regions. That emphasises the Government's isolation in failing to grasp the strategic importance of high-speed, 200 mph plus, railway systems.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that, despite his and the Prime Minister's fancy fiddling with figures on the

public cost, contested by Eurorail, the Government are expected to provide approximately £400 million out of the total project cost of £3 billion? Is that not in line with the Government's policy of using small amounts of public money to generate far larger private finance and provide transport infrastructure, which is precisely the way the European high-speed rail networks in Europe have been financed?

Does the Secretary of State accept that there has been unnecessary and intolerable delay in the decision to construct the channel tunnel rail link due to the Government's interference—forcing British Rail to seek a private partner, without insisting that the matter be open to tender? Why was it not put to competitive tender, which is exactly what British Rail must now do three years later?

Is it not true that the Prime Minister, because of her fears of the residents of Kent before the 1989 Kent county council elections, rightly promised extensive tunnelling to limit the environmental damage? However, she did not say where the money would come from, thus turning a profitable project into an unprofitable one. By putting her party's electoral concerns before the long-term interests of Britain, the Prime Minister has condemned the people of Kent to another decade of uncertainty and blight.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that the extra £1 billion will not increase the line capacity in the south-east network, where some trains will be restricted to 50 mph in some places, and be paid for by the passengers? Does he believe that an extra 16 million channel tunnel passengers can travel on the existing, most congested, Network SouthEast, and not effect commuter lines?

Will the Secretary of State establish—he should seriously consider this—a committee of experts to examine all the available route options, as I suggested eight months ago? He rejected that then because it would cause delay. Such a committee could review all the technical details and report in about six months, allowing the Government to make a political decision about the route of a future high-speed line.

While such a review was under way, would the Secretary of State reconsider his objection to my proposal to abolish section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987, and take into account the aviation and shipping concerns that were considered at that time—especially as the Government have given nearly £50 million in section 8 grants since 1980 to the rail freight industry, including to its international services, and a subsidy, on the ground of environmental protection. That is exactly the same reason that now demands that public money be provided for the channel tunnel rail link.

Is the Secretary of State aware of the European Commissioner's statement on Monday 4 June that, once there was a demand from the British authorities, the Commission would look "favourably and positively" at a request for financial assistance, such as that given to other countries to help construct channel tunnel rail links? I hope that the Secretary of State will not continue to block the European infrastructure fund, which could assist us in that development.

Does not the Secretary of State accept that the failure to break the ideological logjam preventing the use of public money will mean that the Tory Government will go down in history as the Luddites of Europe for failing to join the technological revolution in high-speed rail travel and for failing to be aware of the need for a transport policy that actively requires Government involvement?

Labour is committed to a high-speed dedicated rail route from the channel tunnel to London, and beyond to Scotland, to relieve congestion on our overburdened roads and in our overcrowded skies, guarantee environmental protection, and give maximum economic advantage and support to British industry to enable it to compete successfully in the European markets of the 21st century.

Mr. Parkinson: I shall deal with the hon. Gentleman's points in the order in which he raised them. He spoke with amazement about the fact that the French Government are planning to invest £1 billion a year in their rail system.

Mr. Prescott: In each of the next 20 years.

Mr. Parkinson: We are planning to spend more than that—£3·7 billion in the next three years, with a continuing programme to follow.

Mr. Prescott: Of what size?

Mr. Parkinson: We are spending more than the French.

The hon. Gentleman keeps repeating the ridiculous canard that the regions will be denied access to freight. If he had listened to the statement instead of repeating, parrot fashion, his prejudices, he would have heard me answer that point. I said that the freight trains are ordered, the depots are being decided, and that there will be through freight services from the regions to meet 70 per cent. of the demand—70 per cent. of the freight capacity of the tunnel. The regions will have the most modern electric freight trains, running at the same speeds as continental trains. Will the hon. Gentleman please stop repeating the nonsense about the regions in some way being at a disadvantage?

The hon. Gentleman clearly was not listening when I spoke about the costs involved. I have seen the directors of Eurorail, and these figures are entirely agreed by them. There is a demand not for £400 million overall, but for a grant of £500 million, a deferred loan that would rank below any other creditors of more than £1 billion, and investment by British Rail of another £400 million. To support the project, Eurorail is asking for £1,900 million. Will the hon. Gentleman please take an arithmetic lesson and start revealing the facts?

The hon. Gentleman's second point was that the Government are delaying the channel tunnel. As he knows, we are getting on with the job of being able to service the tunnel from the day on which is is opened, and huge sums are being invested. There is no shortatge of capacity for freight. The blockage is not due to problems in getting freight to the tunnel; the capacity of the tunnel itself is limited.

I expect the tunnel to be fully used. If it were a port now, its capacity would make it our 12th biggest port. Clearly we cannot direct all our plans towards servicing the tunnel; most freight will not go anywhere near it, but will leave the country by the traditional routes.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East talked about £1 billion of capacity. In his own muddled fashion —I observed that he confused the Leader of the Opposition as well; that is a more difficult job, by which I intend no compliment to the Leader of the Opposition —again mixed up fares with investment. The £1 billion that is being invested in capacity in the south-east comes from British Rail, not the customers.

I have no interest in the hon. Gentleman's committee of available experts——

Mr. Prescott: Twit.

Mr. Parkinson: The hon. Gentleman should stop talking about himself: it is a very bad habit.

I have no interest in the hon. Gentleman's committee of available experts, and nor has the House. These decisions are for Government, who are answerable to Parliament.

The hon. Gentleman referred to section 42. I hope that he has told his friend Sam McCluskie that subsidies will be given to the competitors—to the union that sponsors him. The hon. Gentleman used to argue forcefully for section 42; now he denies it.

The other night we saw the hon. Gentleman's piece de resistance on television. He was explaining to a bemused world that if only Britain sanctioned the European infrastructure fund the freight could be paid for—*[Interruption.]* I have read the transcript. It is there—all £15 billion of it. The infrastructure fund is likely to be £80 million for all the 12 members of the Community. The hon. Gentleman's plans would involve pre-empting that for 175 years, assuming that our Community colleagues were happy to see us subsidising our rail. Like the rest of his ideas, this is half baked, ill thought out and economically illiterate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. So that I can call as many right hon. and hon. Members as possible, I ask for single questions today. If by chance a double question is asked, it would help me greatly if the Secretary of State would answer only one part of it.

Mr. Terence L. Higgins (Worthing): Does my right hon. Friend agree that participation in any joint venture must depend on the terms? To those who listened carefully to what he said this afternoon, it is clear that those terms are far less favourable than has been suggested in the press, and would be unfavourable to the Government in relation to private investors. That being so, does he agree that it is right to examine alternatives—as this plan is obviously not a starter—and, meanwhile, to protect the interests of those affected by possible blight along the route?

Mr. Parkinson: That is precisely what the Government are seeking to do.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East dismisses the £2 billion of taxpayers' investment—which would not get any return until the year 2010, if then—as if it is something that is easily dished out. I happened to talk to his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith)—the shadow Chancellor—who told me that he has only two commitments: on pensions, and on child benefit. We can only assume that the hon. Gentleman's plans are pie in the sky.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): Is the Secretary of State aware that many people in the north-west are under the impression that the channel tunnel is something for the south-east, and that the south-east will benefit? Is he further aware that, if freight is to use the channel tunnel, we must ensure that there are proper facilities in the Greater Manchester area, part of which I have the privilege to represent? We have been waiting for a decision for nearly a year about the depot in Guide Bridge, in my constituency.

Mr. Parkinson: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his remarks. Yes, I recognise the importance of through services to the regions. As I said in my statement, we plan to have 3 million seats a year from the regions going through the tunnel. In addition, we plan that 70 per cent. of the freight which goes through the tunnel will come from the regions. The trains are ordered, and the equipment is ordered. They will be fast electric trains—one of the most modern type of freight train in the world. I recognise the need for British Rail to make a decision about the location of its cargo depots, and I shall press it again on that matter.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid Kent): Given that my right hon. Friend has warmly welcomed concern for the densely populated parts of Kent, which will be affected by the British Rail route, will he accept how grateful we are to learn that alternatives, such as that which would affect six houses only between Ashford and the Kent boundary, are to be properly and fully assessed? Can he set our minds at rest by stating that, when he says that the existing route in Kent is to be safeguarded, that is not pre-empting the chairman's study of the alternatives?

Mr. Parkinson: I can confirm that it is not pre-empting that study, but is a means of ensuring that compensation is available to help the people who are directly threatened, or who feel threatened. It does not rule out consideration of the alternatives.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Will the Secretary of State now tell us the Government's policy on when there will be a high-speed rail link to reach all over the country from the entrance to the channel tunnel, and when people in London and the south-east will be relieved of the congestion, which will increasingly choke roads and railways, as a result of the announcement that he has made this afternoon?

Mr. Parkinson: Peak periods are the problem for Network SouthEast. There is plenty of capacity off-peak, which is why freight does not represent a problem, and why the search is for extra passenger capacity. Another misunderstanding is that people feel that, because we are not going ahead immediately with the link, they will have to change trains and come to London to get to the tunnel. Services from the regions will go direct, bypassing London. If one wants to go to France and go through Paris to somewhere else, one will have to change trains there. There will be direct links from the tunnel to all the regions of Britain, and that will not be the case in France, which disappoints people.

I saw the amusing cartoon by Jak yesterday, showing the TGV pulling up and a tram waiting for it. The trains are in an identical pool, which will be owned jointly by all the railway companies. The trains which leave Paris will be the trains which arrive in Edinburgh, and vice versa.

Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge and Malling): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his announcement today has profound implications for those people with homes close to existing routes to London from the channel tunnel? Is he also aware that those people face totally inadequate provisions in the noise insulation and compensation arrangements? Will he carry out a fresh examination of their position, because as a result of this announcement, for the foreseeable future, they will have the full weight of freight and passenger rail traffic going past their homes?

Mr. Parkinson: I recognise that that is a problem, and I am sure that my right hon. Friend recognises that what he is suggesting has huge implications, because it is a long-established principle that if traffic increases on existing roads and railways there is no entitlement to compensation. If a road is widened—as we are proposing to do to many motorways—it is effectively a new road and it is treated as such. I realise that what my hon. Friend says poses a real problem, and, without making promises, I will consider it carefully.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): Is the Secretary of State aware that his announcement today will be greeted with great dismay in the east midlands and many other regions of England, Wales and Scotland? In Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Loughborough and all the other towns and cities along the east midlands main line, people are waiting desperately for electrification of the line. Does it not show the Government's lack of ambition, when the Spanish are tearing up their lines and replacing the whole gauge, the Germans are putting in two more north-south lines and the French are electrifying every last chicken shack in France? However, we are not prepared to invest in a high-speed rail link through London which would benefit the regions. Is not the reason that he is doing that to save money for the general election kitty rather than ensuring that we are all in a position to contribute to ending our trade problems with our continental competitors?

Mr. Parkinson: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman was asking a serious question, and I am tempted not to give him an answer. There is no reason for dismay. The regions will be well served to the tunnel from the day that it opens. We are talking about creating capacity that will be needed at the turn of the century and later, so the announcement today should do nothing to dismay those people who take a real interest, unless they are like the hon. Gentleman, who is professionally dismayed.

Mr. Gerald Bowden (Dulwich): I thank my right hon. Friend for his statement, for two reasons. First, it closes the door on British Rail's ill-conceived and extravagant proposals; and, secondly, it opens the door for consideration of alternatives which offer an economically viable, operationally effective and environmentally acceptable route. Will my right hon. Friend therefore urge all concerned to proceed with all speed to consider the alternatives, because until a firm route is defined blight and anxiety will hang over many communities?

Mr. Parkinson: As far as we have been able to do so, we have attempted to minimise those problems, and that is why I announced that the compensation scheme will remain in existence for the 1989 declared line. I have little to add to what I said in my statement. I thank my hon. Friend for what he said. Alternative routes are being seriously considered.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): Will the Secretary of State accept that this is a very important matter, not only for the south-east but for the north of England as a whole? Does he appreciate that a high-speed passenger line across Kent will improve journey times to the north and provide increased capacity for fast through international trains, thus reducing congestion on passenger and freight trains alike? Will he now urgently meet the North of England Regional Consortium to discuss the question of the channel tunnel and the needs of the north?

Mr. Parkinson: I am a northerner myself, and I am aware of what the hon. Gentleman has said. I repeat what I said earlier in my statement. There will be scope for 3 million passengers to travel from the regions to the tunnel, which is the capacity which will be created when the tunnel is opened. The freight service will be second to none. Freight trains are ordered. I think that I broke some news to the hon. Gentleman the other day when I told him that the TGV was not a freight train, as he has visions of 10,000 tonnes of steel hurtling round France at 300 mph, which would be not a train but a missile at that speed. There is a speed limit on freight train speeds, but in this country they move faster and the limit is higher than in most other countries. We will have modern equipment travelling at comparable speeds, and there is plenty of capacity.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the mercy killing of British Rail's white elephant, and for rejecting the bull-at-a-gate approach of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott). As my right hon. Friend has assured me that services for passengers and freight by rail from the channel tunnel will cope with demand for many years ahead, I commend the consultants' study, which considers the alternatives in detail. Can he assure us in Kent that protection of our environment will be given the highest priority? Will he ensure that the access across the north downs to the west will not be fixed so that there will be flexibility about the point where any route, if it were necessary, should pass across the downs?

Mr. Parkinson: The Eurorail proposal suggested that there should be some modifications at that point. That, together with the other alternatives, will be considered. Our determination to protect the environment has led to an enormous increase in the cost of the line. I discussed the relative costs a couple of weeks ago with my French colleague. The French drive their railway lines through open country. There is not a single tunnel or cutting on the whole of the line from Lyons to Paris. We, however, have to take the vast proportion of the line in tunnel from Folkestone to London. We have difficult problems to overcome. We recognise that there are special problems in Kent, and we must protect the environment.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): The Secretary of State said that there is general agreement that the line should terminate at King's Cross. That is not the case. Those of us who live in the north-west expect to be able to move our freight around London at speed, but there is no evidence that that will happen. We also expect the Secretary of State to encourage British Rail to establish a minimum of two freight depots in the north-west; otherwise, the region will find it difficult to compete with European firms.

Mr. Parkinson: I recognise that the hon. Lady's concern is genuine, but it is ill founded. The proposals are not pipedreams of the kind we heard about from her hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott). Orders have been placed and trains and rolling stock have been designed to allow for the fact that our tunnels are smaller than theirs, which means that we need lower bogies. All that work is in hand to ensure that the

[Mr. Parkinson]

regions, from which we expect 70 per cent. of the freight to come, have a good service with modern trains running at comparable speeds to those on the continent.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Bearing in mind that Bristol is nearer to Dover than it is to Penzance, does my right hon. Friend's welcome assurance that there will be electrified through services from the regions mean that they will operate to the centre of the south-west region, which is between Exeter and Plymouth? By not going to Bristol, which is only spuriously considered to be in the south-west, I hope that my right hon. Friend does not imagine that that will satisfy people?

Mr. Parkinson: My hon. Friend knows that there are special problems in the south-west. Arrangements, however, are being made for both passengers and freight, from the south-west and also from Wales, which I hope will prove satisfactory.

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): The Secretary of State is hardly covering himself with glory in the way that he is arranging for a high-speed link. We are not surprised that the first set of proposals has fallen down. It provides the Secretary of State with a wonderful opportunity to look at the other better and cheaper proposals that are available which go through Stratford. Can the Secretary of State assure us that he will give careful consideration to those proposals? Instead of getting complaints from his Back Benchers, if he comes to Stratford the local authority will welcome him with open arms.

Mr. Parkinson: I made it clear in my statement that those alternatives are being considered. However, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has noticed that even the Ove Arup proposal is being modified to go through from Stratford to King's Cross, since most people recognise that King's Cross is a vital hub.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): I congratulate my right hon. Friend, who seems to have got it absolutely right from the point of view of the Dover constituency. Will he confirm my understanding that the improvements to the A2 and A20 that have been announced will take place, that the commuter services to Dover and other parts of Kent will be improved as a result of the announcement, and that the money will continue to be spent on them? Will he also confirm my understanding that section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 will be preserved and that the jobs of ferry workers in Dover will therefore be safe and secure? Can my right hon. Friend explain why the Opposition want to do away with——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has already asked three questions.

Mr. Parkinson: Yes, we are going ahead with the improvements to the roads to which he referred and which we have announced. We shall be investing substantial sums in roads. Half the capacity of the tunnel is designed to carry vehicles. The shuttles that will carry vehicles will take half the capacity; the other half will be shared between passengers and freight. That is why there is a limit on the amount of freight that can go through the tunnel. I certainly hope and expect that the tunnel will be fully used, but the limitation is the size of the tunnel—not the problem of getting freight to the tunnel.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Bluster and abuse will not cover the Secretary of State's acute embarrassment this afternoon. I warned the then Secretary of State for Transport at a meeting in his room on 19 December 1988 that, unless the Government took political action and a hand in the way the whole matter was being considered, they would eventually be put in an embarrassing position. Will the Secretary of State give an absolute assurance that, when British Rail looks at the options, it will consider not only the Ove Arup route but also the Bechtel route? I hope that it will not do what it did on the last occasion and just take a cursory glance at the options. I hope that it will carry out a proper examination of the options and that it will not carry out any developments at Stratford that would shut out any of the other options.

Mr. Parkinson: During the course of his remarks the hon. Gentleman was rather more agitated than I am. I made it clear in my statement that we think that the other routes are likely to be even less viable, but the new chairman wants to be totally satisfied. That is why he has commissioned independent consultants to look at all the proposals, so on this occasion I can give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that he seeks.

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his statement poses more questions than it provides answers? I refer to the point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) that there will be a massive intensification of passenger and freight traffic Folkestone-Ashford-Maidstone-London and Folkestone-Ashford-Tonbridge-London. Unless we change the primary legislation, the Land Compensation Act 1973, there will be no compensation and no environmental protection for the millions of people who live alongside those two routes. If there were to be such a change, massive public expenditure would be involved to protect them. My right hon. Friend is condemning many of my constituents, and others, on the routes between Kent and London to great disturbance over the next 10 or more years.

Mr. Parkinson: My right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) and my hon. Friend know that the proposal that we are discussing today is about passengers; the Eurorail proposal was about passengers. The freight arrangements are unchanged as a result of my announcement. I know that the Network SouthEast lines will be more busy. Freight capacity is there, but there will be a shortage of passenger capacity. I note what my hon. Friend said about blight. We have done our best to minimise blight. I shall take note of the need to consider compensation, but I make no promise.

Miss Kate Hoey (Vauxhall): The Secretary of State has created even more concern and confusion about what was already a muddled situation. Where does he propose the railway line should go around London? Just where exactly are these tracks around London? If there are alternatives, why is there any need for the huge monstrosity of a

terminal that is being built at Waterloo which the people of Waterloo do not want and which is unnecessary if the new route is to serve all regions?

Mr. Parkinson: The hon. Lady is adopting a very blinkered view. The channel tunnel is to open in 1993. A fast link would not be available before 1998 at the earliest —probably not before the turn of the century. Waterloo will therefore be the main London terminal for the foreseeable future. That is why the redevelopment of Waterloo is under way.

Sir David Mitchell (Hampshire, North-West): Will my right hon. Friend undertake regularly to re-evaluate the position as more concrete evidence becomes available as to the potential revenue to be earned by British Rail from the operation of the high-speed link?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes, we shall. British Rail expects the case for the line to become stronger as demand develops. It will be kept under constant review.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Does the Secretary of State accept that there will be widespread anger in Newcastle tonight because our hopes for King's Cross will have been smashed for the foreseeable future? Have the special passenger trains that will be necessary to take trains from the channel tunnel round London and up the east coast main line been ordered? When will they have something better to use than a chain of Victorian branch lines round London not fit for Thomas the Tank Engine?

Mr. Parkinson: I shall leave on the board for the hon. Gentleman this book about the trains which have been developed—and are ordered—by Belgium, France and Britain. There will be a pool of jointly owned rolling stock, and identical trains will run between Brussels, Paris and the regions of Britain—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) sits there wittering away with her ill-informed colleagues, but it is a fact that there will be a pool of commonly owned trains that will be used for the through services.

Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his confirmation that the Kings Cross Railways Bill, of which I am the sponsor, is still needed and is unaffected by his statement. Does he understand that some Conservative Members are disappointed by his statement this afternoon because an opportunity to get the full benefit of our membership of the EC may not be lost? My right hon. Friend said in his statement that the railway investments that are going ahead will cater for demand in 1993 and for several years thereafter. Just how long will the existing capacity be able to cope?

Mr. Parkinson: I am sorry that my hon. Friend is disappointed. The existing freight capacity can cope indefinitely, but the passenger capacity will run out at about the turn of the century and additional capacity will be needed. I do not see that anything that I have said today will deny anybody the full benefit of anything. Channel tunnel rail services will be available for freight and will be fully utilised. All the regions will have access to the tunnel, with the most modern freight trains moving at comparable speeds. I do not see where the loss of benefit will occur.

Mr. John P. Smith (Vale of Glamorgan): Is the Secretary of State aware that the Welsh CBI has expressed total dismay at his decision? It is participating in a European business initiative this very week in Cardiff. In light of the disastrous consequences of his statement for the British transport network, does the Secretary of State intend to resign?

Mr. Parkinson: No; but I would not mind spending five minutes with the hon. Gentleman explaining why he is wrong.

Mr. Bob Dunn (Dartford): Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that evaluation of the options leading to Stratford will be carried out in a way that is both realistic and proper and not in a way that suggests tokenism? Will he further confirm that those who live in north-west Kent near the route announced in September 1989 will continue to qualify for support under the compensation arrangements announced at that time?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes, I am happy to confirm that my hon. Friend's constituents will remain fully entitled to compensation. The new chairman of British Rail is extremely anxious to settle the right route. He is taking seriously the report of his independent consultants.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The Secretary of State has made numerous references to the regions. Presumably he was referring to the regions of England. Why is he so contemptuously indifferent to the needs and interests of Scotland? When will he show some concern and commitment to an electrified high-speed link between Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and points south of the border?

Mr. Parkinson: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the electrification will continue to Edinburgh, and after that there is a discussion as to whether is would be justified to electrify as far as Aberdeen. That consultation is continuing. Many people consider that it would not be economically justified, but, as I have made clear on a number of occasions, if British Rail came to me with proposals, I would consider them very carefully.

Mr. Roger Moate (Faversham): My right hon. Friend has taken a decision that was incredibly difficult but courageous and correct. Does he accept that one of the principal arguments in favour of the high-speed link was the need to get freight off the roads, but the high-speed link did nothing of the sort, even at the proposed cost of £2 billion in public funds? Does he also accept that some Conservative Members would gladly accept more public financial support for rail investment so long as it formed part of a proper national rail freight and passenger strategy? That is why we welcome the commitment to study the alternatives available to British Rail.

Mr. Parkinson: I thank my hon. Friend for his support.

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): If I heard the Secretary of State aright, he said that he was born in the north. I assure him that after this afternoon his credentials have been withdrawn. It seems to me that there is no other city in Europe of equivalent size to Sheffield which has so little rail investment, so little planning for the single European market and so few prospects for getting a decent integrated service with Europe. Will the Secretary of State comment on that?

Mr. Parkinson: I never had any credentials as a Yorkshireman. I am a Lancastrian and proud of it, so it does not worry me at all that the hon. Gentleman has

[Mr. Parkinson]

withdrawn my northern credentials. A number of us think that Sheffield has suffered for quite a long time for reasons which have nothing to do with the national Government and everything to do with its appalling local government.

Mr. Mark Wolfson (Sevenoaks): Will my right hon. Friend undertake to convey directly to the chairman of British Rail the very strong views expressed in the House this afternoon welcoming the commitment to investigate the alternatives to the Stratford-King's Cross entry? Despite his rather unenthusiastic view of those alternatives, does he agree that they could offer a positive approach to taking freight round London rather than through it?

Mr. Parkinson: It could be the launch pad for the development of a hugely expensive national freight network, but I consider that the pressure is on passenger capacity. That is British Rail's overriding consideration. As I have said already, British Rail is examining carefully all the proposals. The new chairman wants to be satisfied that what has been put to him is the best route, but he is totally open-minded and is considering the alternatives.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that in his statement today he has extended even further the feeling of uncertainty among people in my constituency and throughout south-east London as to whether, when and where extra lines are likely to be placed? Meanwhile, if he assures us that the existing lines have the capacity to deal with freight and passenger traffic, does that not mean that those existing lines will be very much more heavily used and our constituents will suffer greatly from that heavy use? The fact that there may be no legal obligation for them to be compensated or for environmental protection to be provided does not mean that there is no moral duty on British Rail. Will he emphasise that point as strongly as possible?

Mr. Parkinson: Although the lines will be more heavily used, we have, in Network SouthEast, a network that is designed to deal with massive flows of people for relatively short periods each day. Between those peaks, there is quite substantial capacity available. The real problem for passengers is in the rush hours and freight does not need to use the rails at that time, as I explained. The lines will be more heavily used, but there is a great deal of scope for them to be more heavily used without them becoming overloaded.

In the meantime, I note what my hon. Friend has said. He knows the difficulties. Every road in this country is now carrying more traffic than it was 10 years ago because we have 5 million more cars. My hon. Friend is asking me to breach an enormous principle, which would affect not only railways, but all our roads—all of which are busier. It is not an easy subject on which to come to a quick decision. However, I note what my hon. Friend says.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Will the Secretary of State clarify one of his earlier—and confusing—answers? When does he expect through trains from Paris to Newcastle to be operating and at what speeds? How can he tell us that he is looking forward to an examination of all the options when the Bill was passed by his Government in their previous term of office, before I was a Member of Parliament? Are the Government trying to tell us today that not all the options were considered before the Secretary of State talked to Eurorail?

Mr. Parkinson: Section 42 was included in the Channel Tunnel Act to ensure that no subsidised line would be built. What is more, my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), the then Secretary of State for Transport, did not work and Eurotunnel did not issue its prospectus on the basis that there would be a fast link. The fast link began to be discussed after the Channel Tunnel Bill was passed. I have already mentioned in my statement that eight consortia came forward with different proposals last year.

After careful consideration, British Rail settled on Eurorail and investigated the route about which I have talked today. As that route needs far greater Government support than originally expected—and the consortium originally said that it expected to come forward with a viable proposition—we have been forced to turn down that proposal. There is no question of incompetence and the House has been kept informed at all stages. Perhaps the hon. Lady should read some of the past debates.

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): As my right hon. Friend has already recognised that most freight from the channel tunnel will be going to the midlands, to the north and to Scotland, will he also recognise that it is daft to try to move all that freight over already congested rail lines running through south and west London? Will he require British Rail to produce plans for improving the Ashford-Redhill link to move that freight round London?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes, British Rail will look at the question of improving that link.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): How much has this embarrassing muddle cost British Rail so far? What is my right hon. Friend doing to tap European financial resources that have been offered? Is not the reality that, when the dust settles, the problem will go on stewing and that the United Kingdom European region will be at a disadvantage for even longer?

Mr. Parkinson: I hope that my hon. Friend will read my statement. We shall be offering a through service from the regions to Paris when the French will not be able to offer a through service from their regions to London. All passengers to the French regions will need to change in Paris initially. We shall have through services from the time that the tunnel opens. There will be 3 million seats a year—a substantial number.

I did not answer one of the questions of the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong). There will be a through service on the east coast main line from 1993.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): May I reiterate the views of hon. Members who have stressed that what will disappoint Kent people most about my right hon. Friend's announcement this afternoon is the fact that it prolongs the uncertainty? If the chairman of British Rail is to do a thorough job of looking at the alternative routes, he must also do a speedy job so that, once and for all, we can have a protected route which is the only route and so that there will be no further uncertainty. Will the chairman of British Rail be looking only at the options that have come up so

far—that is, the Ove Arup route and the Thames alternative link international system or TALIS route—or are there further routes at which the consultants will look?

Mr. Parkinson: To avoid uncertainty, I have confirmed today that the compensation arrangements on the September 1989 proposals will be maintained. That means that the only people who are threatened by any decision have the right to compensation. That applies from Folkestone to Kings Cross. The chairman of British Rail wants, of course, to end the uncertainty as quickly as possible. Equally, he wants to take a good look at the options before he comes to a decision.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the speed of freight travelling from the midlands, from the north and from Scotland to the tunnel mouth will be comparable to that on the continent? Does he agree that it is at best bizarre for the Opposition to suggest that today's announcement is to the disadvantage of the rest of the country? Does he agree that the Opposition's attitude is more likely to be downright dishonest?

Mr. Parkinson: I do not know what the Opposition's motives are, although I have my own opinions. I can confirm, as I have done already, that British freight will be drawn by the most modern rolling stock, from modern depots and at comparable speeds to those on the continent to the mouth of the tunnel.

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): My right hon. Friend has made several comments, which sounded slightly worrying to me, about the passenger capacity of the services. Will he give an absolute guarantee that my constituents and other commuters will be able to find a seat on the services that are running and will not be travelling on overcrowded trains?

Mr. Parkinson: My hon. Friend has underlined an important point—that too much of our discussion about transport is centred around the channel tunnel and the channel tunnel link—*[Interruption.]* Many people who will never use either want a decent service in their own areas and that is why, unlike the Opposition, we are not obsessed with the tunnel. We recognise its significance and the need to improve other parts of the network. That is why Network SouthEast alone will invest £1,200 million over the next three years in improving the lot of the commuter.

Mrs. Ann Winterton (Congleton): My right hon. Friend has said that he is aware of the vital importance of the channel tunnel to the regions, especially the north-west, and of the necessity for further rail investment not only for passenger travel, but for freight to enable the fast, efficient export of manufactured goods from the north of England to their continental destinations. Does he agree that such investment would be economically and environmentally justified?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes, I do. It is important that the north-west, including the area that my hon. Friend represents, has fair access to the tunnel. It is also important that it has a good road network, good access to the ports, good access to the airports and better airports. In other words, we need to improve our whole infrastructure, and that is what is happening under this Government, with record programmes in every area—in rail, in the underground, in roads and in air traffic control. I am glad that my hon. Friend has given me the opportunity to confirm that that the Government are determined that the north-west will have access to a full range of good transport facilities.

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): Notwithstanding the high-speed ranting of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), can my right hon. Friend confirm that we are talking about the postponement, rather than the cancellation, of the fast rail link and that it is now for British Rail to go away, do a great deal more thinking, and come up with a more acceptable scheme?

Mr. Parkinson: That is absolutely right. Unlike the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), who studies nothing and knows everything, British Rail recognises that this is a complicated problem and deserves careful consideration, which is precisely what British Rail is giving it.

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): My right hon. Friend is, of course, aware that two of the alternatives, which will no doubt be looked at in the report to be commissioned by the chairman of British Rail, would involve routes through my constituency. May I ask my right hon. Friend two questions?

Mr. Speaker: No—one question, please.

Mr. Janman: Does my right hon. Friend feel that either the Ove Arup or the TALIS alternative would provide better through links to the north than the Eurorail proposal? Can he assure the House——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I asked for one question, and the time is getting on.

Mr. Parkinson: The Ove Arup scheme is completely different in concept. As my hon. Friend knows, it deals with both freight and passengers. If we were to benefit from it, it would need to act as a launching pad for a very expensive nationwide scheme costing about £10 billion to £15 billion—hardly the sort of money that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East would get from that £80 million a year European infrastructure fund.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): So far, our questions have been dominated by hon. Members representing constituencies in London and Kent, who are rightly concerned about the local environment. Does my right hon. Friend agree that taxpayers in general would conclude that it would be at best most unwise to favour one part of the transport infrastructure by throwing £2 billion into what could prove, literally, to be a bottomless pit, by tunnelling through some of the most difficult geological conditions in the world, just to cut half an hour off the journey time between London and Paris?

Mr. Parkinson: I thank my hon. Friend for bringing a note of common sense and realism into the discussion and pointing out that we cannot lay all Britain's future transport needs at the door of the tunnel. We need to improve the whole of our infrastructure, and the Government are getting on with doing just that.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Does the Secretary of State accept that Opposition Members believe that what is needed is a new rail link that will benefit the whole of the United Kingdom, and that, to that end, we

[Mr. Peter Snape]

shall continue to consult the civil engineering industry and other railway technical experts? *[Interruption.]* The Secretary of State may snigger, but I am being serious. Despite the right hon. Gentleman's earlier cavalier dismissal of what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), will he undertake to consider any proposals that we relay to him about the feasibility of such a rail link?

What, in his opinion, will be the impact of today's decision on road traffic in Kent and particularly in constituencies such as Dover, Dulwich and Dartford? Will he take it from me that the bluster that typified his statement this afternoon will not alter the fact that the announcement is a grievous blow to Britain's economy and that it will condemn British Rail, and particularly commuters in the south of England, to a crowded and uncertain future?

Will he accept that we will give him every assistance in repealing section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 if that is what he thinks is holding up proper investment in rail links to and from the Channel ports?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that his statement today has united the CBI, the Institute of Directors, chambers of commerce throughout the United Kingdom, local and regional authorities of all political persuasions, the technical and rail press, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, all of which have condemned his latest defeat as a dream that has come off the rails. Will he take it from me that the decision today is not only a blow for Britain but could prove to be the end of his already faltering career?

Mr. Parkinson: It is better to be a has-been than a never-was.

The hon. Gentleman talked about road traffic. I am sure that he is aware that the tunnel is designed so that half the capacity can be used by the shuttle to move road traffic. That is why this Government and the French Government are spending approximately the same amount—£600 million—in providing road access. My announcement today will make no difference at all to congestion. Freight will travel as I have explained and by the routes that I have outlined, and it will travel in the quantities in which it would have travelled had I not made my announcement today. The limitation on the movement of freight will be the capacity not of railway lines but of the tunnel. There will be road traffic. That is why we are spending a lot of money, and that is why Eurotunnel is to allocate half the capacity of the tunnel to road. It is a surprise only to the hon. Gentleman—it is not a surprise to anyone else—that there will be an increase in traffic and that roads will be improved.

I do not accept that what I have announced today is a grievous blow to anybody. When the CBI reads my statement, instead of listening——

Mr. Prescott: Listening to me?

Mr. Parkinson: No. The CBI was probably listening to those who were pushing out stuff saying that, for only £400 million, we could have an amazing all-singing, all-dancing all-purpose link. The sum was never going to be £400 million. When the CBI reads my statement and sees the facts, it may want to modify its views.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned commuters. I have pointed out to him that, in addition to the fast link, in Kent alone we shall be investing nearly £800 million in improving commuter services. To give an example, the north Kent line will have its entire rolling stock replaced and 63 stations lengthened to take 12-coach trains, and new signalling and maintenance systems will be installed. The south Kent lines will get a further £300 million to £400 million to be invested in new rolling stock. While the hon. Gentleman squeals about his concern for commuters, the Government are as usual getting on with making arrangements to make their lives better.

I am answerable to the bodies that the hon. Gentleman mentioned; I am answerable to the House. The Government's transport policies are sensible and balanced and will give Britain a modern infrastructure in the 1990s.

Optical Factory (Kidwelly)

5.27 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The shock closure yesterday of a factory owned by United Kingdom Optical Ltd. in the town of Kidwelly in my constituency with the loss of 200 jobs."

The factory is probably the largest manufacturer of lenses for spectacles in the United Kingdom.

The matter is important because the economic and social consequences will be devastating for the small town of Kidwelly and the surrounding villages. The lost production will almost certainly be taken up by imports, thus making the United Kingdom's horrendous balance of payments deficit even worse. It is also important because the company has publicly stated that one of the reasons for the closure is that sales of lenses for spectacles have fallen by 30 per cent. as a result of the Government's imposition of charges for eye testing. That is directly contrary to the recent assertion by the Secretary of State for Health that there has been no reduction in demand. Clearly, the market knows more than the Minister.

For those reasons, I respectfully ask you, Mr. Speaker, to consider that the closure of the factory is a matter for urgent debate.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The closure of United Kingdom Optical Ltd. with a loss of approximately 20 jobs."

I listened with care to what the right hon. Gentleman said. As he knows, the difficult decision that I have to make in these matters is whether his application should have precedence over the business set down for today or for Monday.

I regret that the matter that the hon. Gentleman has raised does not meet the criteria laid down in the Standing Order and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Estimates Day

[2ND ALLOTTED DAY]

ESTIMATES, 1990-91

Class VI, Vote 1

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

TRAINING

[Relevant documents: Third Report from the Employment Committee of Session 1989-90 on Employment Training (House of Commons Paper No. 427) and the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee on 2nd May 1990 (House of Commons Paper No. 394-i), so far as they relate to training]

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a further sum, not exceeding £1,286,770,000 be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1991 for expenditure by the Department of Employment on improving, promoting and disseminating training among individuals, small firms and employers, encouraging enterprise, running services for small firms and the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, providing training programmes for young people and adults, providing employment rehabilitation services, technical and vocational education, work-related further education and the costs of the Skills Training Agency until privatisation, on the administration of training and enterprise, and central and miscellaneous services.—*[Mr. Eggar.]*

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer). A large number of hon. Members want to take part in this debate which lasts for three houses. I ask hon. Members who want to speak to make brief contributions because if we can start the second debate within the three hours, that would benefit the House.

5.29 pm

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): I am pleased to introduce this debate on the Department of Employment's estimates. It will enable the House to debate training and the Government's policy and record in that regard. I am also pleased to see the previous Secretary of State for Employment, the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler) in the Chamber today.

If we follow where Government money goes—or does not go—we can follow where policy is going. I must emphasise that I am giving a personal view and no doubt other members of the Employment Select Committee, if they are fortunate to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, will do the same. The hallmark of our times is the rapid and constant advance of new technology and product innovation. If our industries cannot innovate and deliver the new products, the orders will be lost to suppliers abroad. Not only overseas customers but our own domestic market will be supplied from abroad.

We live in an ever more competitive world market. Any country, any industry or any company that does not keep abreast of the development of technology will lose out and be overtaken. Much of the new technology can be transferred. State of the art equipment can be brought in. However, the question is: does the work force then have the skills and ability to use and exploit it to the best advantage? If technology can be transferred, countries and companies will compete on the skills of their work forces.

[Mr. Ron Leighton]

The successful countries and successful companies are invariably those with the best training programmes and the best trained work forces. They understand that it is as important to invest in people—perhaps even more so—as in the fixed assets of plants and machinery. The most important resource, the one in which systematic investment yields increasing returns, is people or human capital.

A number of countries have based their success on understanding that truth. The industrial revolution occurred in Britain first and, as a result, Britain then led the world. Other countries, like Germany, adopted conscious policies to catch up with Britain. They did that and surpassed us. Germany now has the renowned dual training system which gives a thorough, first-class grounding of vocational training. In Japan and the United States, participation by 16 and 17-year-olds in full-time education is almost universal. In France, the United States and Japan the education system is the important source of job skills at craft level. That leads to a greater share of the costs of initial training being borne by the Government. The newly industrialised countries of the Pacific rim all now have impressive systems of education and training.

What is the position in Britain? Last year, the Government's Training Agency published the document "Training in Britain". That was the most detailed and authoritative study of training ever undertaken in Britain. What did it tell us? It revealed nothing for our comfort. The picture was startling and bleak. Two thirds of economically active 19 to 59-year-olds said that they had not had any training in the last three years. Over half of economically active adults with no prior qualifications said that they had not received any training since leaving school.

Employers reported that about half of their work forces had received no training during the year. Systematic approaches to training were found to be the exception. No fewer than 42 per cent. and roughly half of those over 35, said that they could not imagine any circumstances leading them to undertake any education or training. Even those who said that they could imagine themselves training, had done little about it, often through lack of funding and time and were waiting for others to take the initiative.

As for young people, the report showed that only around one third of all 16 and 17-year-olds were in full-time education. There had been a dramatic decline in the number of apprenticeships and very few 16 or 17-year-olds entering jobs, outside the youth training scheme, receive any substantial training.

At a time when rapidly changing technology increases the demand for people with high levels of skill and reduces the demand for unskilled manual labour, when increasingly fierce international competition raises the importance of training if we are to achieve a satisfactory economic performance and when there is a premium on a more flexible and competent work force at all levels, how are we to describe the abysmal situation revealed by the Training Agency's study?

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Leighton: I prefer not to give way at the moment, because I have been asked to be brief.

The description given by the previous Secretary of State for Employment, the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield whom we are extremely pleased to see in the Chamber this afternoon and to whom the Training Agency's report was presented, was that the position was "mind-boggling". The right hon. Gentleman actually issued a press notice on 16 November headed "Mind boggling". For the benefit of Employment Ministers who often make complacent statements pretending that all is well, I should point out that the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield did not mean mind-bogglingly good, he meant mind-bogglingly bad.

So what is to be done about that? We all know the facts and they have been analysed to death. We need action. We get lots of governmental lip service to training, but where are the resources? Are the Government going to put their money where their rhetoric is? The estimates show that that is not the case.

The Government's expenditure plans 1990-91 to 1992-93 are grouped under the heading

"Skills and competence for work"

in table 6.3 of Cm 1006. If we analyse and compare expenditure with previous and future years we can take an index figure of 100 for the estimated outturn for the year 1989-90. In real terms, the figure for 1987-88 was 122. Therefore, two years ago we were spending 22 per cent. more. In 1992-93 it is planned to be only 73. Therefore in two years' time we shall be spending a further quarter less. The cash for training has been falling and is planned to fall further. Even since last year's White Paper, the cash for 1990-91 and for 1991-92 has been cut in real terms by 18 and 21 per cent. respectively. That is a measure of the cuts in planned expenditure on training which the Treasury obtained from Ministers in last autumn's spending round.

Mr. Janman: Will the hon. Gentleman give way now?

Mr. Leighton: No, I am sorry. I do not have time. [HON. MEMBERS: "Give way."] Well, if hon. Members want me to give way, and take up more time, I will.

Mr. Janman: The hon. Gentleman has referred to the amount of money that is being spent. Does he accept that how much is spent is important, but so too is how well it is targeted? Does he also agree that the Government's new initiative of training credits will do much to achieve the right balance between what is being spent and ensuring that it is spent in the right place, on the right person being trained in the right way?

Mr. Leighton: I have a great deal of affection for the hon. Gentleman, but he has a bad habit of interrupting every speech that I make in the House. If he had had a little more patience he would have found that I was about to come to his point.

As I was saying, those cuts were a major victory for the Treasury, but a defeat for the nation's training needs. I hope that no one will try to pretend that those cuts in expenditure are justified by the fall in numbers. For example, employment training reaches only a fraction of the client group. Over the next three years, cash for youth training will fall by nearly half in real terms, but the numbers will fall by only a quarter. Real expenditure per trainee will fall from £50 to £33. Quality is likely to go down, not up.

Of course we want to see employers spending more. However, is it right to say that we shall spend less? Is that the right signal to send out? For demographic reasons there will be fewer school leavers. As employers compete for them, there will be less youth unemployment. Does

that mean that the Government should spend less per person per unit on youth training? That lends credence to those who say that YTS was just a cosmetic and a means to disguise unemployment and that the Government will now pull out and wash their hands of the matter.

The Minister was good enough to go along to the launch of the London East training and enterprise council. He knows that some people complained of their difficulties with YT. He said that the guarantee would still be given. I must tell the Minister that I received a telephone call today from Mr. Ernest Large, the chairman of the east London managing agents network, who told me about a meeting this week in east London of more than two dozen managing agents to discuss what he called the crisis in YT. He told me that, last year, they got £39·03 a week for each trainee and that they had received that sum for the past four years. Not having been inflation-proof, in real terms that sum had gone down. It has now been cut to £32, and that has brought about a crisis that will lead to lower quality.

Mr. Large told me that college fees had gone up three times in the past two years as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988, meaning that full costs are charged. The managing agents are angry and demoralised. They told me that their hard work made the scheme a success for which the Government took the credit. Now they say that they are being kicked in the teeth and that the guarantee cannot now be delivered. Today Mr. Large sent 12 letters to potential trainees, telling them that he cannot offer them places. Mr. Large's address is suite J, Roycraft house, 15 Linton road, Barking IG11 8HG. That is the position in east London as told to me by the people who are operating on the ground today.

Employment training was launched amid much hype, which we seem to hear rather less of at the moment. The fall in numbers cannot be convincingly argued, as the programme reaches only about two thirds of its original target number. Even if the programme had reached the original number, it would have reached only a fraction of the client group. The Select Committee on Employment has monitored the programmes since its inception, when it replaced the new job training scheme. JTS was also supposed to provide training that was tailored to individual needs, but it was plagued by drop-outs from the scheme.

In a previous report the Committee revealed that, in 1987-88, JTS had used only £64 million of its £215 million provision. That was a disappointment on a heroic scale. We took evidence from the Training Agency and asked what lessons it had learnt from that failure, and it told us that there were four—first, the targets for numbers on the scheme had to be realistic; secondly, trainees had to have a financial incentive to join; thirdly, managing agents should have higher incentives; and fourthly, employers needed to be encouraged to have a more positive attitude to the long-term unemployed. It does not seem that those lessons have been learnt or adequately applied.

The target for ET was 600,000 on the scheme in one year and 300,000 participants at any given time, given an average six-month course. Those numbers were far too optimistic. They might have looked good for massaging the unemployment figures, but it was impossible to cope with them without an adequate training infrastructure of agents, managers and willing employers. The numbers have been successively reduced.

In the autumn of 1988, the number was reduced to 265,000, in the autumn of 1989 it was reduced to 250,000, and, in December 1989, according to Roger Dawe, now the director general of the Training Agency, there were 210,000 on the scheme and 40,000 unfilled places. As the numbers envisaged dropped, so did the amount of money allocated, with underspending followed by two large cuts.

As for the financial incentive for trainees, they get £10 over benefit. That has not proved attractive. Many say that why are worse off. That allowance could be doubled at a cost of £120 million, and that point should be seriously considered. As for incentives for managing agents, the training agent in London gets £38, and an agent outside London gets £31·50 to interview a client and draw up a personalised action plan. Action plans are not drawn up very thoroughly. There is evidence that, in some cases, it takes half an hour to draw up such plans, according to parliamentary answers, it takes four to five hours over two days. The training agent then gets £15 for every placement with a training manager. That can only be described as a shoestring budget.

At the next stage, the training manager gets £15 for every person who starts training, and then £18 a week basic grant for training. There are also supplementary grants averaging about £20, making about £38 a week to pay for training. What quality training can we get for less than £1 an hour?

Of course, employers could make a contribution, but is it any wonder that most of them have had nothing to do with the scheme? The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice) asked questions on that very point when he was a valuable member of the Select Committee. He knows that I am right, because I read his questions and answers only a couple of days ago. Only a quarter of trainees get placements with employers. The rest are expected to struggle on with the sums that I have mentioned.

Although ET has the germ of a good idea, in its present form it is badly flawed. It is underfunded and, as a result, often inadequate and unattractive. It has been unable to reach its targets and it has not spent the money allocated to it. Perhaps the most graphic indicator of its flaws is the staggeringly high drop-out rate, the customers voting with their feet.

Roger Dawe of the Training Agency told us on 11 December 1989 that about 45 per cent. of those referred dropped out before they got to the training agent and that there was a further large drop-out before they got to the training manager. Only about 20 to 25 per cent. stay with a training manager for more than a week. Of that number, 70 per cent. did not complete their original action plans. Of the small minority who actually complete their training, 49 per cent., or virtually half, get a job.

With the best will in the world, I find it impossible to describe that outcome as other than shambolic. None of us would be happy with that or accept it. An inferior programme is wasting public money, and no one can pretend that it matches up to the training needs of the country. Because it is so unattractive and because there are so many drop-outs, the scheme does not spend the money that is allocated to it.

Sir Norman Fowler (Sutton Coldfield): I accept what the hon. Gentleman says about the drop-out problem and that there has been a problem under all programmes. Will he equally accept that the great majority of those people

[Sir Norman Fowler]

drop out before they get to the training programme? That is the point. Under any programme, that problem will continue, and we must tackle it.

Mr. Leighton: The former Secretary of State is absolutely right. About 45 per cent. drop out before they get to the training agent. After the personalised action plan is done, there is a further large drop-out, and only about 20 per cent. actually stay with the training manager. Of the minority who stay with the training manager, 70 per cent. do not complete their personal action plans. Of those who complete their training, 49 per cent. do not get a job. Those are the facts as told by the Training Agency, and they are less than satisfactory.

Because people did not go on the scheme and the money was not spent, the Treasury took back money. It first took back £100 million and then it took back £200 million. Rather than make those cuts, the Government should make an essential investment in a quality training programme. They should restore the cuts and improve the programme. We know that the Department of Employment commissioned a scrutiny and a survey on ET——

The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. Tim Eggar) *indicated assent.*

Mr. Leighton: The Minister is nodding his head. I believe that the Secretary of State has had the result for a couple of months now and, as far as I know, it has not yet been published. I have asked for it to be published and I am asking again now that that official scrutiny, which was commissioned and carried out on behalf of the Department, should be published. Why have the Government clammed up and kept it secret? Surely we should lay all cards on the table.

Mr. Eggar: Of course it will be published, and I shall refer to it in my speech.

Mr. Leighton: I made a note earlier to hope that as a result of the debate we might have an outburst of glasnost and the report would be published. That might help us to decide what we can do to rescue and transform the programme and to give it some credibility. The very least that we should do is to restore the cuts. Instead of a cheap, low-quality scheme, we should restore the original money and go for higher-quality training, with fewer but more realistic numbers. Anything less will fail the country's training needs.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): My hon. Friend has spoken about restoring the scheme in real terms. Is he aware that I have received yet another written answer from the Department during the past fortnight, showing that the original youth training scheme that was set up by the Labour Government in April 1978, paid trainees an allowance of £19·50 per week and that if that had risen at the same rate as average earnings over the past 11 years, youngsters would now receive £63·48 per week instead of the £29·50 that they are paid? Does he agree with me and, I suspect, a hell of a lot of parents and trade unionists, that one of the things that needs to be restored is the real value of the training allowance, which the Government have steadily eroded over the past 11 years?

Mr. Leighton: My hon. Friend has paid close attention to the youth training scheme since he has been a Member of Parliament and makes a sound and effective point. We shall have to wait for the Government's response.

I hope—this is my final point——

Mr. James Paice (Cambridgeshire, South-East): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way, especially as he referred to me earlier. He has made great play of the fact that the number of trainees has not reached the total that was originally set. However, he has not taken into account the fact that the target group of the long-term unemployed has dropped dramatically—beyond anybody's expectations—in the two years since my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced the scheme and has dropped considerably more than the numbers by which the Labour party promised to make it drop at the last election.

Mr. Leighton: That is not an adequate excuse for not hitting the targets. I do not want to become involved in any party political badinage about the way in which the figures for the long-term unemployed are arrived at. Many people who begin a scheme but then drop out in the first week are then not treated as long-term unemployed. However, even accepting the alleged figure for the long-term unemployed, if we had hit the original target, we would still have dealt with only a fraction of the client group. It is not as though we are short of people who are long-term unemployed to take part in the programmes. That is not a good enough excuse to explain the inadequacies, drawbacks and flaws of the programme.

I hope that we shall hear something of moment and consequence from the Minister. He has at least suggested that he will publish the survey. I hope that he does not seek to shuffle off or abdicate his responsibilities or wash his hands of such an important issue by saying that it is a matter for the training and enterprise councils and that he is handing all this over to the TECs—that it is their problem and not his. There is a national interest in training which is greater and larger than that of any particular group of companies. We must all wish the TECs well—after all, they are the only show in town. I wish well and will closely follow the experiences of the London East TEC under the excellent chairmanship of Mr. David Dickinson and his enthusiastic group of people.

Although we wish all the TECs well, the ultimate responsibility always lies with Parliament. The Select Committee will continue its interest in and scrutiny of these matters. I hope and trust that we have done a service in bringing them before the House.

5.54 pm

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): I share the anxiety of the Chairman of the Select Committee on Employment about the fact that employment training has an unacceptably high drop-out rate. However, a considerable proportion of those who drop out of ET do so because they have found jobs, which makes it understandable.

Mr. Nellist: How many?

Sir Philip Goodhart: I believe that at the moment the proportion is about four fifths of those who drop out.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice) has pointed out, there has been a sharp fall in the number of long-term unemployed during

the past two years. Naturally enough, that means that many of those who are left have considerable social and educational problems, and those are the reasons why they have remained unemployed for so long.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): I am interested in my hon. Friend's point because in the evidence given by MDS Training Ltd., it appeared that about 55 per cent. of trainees had literacy and numeracy problems. Does my hon. Friend agree that that points to deficiencies in the education system and that that is why there are so many people with problems which employment training then has to sweep up?

Sir Philip Goodhart: That is certainly true. I believe that about 16 per cent. of those on ET have identifiable literacy and numeracy problems. However, paragraph 30 of the report points out:

"we do not however assume that learning difficulties such as those described by our witnesses should be dealt with only by ET; many other agencies are available for this task."

I know that the charities involved in the employment training programme are particularly well qualified to help those with literacy and numeracy problems. Our report has thus appeared at a particularly propitious moment as I believe that there is a three-way move between the Department of Employment, the TECs and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in relation to the proposed cut in training places provided by the charities represented on the NCVO. It appears that about 5,000 training places are to be cut in the coming year, which is about 11 per cent. of the places provided by those charities. As so many people on ET programmes have special literacy and numeracy problems, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will press the TECs to ensure that the number of places offered by charities with special skills in dealing with such handicap can be maintained at the current level.

I note that during the past couple of years the Department of Employment and training in general has moved rapidly in the direction of consumer choice and taken up the suggestion that training vouchers should be widely used. I am glad that pilot schemes for the voucher system are under way as I am worried about the large number of drop-outs from ET, which clearly shows a lack of identification between the trainee and the scheme. The introduction of vouchers will get over that problem and in the years ahead will sharply reduce the number of people who drop out from this most valuable programme.

6 pm

Mr. Mike Carr (Bootle): It is a great honour for me to make my maiden speech in the House of Commons today. On this occasion I am reminded of a saying which the Secretary of State for Transport, who has left the Chamber, might appreciate. It is that speeches are like babies—easy to conceive but hard to deliver.

First, I wish to refer to my election campaign. Considering the tremendous pressures placed on candidates of all parties these days in by-elections, I must say that the campaign was conducted for the most part with good humour and without resort to personal insult or abuse. I take great pleasure in the remarkable achievement of increasing the Labour share of the vote from 67 per cent. in the 1987 general election to 75 per cent. in the Bootle by-election. The overall swing of some 9·5 per cent. to Labour in what was already a Labour stronghold underlines a trend that was demonstrated in the mid-Staffordshire by-election and the May local elections. The Labour party is on course to form the next Government of this country.

Before I leave the by-election, I wish to refer to the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and the Social Democratic party. Bootle has been described as the graveyard of the SDP. I am reminded of the words of Hilaire Belloc:

"Here, richly with ridiculous diplay,
The politician's corpse was laid away,
While all his acquaintances sneered and slanged,
I wept; for I had longed to see him hanged."

On a more serious note, it would be remiss of me in making my maiden speech not to comment on my predecessor, Allan Roberts. He was not only a serious politician but a warm, generous personality. I will quote the words that he wrote in *The House Magazine* last year, when he said:

"I'm proud to be a British Member of Parliament elected on a Labour ticket for one of the world's leading democracies. I've had a superb life, I enjoy good friends, good food and good wine. I have no regrets."

Allan will be sadly missed and I shall continue the work that he did so well in the constituency.

I owe my success—as did Allan and Simon Mahon before him—to the Labour party and movement, and to the loyal Labour voters of Bootle who returned me to this House with such an overwhelming majority. As one journalist commented in the campaign, the people of Bootle do not just vote Labour—they are Labour.

Bootle, home to 96,000 people, is described as a tough dockland town. Its skyline is certainly dominated by the cranes on the dockside and the docks play an important role in the economy and culture of the town. But Bootle is much more than a dockland town. It houses the headquarters of National Girobank, one of the town's largest employers, with 5,500 staff. The Inland Revenue also has offices in Bootle and it is hoped that more civil service work will be transferred from London to Bootle.

The town is not so much tough as independent. Local people are proud to come from Bootle. It long resisted being taken within the borders of its southern neighbour, Liverpool. In the mid-1970s, however, it was swallowed up by the metropolitan borough of Sefton, which includes the towns of Southport and Crosby. But Bootle still asserts its independence by refusing to vote either for the Tories or for the Liberals favoured by the populace of the other two towns.

Every one of the 24 council seats in the constituency of Bootle is Labour, and Labour is the largest party in the hung council, with a total of 27 councillors. The people of Bootle work hard and have strong trade union traditions. The town is predominantly working-class, with twice as many semi-skilled and unskilled workers as the national average. Many skilled workers have moved out of the town to find work. The population has fallen by 20 per cent. since the 1971 census. More than a third of the population is either under 15 or over 65.

With some success, Bootle has broadened its range of employment to avoid becoming a one-industry town, but civil service relocation has not always placed jobs for local people at the top of its agenda and unemployment is still rife. Department of Employment figures suggest that there is 13·9 per cent. unemployment, but the unemployment unit, using the pre-1982 method of calculation, puts the

[Mr. Mike Carr]

figure at 20 per cent. In the league table of constituencies with high unemployment, Bootle is 18th in England and 27th in Great Britain.

Young people, in particular, bear the brunt of unemployment with 22 per cent. of Bootle's unemployed under the age of 25 and more than half of them out of work for more than six months. The point that is relevant to today's debate is that if a sizeable proportion of the young have no stake in society, society itself appears to have given up its stake in the future. Britain is in danger of becoming the worst educated and most poorly trained nation in Europe. Further and higher education has been undermined and skill centres and industrial training boards have been shut down.

In the recent giveaway privatisation of the nation's Training Agency, 28 staff at the Liverpool skill centre were sacked immediately by the new private owners, Metel. Existing training programmes—the youth training scheme and employment training—offer low quality training, often without any recognised qualification. Among the half million 16 and 17-year-old school leavers entering the labour market, 315,000 joined YTS in 1988-89 but only 42 per cent. left having gained any qualification. Why is that so? Previous speakers referred to the reason. For the most part, the scheme is about providing cheap labour to employers who are more interested in job substitution than the provision of decent training—and the taxpayer forks out £1 billion per year for the privilege. It is nothing less than a gross scandal. I have four children who have been on the youth training scheme. It is an insult to expect our young people to do a week's work for £29·50.

Of the 176,000 people on employment training last year, only 25 per cent. completed their action plan. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) referred to that. Is it any wonder that people drop out? Where is the motivation for people in receipt of benefit, plus a £10 a week so-called training premium which has not been increased since ET started and has been reduced for single people under 25 and childless couples?

The poor provision of training perpetuates an economic cycle of poor products and reinforces a human cycle of unemployment, insecure work, low skills and low pay, in which 9 million people are now trapped. Education and training holds the key to Britain's future prosperity. To meet the challenges of the 1990s, Britain must invest in the urgently needed skills that will enable us to compete in future world markets. Therefore, our goal must be to provide a clear, well-defined structure of educational and high quality training opportunity for all.

That means ensuring that everyone, including the redundant and the long-term unemployed, has the opportunity to acquire new or improved skills, so that they can increase their job satisfaction, widen the range of their opportunities and extend their contribution to the economy and to society. It means that education and training needs must be regularly reviewed and an adaptable framework provided to meet those needs. It means ensuring that people have a constant opportunity to update their skills throughout their lives. It also means giving a new priority, throughout our education, training and retraining strategies, to the needs of women so that we can tap the huge potential of skill and talent in the majority of the British people.

Education and training are the keystones of a society of opportunity and personal fulfilment, and an economy that is competitive and efficient. Investment in education and training is a measure of a Government's vision and commitment to the future.

6.10 pm

Mr. Simon Coombs (Swindon): It is a pleasure to be the first to congratulate the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Carr) on his maiden speech. It is some seven years since I made my maiden speech, and if the hon. Gentleman was as nervous today as I was on that occasion I can only say that he is an extremely good actor. He conveyed no sense of the gravity of the occasion that we all feel when we first come to the House.

I was delighted to hear the hon. Gentleman pay a warm tribute to his predecessor Allan Roberts. We are all aware that he was well respected not only in his constituency but by hon. Members throughout the House. We miss him, but we warmly welcome his successor. I must tell the hon. Gentleman that he will not always be listened to in this House with the same rapt attention that has been his lot on this occasion. Indeed, there may in future be the odd moment when Conservative Members may find something in what he says with which to disagree. Nevertheless, our welcome is warm and we wish him well.

I wish to say a few words about each of the two training schemes that we are debating. I shall start with employment training. As the Chairman of the Select Committee on Employment said in opening the debate, the Select Committee has this week published a report on that matter. It is right that, during this short debate, the House should dwell upon some of the points made by the Select Committee.

The report was fairly critical of the employment training scheme, but I think it right to point out that a great deal of good value has come out of employment training in its few short months of existence. There are faults and we need to improve the system, but many people have benefited from that training and have returned to the workplace, to real jobs. When we are trying to be constructive in our criticism of the scheme, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that much good work has been done already.

The shortfall in numbers from those originally suggested as appropriate for the funding of the scheme has been mentioned. It must be recognised that, during the life of the scheme, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of unemployed people. In parts of the United Kingdom such as Swindon, there are now relatively few unemployed people who are available for employment training. Therefore, it is natural that there should be some reduction in the overall funding of the scheme.

I do not want to go over the ground that has already been covered by the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton). There are imperfections in the scheme, and I look forward with interest to what my hon. Friend the Minister says about the results of the internal review. We must look to the future for the scheme, and I agree with the hon. Member for Newham, North-East and

my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) that we need to target ET and make it more user friendly.

There is no doubt that the sort of people coming forward for employment training find it tough enough to go through one interview, so they must find it even more difficult when they have to go through a second interview before they can hope to start their training package. Can we not discover from the internal review whether we can simplify that process for many of those who lack confidence and need a great deal of support and encouragement? Can we find a way of making it easier for them to get to the point of starting training? As was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler), there is a substantially higher drop-out rate among those who never even start their training than among those who start but then fail to complete it. That is the first point that we must tackle.

My experience from talking to training managers in my constituency is that once people start with a training manager and get stuck into their training, many are surprised by their experiences. They have heard a great deal of criticism about the scheme from the House—and Opposition Members are always the first to criticise any scheme that the Goverment put forward—and they often initially come to the scheme lacking in confidence in what they can achieve. Very often they are pleasantly surprised, they find the training valuable and they then find jobs in the real world outside the world of training. I ask all hon. Members interested in the debate to agree that we need to simplify the processes that get people into the training system and I look to my hon. Friend the Minister to say something about that.

I wish to touch on the need for increased concentration on those who lack personal skills—those who may be unable to read or write, and especially those who may lack motivation and have a low opinion of themselves, perhaps as the result of a long period of unemployment or family difficulties. Whatever the reason, they lack the self-confidence to believe that training is right for them and they need encouragement.

Like the Chairman of the Select Committee, I believe that we must increase the per capita spending on such people to provide the additional support to get them up and running and ready for the job market. I am not talking about large sums. No doubt my hon. Friend the Minister will say that he has read the Select Committee's report, so he will know that we are not arguing for a vast increase in public expenditure. We are saying that there will be an increasing need to target resources on those—and we hope that it is a diminishing number—who have such problems and therefore need that support.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham rightly said that ET is not the only way in which that problem could be tackled. The Select Committee was right to say that other agencies must play their part in trying to help with problems such as difficulty with reading and writing. The key—and this is where Opposition Members lose their way—is the share of responsibility for the potential employers of the trainees. The Opposition have frequently said that there is no private sector involvement. When we hear their attacks on the level of Government expenditure we might think that that was the whole story, and that it was simply the Government reducing expenditure. That is not true, and I know that Opposition Members would not wish to mislead the public into thinking that it was.

The point at issue is the degree to which employers will be prepared to take up what the Government and Conservative Members think are their responsibilities in this matter. The problem is that, the more difficult it is to place the individual trainee, the more reluctant the employer will be to give him the opportunity or to help to fund the training scheme in some way. So I hope that the Minister will not be content with the simple answer that employers will come forward to fill the gap between what is available in public expenditure terms and what is needed to ensure good-quality training for those who would otherwise be without it.

I am afraid that employers will be tempted to import labour—not necessarily from overseas, although after 1992 that must be a developing question in our minds—but from other parts of the country. They may be prepared in an area such as mine to bid up the cost of labour and engage in competition between themselves to get workers to fill vacancies.

We should be making it clear in this debate that we want everybody to have a chance of sharing in the job market. That must include those with learning difficulties and those who lack motivation and self-confidence. They, too, must be part of it all, and that means that extra help will be needed from the public purse to ensure that such people take the first steps on the ladder into training and later, we hope, into jobs.

I pay tribute to the Minister of State and the Secretary of State for the way in which they have promoted pilot schemes for those with learning difficulties, so that there are now 15 job clubs with pilot schemes. In my constituency, the jobcentre, under the management in recent years of John Down, has done well in trying to help those with learning difficulties. Much has been achieved, but the question at the heart of the matter is who will give the quality training that is needed and how will it be funded. Having put a series of questions on that issue, I hope that, by the conclusion of the debate, we shall receive some helpful answers.

The same problem, in a sense, must be tackled in youth training. Will the funding from the public purse be sufficient to ensure that young people with learning difficulties coming into the job market for the first time have a chance to get training and find a good job?

Recently in my constituency I was approached by the Taurus training centre, an organisation set up in 1969 to help young people with learning difficulties to find a way into the job market. I pay tribute to Sue Morgan, the manager of that centre, and to Raychem, a large international company which has supported the venture from its inception, and the senior personnel manager of which, Philip Griffiths, is currently chairman of the Taurus training centre.

The Taurus organisation was threatened with reduced funding. It came to me, as the Member for the area most affected, asking for my help, having made it clear that its client base was not reducing. Hon. Members may think that Swindon is a place where everything is going well, with high employment and good opportunities. That is so, but there are still young people left out in the cold of the bright new world that exists in Swindon and many parts of Britain. That client base has not declined and Taurus argues that the money should be available to support those requiring special help.

I am pleased to say that, as a result of what I was able to do, the Wiltshire training and enterprise council, which

[Mr. Simon Coombs]

has only recently entered its development phase, was able to initiate discussions. This story may convince Opposition Members that there are ways of overcoming problems. As a result of discussions between that training and enterprise council and Taurus, extra money has been found. We see that flexibility and room for manoeuvre exists within the budget to provide help where it is needed.

The Minister of State was involved in that matter. An exchange of letters between us led to meetings in the constituency, as a result of which not only has the Taurus training centre obtained additional funding to help young people with learning difficulties, but contact has been made with employers who are not simply interested in employing the youngsters but have a philanthropic approach to the problems that have been brought to their attention.

A combination of extra public money and help from the private sector means that the Taurus training centre in my constituency will have a better chance of continuing with its excellent work than seemed likely a few weeks ago.

What next? What is the Government's message to those young people? I hope that it is not, "You are on your own. It is up to you to find help. It is up to the people who want to help you to find help." I hope that the Government's attitude will be clearly spelled out. We want everyone in the country, irrespective of ability to have a chance to get into the job market through the high-quality training that the Government intend to provide throughout Britain.

The cost of what I am suggesting—which is flexibility to allow additional expenditure on a per capita basis to help these people—is small compared with the cost to the economy of the wage cost inflation that would result from bidding up the cost of labour in areas such as mine, or the house price inflation that would result from people moving about the country, if they were able to do so, to find jobs in relatively prosperous areas.

We cannot rely on a few public-spirited private companies to fund training in Britain. Nor do I believe that the Government believe that that, any more than the education system, which has all too often failed the disadvantaged, can be held responsible for all that has gone wrong.

I will not be joining Opposition Members in any wholesale criticism of ET or YT, because there is much to be said for both of them. They have achieved a great deal in an area that was underfunded until the early part of this decade, but which has been increasingly better supported by the Government in the past five to 10 years. But the time is coming when we must review our priorities. We must see what can be done for those who up to now have missed out on the help that has been available. On their behalf I appeal to the Minister to make a positive contribution and so to help them to feel that they have not been forgotten by us.

6.28 pm

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): I wish at the outset to congratulate the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Carr) on taking his seat and making his maiden speech. I appreciate, having myself fought a by-election, what a nerve-racking experience it is, not just in being a candidate in such a contest but in being the candidate whom everybody else wants to knock down. On arriving here, one finds that it is not the easiest place in which to make one's maiden speech. I congratulate the hon. Gentleman not only on his speech, but on the words he chose to refer to his predecessor. I recall having to make a similar, in many ways sad, speech when I first arrived here.

I have no doubt that the hon. Gentleman and I will not always agree, but today I agreed with much of what he said about training. Having some knowledge of Bootle, I endorse what he said about the needs of the area. I hope that he will campaign hard to bring to the attention of the House the issues that his constituents are anxious to have raised.

The report published this week by the Select Committee on Employment is a damning indictment of this country's record on training. I say "this country's" rather than just "the Government's" because in the long term this country has failed to give young people—indeed all people—the skills and opportunities that they should be given in an increasingly high-tech and complicated age. The numeracy and literacy shortcomings and weaknesses are a particular indictment, and should not exist.

Many of those problems do not exist merely among people leaving school. Although not all hon. Members would agree, we probably have the highest standards of numeracy and literacy that we have ever had in this country among young people coming out of college. But there are many people, of all ages, who do not have those skills and whom we have neglected. We have not fully addressed those problems and I agree with the hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) that we must do so. I hope that the Minister will pay particular attention to the points made in the report on that matter.

More specific criticisms are made in the report which are laid, in part, at the Government's door. The report states that 70 per cent. of those who agreed a personal action plan did not complete it, and 42 per cent. of the trainees who completed the scheme returned to unemployment. I stress three key points on employment training mentioned in the report. First, it has an unacceptably high drop-out rate. Secondly, however they arise, the high drop-out rates represent a waste of public money and the programme's failure to give trainees the necessary skills to find jobs and careers. Thirdly, the Committee wants the Government to put more emphasis on higher-quality training in view of the fact that unemployment has fallen.

We must address the need to increase the quality of the training elements and resources given to improve the skill levels of people, at whatever level. The Government should respond to the lower numbers using the schemes by using the resources that have already been earmarked to improve the training provision, and not by reducing the amount of money spent. That choice falls to Ministers, who have the option to react in either direction. They have been wholly mistaken and used the opportunity to try to save money rather than to improve the provision that we are able to offer such people. If we look at the employment, training and educational opportunities for young people in other countries, it is hard not feel that we have neglected and left behind some of those in this country who could benefit from a greater input than they currently receive.

One point that has not so far been raised is specific to rural communities such as mine. The allowances and help given to those entering the schemes in rural areas—compared to those who simply continue to claim benefit

and do not go on to training or educational schemes—do not meet the extra cost that some people face when taking up the courses. That has been true for a long time, and it is still true. Some people coming to my surgeries feel that they cannot afford to take some of the courses available, whereas they would be able to if they had allowances and support from the Government.

Part of the problem is not merely the quality of the courses or the opportunities given, but the ability of people to make use of them. Some people may have to look after a family, and some single mothers may have to look after their children. Such people may not be able to afford to go on the courses. That problem must be addressed, because it cannot be acceptable that people genuinely committed to getting themselves out of difficulties find they cannot financially afford to do so.

The records on spending and projected spending on training shows that the January expenditure plans are that spending on training and education programmes is to fall from £2·5 billion for 1990-91 to £2·4 billion for 1991-92. That is a reflection of the fall in unemployment, although we could have a long debate about what that fall shows in terms of such people obtaining work. The juggling of figures that has taken place has allowed them to fall into disrepute, but there have been some real falls which should be welcomed. Why not take the opportunity presented for improving the training for the rest? I believe that all hon. Members would acknowledge that, more than anything else, employers are now talking about a lack of the right people with the necessary skills to fill the places available.

Last year it was estimated that British industry was short of about 30,000 experienced information technology staff. However, the same report predicted that by 1993 Britain would be short of 100,000 such experienced staff if we continue with the present IT training. The widespread use of up-to-date IT and people with the skills to operate it is imperative in every sector of our business, industrial and educational life. The need for such IT skills is a sign of the need for a better-resourced education system, and better provision of IT equipment and training opportunities.

In my constituency, the Cornwall information technology centre has pulled out of providing such training programmes for those on the information technology schemes. That is an example of the sort of problems that have arisen from the recent changes that have taken place in the funding of the management side of such courses. The hon. Member for Swindon gave an example of how he had been able to obtain extra funds when a problem had arisen over the provision of training. In my case, that was not possible. The changes that have been made to the management and decision-making structure, while sometimes welcome, have led to difficulties in pinning down who is responsible for sorting out the problems. I have received a series of letters that effectively transferred to somebody else the responsibility for the decision and the reason for Cornwall ITEC pulling out. It was a circular argument.

It is to be deeply regretted that the major supplier of information technology training to those, mainly young, people should be pulled out. One of the worst experiences I have had recently in relation to training, young people and opportunities was with a number of young people who had been at the Cornwall ITEC and found themselves completely left out in the cold when they were halfway through their courses. I do not lay the blame at the door of the Government—there was something wrong with the system that meant that those people were let down. Even if there was a good reason for a long-term decision to change the courses—I do not believe that there was—I do not understand why, and I do not believe that it is right, the change should have been implemented in such a way that the Cornwall ITEC felt obliged to stop providing courses for people in the middle of gaining qualifications after a long period of working towards them. Those people were thrown onto the street without gaining any benefit from the work they had been doing for a long time.

We must do more towards adopting a more systematic approach to training and providing better provision for retraining that brings together all the qualifications. The Government have started to do that, but very little has happened yet. We should bring together all the qualifications for the 16-to-18 age group, and those who return to education later, so that they all work towards a recognised system of qualifications at suitable levels. I acknowledge that that has been done in part, but it should be extended to ensure the development of a full-blooded modular system that people can re-enter or leave, knowing that the work they do is adding to their qualifications.

If there is any issue other than spending on which we will disagree for ever across the Floor of the House, I hope that it will not be the development of an integrated approach, so that people may have an opportunity to gain new qualifications. That will produce a more adaptable work force better suited to a growing and changing economy—getting away from the short-term, narrow approach to training that involves qualifying people for a specific job in isolation from everything else that is going on, and the attitude that once people are trained for a job, they will never need to train again. That is not true now, if it ever was. The Government have only scratched the surface of the radical changes that are needed.

The Government say that the implementation of such changes are a priority for them, as have all the parties represented in the House, yet every right hon. and hon. Member knows that, when it comes to the individual constituent, something is still missing. We are not filling all the gaps that exist and offering all the opportunities that people need. Time and again in our constituency work, we come across people who, in one way or another, fall through the holes in the system. If this debate can help change that, it will have made a real contribution.

I feel particularly strongly about training, as do many other right hon. and hon. Members. The report clearly demonstrates that we have not yet succeeded in meeting the aims that I have described.

6.41 pm

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): I will not join the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) in his criticisms of employment training because from my reading of the Select Committee's report it is clear that more than 200,000 people a year are helped by it, most obtain jobs after receiving that training, and most believe that ET assisted them to do that. To me, that counts as success. It may not quite live up to the hype that surrounded ET a few years ago, but helping 200,000 people a year to get jobs that they previously did not have seems to me pretty good going. I place on record my congratulations to the people concerned.

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

What of the people who are not so easily helped by ET, such as those suffering from chronic illness, mental problems, or difficulties of illiteracy—which has surfaced in my area? I am not in the least surprised that the Committee found that 16 per cent. of those receiving ET have problems of illiteracy or innumeracy. A number of other problems also exist, and it is to those that I turn my attention.

The Select Committee skated over the wide variety of problems that prevent many people from obtaining jobs. For example, most trainees are over 30, and are returning to work after redundancy or unemployment, or—as the report observes in just half a sentence—after caring for their families. There is, first, the problem of ageism—discrimination against people simply because they are regarded as too old. I suspect that there also exists somewhere along the line the problem of sexism. That applies particularly to women returning to work after caring for their families.

There is no doubt that we need to recruit from both categories. The number of 16 to 25-year-olds available for the work force over the next 10 years will drop from 8 million currently to about 6 million. If all the other schemes and hopes that we have come to fruition, many more will be staying on at college and be unavailable for work. The Department of Employment estimates that, by 2000, 90 per cent. of all new jobs will have to go to women. Many of them will be women returning to work in the way that I described. However, we find that the returners experience great difficulties—and the women among them most of all.

Resistance comes not from the women themselves, or from their husbands and families—who are often extremely encouraging—but from personnel directors in boardrooms and businesses throughout the country. They are precisely the people who ought to know better. A survey undertaken by Gallup on behalf of the employment agency Brook Street, "Ageism—A Problem of the 1990s", received extensive press coverage last week. That survey of 250 personnel directors found that 86 per cent. of them preferred to recruit under-35s. Two thirds preferred people aged 22 to 35, and a further 30 per cent. wanted under-25s. In other words, those personnel directors wanted to select their staff from a diminishing pool.

The reasons most often given by companies for having age criteria were that young people were not set in their ways, are quick thinking, have more stamina, and better fit the dynamic image that many companies want to cultivate. That rules out most of the people in this Chamber. One wonders what those personnel directors think they are up to. There is no doubt that there is extensive discrimination against most women.

A separate survey of 1,000 older employees also commissioned by Brook Street showed that nearly 80 per cent. had been turned down for a job on age grounds. In another poll, three in five applicants believed that there should be no age limits in job advertisements. Sixty per cent. of employers said that demographic changes will affect their recruitment policy in the next five years, so they all know about them. One in three said that they intend to make more use of women returning to work. However, when employers were asked into what age categories they thought certain staff should fall, two thirds answered that secretaries should be under 35, and three quarters thought that receptionists should also be under 35. What is to be done in a country that is now short of manpower in so many places—and literally short of man-power—when almost 90 per cent. of personnel directors prefer dolly birds?

However, when personnel directors were asked which categories of employment they feel are most appropriate for the over-50s, they name company chairmen and company cleaners. That tells us a lot about the ignorance, stupidity and prejudices of many of the people responsible for recruitment in this country. I exclude from that criticism a number of businesses. The DIY retail chain B and Q has gone against the age trend by staffing one of its stores entirely with over-50s. It feels that the scheme at Macclesfield, in Cheshire, will give many older people a new lease on working life. Good for them. I am sure that the company will receive an excellent response in terms of loyaity from that work force.

Age discrimination affects women far more than men. Two in five interviewed for the survey said that a woman having the same skills as a man is more likely to be turned down because of her age. Those of us past 35 are not ready to give up just yet. That is just as true for women Members of Parliament as it is for the men.

There is no doubt that employers know about impending problems and that they will have to change their employment training and procedures. One third of all companies polled said that they are prepared to meet staffing needs by attracting women returners. The majority of them, particularly in the south, are willing to consider incentives such as flexible working hours, job sharing, and time off during holiday periods. However, there was a marked reluctance towards providing help with child care, which is the most urgent and pressing need. Only 8 per cent. of companies are interested in making that provision. It is no use the hon. Member for Fyfe, Central (Mr. McLeish) pointing at my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Employment. The fact is that the civil service is addressing those issues far more than private employers, and is in many ways setting an excellent example—particularly in respect of senior women. I look at the Box and see that they are all very pleased.

Only 5 per cent. of employers are prepared to give financial help with child care and, despite the recent tax changes, only 10 per cent. would provide workplace nurseries. That survey was undertaken after my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his very welcome announcement. Clearly there is a large gap between the preferences of personnel directors and managers and public opinion. As *The Daily Telegraph* reported on Monday, there is overwhelming public support for increased availability of child care facilities for working mothers. The percentage in favour in another Gallup poll on that aspect is much higher than it used to be.

When my hon. Friend the Minister has a go at companies and their employment practices, and tells them that they are pushing up wage rates, he should also point out to them that a substantial pool of excellent labour is available—people who want to return to work, have the necessary skills and are keen to make themselves useful. They are mainly women returners, but—as the survey has shown—many men are keen to get back to work, and need advice, support and assistance.

Retraining the returners is a very different proposition from training young people. Many returners lack confidence, as they may not have been at work for 15 or 20 years; the style of training that is adopted for them needs to be different from that applied to 16 to 18-year-olds or people who are on work experience. The first step is to restore their confidence and be sensitive to their anxieties. They may also take a while to start learning, as they may not have been in the classroom for 30 years; it is inappropriate to expect everyone to respond in exactly the same way. Later, of course, they often prove much better and more committed employees, but the traning systems must recognise their initial needs.

The Brook Street study showed that young people were often preferred by employers because

"They are more familiar with modern technology."

That is one of the most unfair comments that could be made by personnel directors about both women and men returners. Frequently, the reason the older workers are less familiar with new technology is that no one has ever given them the opportunity to become familiar with it. What, above all, saps the confidence of a woman returning to work after 20 years is walking into a secretarial office that is full of word processors: she may not even know how to switch them on.

We are often training the untrainable, instead of employing the employable who want to work. Often that is due to sheer prejudice. Perhaps some of the vast sums now directed at training should be aimed at the personnel directors who are so short-sighted about what women want, and what they can offer. Many training directors need retraining themselves, and fast.

I commend those thoughts to my hon. Friend the Minister.

6.52 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I beg to move,

That Class VI, Vote 1 be reduced by £100,000 in respect of Subhead H1 (Skills Training Agency running costs).

The £100,000 is a nominal sum covering payments to consultants, and to three civil servants who were given time during work to prepare a work plan to take over 46 skill centres. The skill centre giveaway is becoming a major scandal. I believe that privatisation is wrong in principle; but to do it behind closed doors—as it has been done, with the Minister's approval—is doubly wrong.

Since my Adjournment debate on 15 May, information has come to light—not, I need hardly add, from the Minister, who has been reluctant to provide any information, but from other sources. There were at least 61 other bidders, who are listed in early-day motion 1106. Before the Minister says that there is a possible error, let me anticipate him. Mr. C. F. Lakin is listed as a potential bidder. As the motion says that

"the following potential bidders were not informed that £14 million was to be donated by the Government to the 'purchasers' of skillcentres",

it is clear that Mr. Lakin—who subsequently became a director of TICC Skill Centres and the recipient of £2 million—was one of those who did obtain some information.

The Minister tried, more or less in vain, to defend his position on the BBC television programme "Face the Facts" on 17 May. The programme featured comments from people who were not told that £14 million was available. I will quote some of them—people who broadcast publicly, some of them doubtless sympathetic to the political position of the Minister and the Prime Minister. One person said:

"It's fairly obvious that if we'd have known that there had been Government money available, our view would have been completely and utterly different. I felt, and feel, that the financial people should have come back to us, and made that simple fact available".

Among the other bidders was Geoff Bowers of the Sheffield-based Bowford Engineering Services. His company was keenly interested in obtaining the Ipswich skill centre, because it is one of the few companies that are accepted to train welders to the high standards demanded by the nuclear industry. The centre was also close to the Sizewell B construction project. Mr. Bowers said:

"After due consideration we decided that there was simply too much distance between the losses, that in particular the Ipswich Centre was making, and the viable commercial operation."

Mr. O'Reilly of Wimpey—not an inconsiderable organisation, and one that is probably politically sympathetic to the Government—said:

"We were notified that the basis of the bid which had been sort of roughly agreed was no longer valid, that they weren't prepared to accept a bid in that form. Under the circumstances, being very disappointed with all the work we'd put into it and so on, we could do nothing other than actually withdraw from the sales of the skill centres we were interested in. They moved the goal posts at the last minute, and it was impossible for us to put together any sort of bid. I think the joint venture that we were putting forward which had been acceptable a month or six weeks beforehand, was no longer acceptable. I was always aware that there was an in-house bid going on, as everybody I think bidding was, and I really didn't see that much difference between what we actually proposed, and what actually came out at the end of the day."

Why was Wimpey turned down?

My final quote comes from a representative of Essex Training Limited, a company owned by the motor trade in Essex. Mr. David Hale said:

"Prior to making our final offer, we said, tongue in cheek, jokingly, 'We're taking on all of these responsibilities, what's the chances of any of the so-called sweeteners that we hear about?' And immediately, the atmosphere became very frosty and prickly, and it was made abundantly clear to us that's not the things that you should say, and not the line in which they were going to go down. But subsequently, we found that people have been paid to take skill centres off the Government. If we had known, then of course we could have made it a serious suggestion."

Why was that organisation rejected? Was it because the people who rejected it were chums of the three civil servants who were making an insider bid? That is a serious point, and it is no good the Minister shaking his head.

Since my Adjournment debate, 400 people have been made redundant by Astra Training Service. It got the plum that Jack Horner pulled out of the pie: the 46 skill centres and the £11 million. The Metel firm in Liverpool has sacked 27 people. I wonder whether this was not a simple case of the Government's bribing those organisations to carry out Government policy.

The Minister has uttered platitudes about the three civil servants being removed from "sensitive decisions" in April 1989. However, the Crown employee rules produced by the Cabinet Office were simply jettisoned. They should be restored in every detail, and applied on every occasion.

The three civil servants responsible for the skill centres were also responsible for the deficits that the Government complained about. That raises the question of how those deficits occurred. Was there a gleam in the eye of civil servants, who knew that they might be able to pick a plum out of the pie that the Government were about to provide

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

for them? There is a rich stench of internal corruption about this. At best, Ministers have been foolish. The stench will remain whatever they say, and one of the problems is that they say very little.

No figure has been given for the value of the assets transferred, at no cost to Astra and to TICC Skill Centres Ltd., plus more than £13 million which was transferred to them. The total value of the land and assets given away, with minimal conditions, is at least in excess of £120 million.

While that was going on, honest straightforward bidders were excluded. I quote Mr. Bowers again; describing what happened when they discovered that between £13 million and £14 million was being handed out, he says:

"We were absolutely flabbergasted. It's fairly obvious that if we'd known there'd been Government money available, our view would have been completely and utterly different. I mean as a private company, and we are very much the children of the Thatcher revolution in the fact that we take our own risks, we don't borrow public money, and maybe we should have thought in terms of subsidies. We simply didn't. I felt, and feel, that the financial people should have come back to us, and made that simple fact available to us. I think that we should have been given an opportunity, if that sort of money was on the table, for a re-evaluation of the bid."

Finally, I quote from a person who has written to me from a skill centre which has been privatised. He says:

"I would like to thank you for your stand against the privatisation of the Skill Centre Network. I work at the . . . skill centre"—

I shall not give the name, so that they will not be victimised by the Minister's chums—

"which has become part of the TICC skillcentres Ltd. . . . which acquired 3 other skill centres."

The four are East Lancashire, St. Helen's, Cumbria and Ipswich, thus retaining anonymity

"I would like to bring to your attention the way in which our centres plus £2,000,000 of Tax Payers' Money were acquired. The Centres . . . and all personnel were given to Mr. Howard Lieu, accountant; Mr. Chris Lakin, university administrator; and Mr. Clive Ibbison-Steel, general production manager . . . This new company, T.I.C.C. Ltd. which had no past experience of running a training organisation, nor had the Directors, managed to be in a position to receive £2,000,000 plus 4 Skillcentres with all their assets (Cumbria Freehold) the rest leasehold. This seems difficult to believe but it's true. We at . . . Skillcentre would be obliged if you could ask the Minister concerned the following questions".

I am asking the Minister now and I look forward to the answers.

"How could 3 individuals with no experience of running a multi-million pound Skillcentre Network, suddenly find that they have hit the jackpot? They now own 4 Skillcentres plus £2,000,000. How much was their personal financial input? Who vetted these people and why were they allowed to proceed with their so called bid? I have enclosed Rantfix and T.I.C.C. company information. Again, I would like to thank you for your efforts on our behalf and I look forward to hearing from you."

I look forward to hearing from the Minister, and I want one final assurance—that no Ministers, when they leave their posts, will join any of these companies to share in the spoils when the Government sell the lot off.

7.2 pm

Mr. Lewis Stevens (Nuneaton): The report of the Select Committee on Employment contains some disappointments because of the nature of its criticisms. However, no surprises came out of it. The sort of training that we have now accepted that the Government and the country need, which requires the association of industry and a wide range of training organisations, is relatively new to this country.

The hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) was quite right when he said that present training difficulties and the lack of training in the past were the fault of the country and not of any Government. In truth it was. Our approach to training was extremely static. For many years,on the industrial scene we accepted apprenticeships, which varied enormously from good to bad, and an academic structure within which the content of many courses changed very little, although they were updated at the higher level. We got into a rut.

Some 10 years ago, we had to consider the whole concept of training. We had little experience of how to proceed. What has happened since? Perhaps the most significant thing that has happened in the past 10 years is that the Government, training organisations and those in education have not remained static in their approach to training. With the employment training scheme, we have made training more flexible.

One part of the report which causes some concern is the way that it refers to drop-outs. Drop-outs have been a problem in almost every voluntary training scheme that I have had experience of in technical colleges, adult education courses and employment training.

My hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) stressed the user-friendly aspect of training. I hope that, as a follow-up to the Select Committee's report, there will be an analysis of why people do not attend training courses and why people drop out—apart from those people who drop out because they have moved to a job. There should also be an analysis of those people who finish courses. Only when we have done that will we be able to modify training to provide a better structure in the future.

Most of what we doing now has been learnt over a relatively short time but can be developed through analysis of the results of present schemes. Almost certainly, much of the training which has been carried out in this country has not been structured in such a way that it enabled people to move from stage to another or to pick up a course again if they were made redundant or moved. It has not been possible to move easily back into training. If we were to analyse training methods and the way that people enter further training, we could keep up the momentum in training systems. We need a momentum for change in training, and so do the individuals who use it. We have not been successful in that respect, because that sort of training is relatively new to this country.

Many people do not find training acceptable or easy to take to. My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) commented inadvertently that people may not have been at school for 20 years and are therefore not used to the classroom. We should not consider modern training as merely another classroom exercise of the sort that we did at the age of 12, 13 or 14. Training is a wider concept than having to get used to a classroom atmosphere. That sort of training is fine for academics. Much employment training and youth training is action and job-orientated, although not necessarily for a specific job. I am sure that many people find it difficult to maintain an interest in that type of training. It is difficult to concentrate for long on learning, even if it is practical learning, without motivation.

Hon. Members have pointed out that many people who go on training schemes are not best fitted to start learning again or perhaps they have just left school and are on such a course for the first time.

The group of people which worries me most are those at the bottom of the academic ladder—for example, some young people coming out of what used to be called schools for the educationally subnormal and those young people who are slightly handicapped. It is important to provide the cash and effort needed to provide them with the resources to enable them to make the most of their potential. We are still not coping very well with that.

I am not complacent about what the Government have done, although they have done well. Training is dynamic and must keep progressing. There are gaps, especially for disadvantaged people, and they should be addressed now and in the future.

We have not concentrated sufficiently on the continuation of education in business, in the engineering profession and all the other professions. The Engineering Council and other organisations are trying to encourage training, but that has not been welcomed with the enthusiasm for which one might have hoped. Figures show that industry is training more people than ever before and that it is spending more money on training than ever before. Unless, however, people in industry are trained continually, the skills that we need will not be available. We praise Germany and Japan for the training that they provide, but that is an insult to the many fine professional people and technicians who work in British industry. Many of the people who work in the engineering industry are technically as good as any that one will find in Germany or Japan. If opportunities are provided for them, they are enthusiastic about increasing their knowledge and qualifications.

We have been slow to train managers. It must be nearly 30 years since I last went on a management training course. At that time, the Institution of Industrial Managers was just ticking over. However, in those days we looked forward to the time when the majority of industrial managers would have a management qualification. That did not happen, not because the institutes were lax but because of higher management's lack of enthusiasm to train their personnel, or send them for training. If managers are not trained in management skills, and if they do not update them, there is no hope for the future. Nothing changes faster than the need for management to train. Their ideas and their skills must change if they are to manage effectively. The most difficult thing to manage is change. If during the past 10 years we have not learnt that the management of change is the key to the future and that it is a continuing process, we have not learnt very much.

Employment training has been criticised, but its foundations are sound. By means of good analysis, it can be made more user friendly. Through the training and education councils we shall be able to provide the best training for people. The continuation of education and training is vital in almost every aspect of business life. Moreover, if managers are not fully trained and are not enthusiastic about being trained, the prospects for their employees to receive training will be damaged. If we train our managers and their employees, industry will succeed. Employees will then be enthusiastic and will be sufficiently trained to be capable of being employed.

7.13 pm

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): I agree with the hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) that the skills of some of our personnel are as good as any in the world. The problem is that we do not have enough of them. The hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) said that the Opposition carp about the Government's recommendations. The Opposition's role is to point out to the general public what the issues are and how things ought to be improved. It is important to face the facts. The Government use the word "training" as a buzz word, but when we compare the United Kingdom with other countries we find that the very opposite is the case.

The Select Committee on Employment reported that this year £200 million less will be spent on training than in the previous year. Whenever the Government make a cut, they try to justify it by saying that the numbers have gone down. They play the numbers game. When, however, the Government find that they have an additional £200 million, they ought to try to improve the quality and standard of training, which so often are nowhere near good enough. As we live in a highly competitive world we must improve the quality and the standards of training.

We are faced with a disastrous balance of payments deficit—the highest in our history. The only way to get rid of it is to export. To be successful, we must export excellent products which are better than those of our competitors and they must be competitively priced.

The hon. Member for Nuneaton referred to the need to improve management training. We do not concentrate sufficiently on that. Seven out of 10 British managers receive no training. If they are to lead their companies effectively, that is a serious indictment. We made a grave mistake about eight or nine years ago when we abolished most of the industrial training boards. I pay tribute to the man who set them up—Lord Carr. He established the industrial training board in the early 1960s because we were in such a mess; industry was making no provision for training. Soon after the 1979 election, the Tory party decided to abolish most of the industrial training boards. That was a disaster.

Education is the key to improving ability and potential. The Department of Education and Science, however, has been starved of funds. According to a press release that I received only today from the Department of Education and Science:

> "It must be a priority for all those responsible for post-16 education and training that the provision they offer equips young people with the skills and qualities that employers need in their workforce."

But they are fancy words with no substance, as is demonstrated when one examines the provision of education. Earlier in the debate reference was made to the lack of numeracy and literacy. It is obvious that, if people cannot grasp the basics, they will never be technological experts. We seem to be going wrong with the basics, but we cannot have one without the other. It is therefore important that the Department of Employment and the Department of Education and Science should work in tandem.

I represent a Manchester constituency and I have experience in education there. I have always supported the colleges of further education. The further education system used to be far stronger than it is today. One of its great strengths was public accountability. Further education was not organised just by the local politicians

[Mr. Ken Eastham]

and educationists. Industry was represented in the colleges of further education and managers took an interest in training. It is often implied that industry never had any input into further education, but that is a complete fallacy that should be refuted today.

Despite the success of colleges of further education—and they had considerable success—further education in Manchester has suffered savage cuts. The further education budget for this year is £18 million; last year it was £24 million. It is no investment in future technology to starve colleges of further education of funds. Last year, there were threee colleges of further education; this year, because of the financial crisis, there will be only two. Last year, they were allocated only £500,000 for equipment. Anyone who knows anything about technical equipment will understand that £500,000 does not go very far.

The Government have a strong preference for private agencies. There is a great myth that something is better because it is private. But many of those so-called private agents were not qualified as the experts in the further education colleges were. They constantly put profit motives before quality training. Already Manchester has experienced many disastrous schemes which were set up by the Department of Employment. Only a few months ago one organisation collapsed, ditching 1,000 trainees. That is what happens in a privatised education system.

Now the training and education councils have come to Manchester and have been allocated well in excess of £10 million which will be administered by private companies. I keep asking questions, but I never get satisfactory answers about how the costs will be monitored. We get all sorts of promises from civil servants, but as soon as anything goes wrong it is hushed up and covered up. It is all supposed to be a great success, but the private organisations suddenly disappear. Cost monitoring will not be the same as it was when training was publicly organised by the further education colleges. There will be less accountability for decisions about what training should involve and concentrate on.

The engineering industry is one of our most important industries. It is the biggest exporter of British industry and the biggest money spinner, along with the chemical industry. The engineering industry is now talking about the new engineering training agency. According to the Government's diktat, that agency will be funded by subscriptions and fees. That immediately means a reduced budget, which means cuts in training, especially in small firms. Usually, small firms do not have adequate training. They will not be funded and they certainly will not volunteer any money. That was a great problem in the early 1960s, when Lord Carr had to decide to make some proper provision for training. Because the new private training agency has been set up, there will no longer be access to European funding because they are not public bodies. Hundreds of thousands of pounds that would have been available for training in Britain will no longer be available.

We already have serious skill shortages, but we only face them when it is too late. I agree that Britain's skill force has the highest technical skills, but it is the smallest in Europe. I can illustrate that. A publication that I picked up the other day referred to a recent survey published by the European Commission which contained a pecking order of the proportion of skills in European industrial work forces. According to the survey, France had 80 per cent. skilled workers, Italy 79 per cent., Holland 76 per cent., Germany 67 per cent., Belgium 62 per cent., Denmark 62 per cent., Ireland 59 per cent., Spain 56 per cent. and Portugal 50 per cent. The United Kingdom was bottom of the pile with 38 per cent. skilled workers. That is where we stand in the provision of skills. Everything has to be privatised. We have private agents with fancy titles, but they are meaningless and they do not come up with the goods.

Today I received a letter from the British Institute of Management saying:

"The recent European Commission survey indicating that Britain lagged woefully behind other Community countries in the proportion of skilled workers in out workforce shows that much more needs to be done."

That is not a picture of the success that the Minister may attempt to present to the House tonight.

I have just a few questions. Why do our European competitors take such a different view from that of the Conservative Government in Britain? Why do Japanese companies give greater importance to industry and training, and achieve such great success? Why are trade unions not encouraged to become involved? The trade unions represent the producers. Nowadays there is always a confrontation between the Government and the trade unions. I assure the Minister that the trade unions are not Luddites; their jobs and futures are involved.

Some Conservative Members may be involved in the stock exchange, floating money about in companies. The difference for trade unionists is that they devote their whole lives to their industries. That is why they see the matter differently. I get the feeling that the Minister is not serious about this. He is smirking and nodding his head, but I am making a sensible plea for industry to move away from confrontation. There must be a partnership. I come from industry, so I mean what I say and I do not want empty gestures.

There are many subcontractors in the offshore oil industry and there are men working on two-week contracts. I am sure that there is no adequate training and it is possible that some of the disasters on the oil rigs have been the result of inadequate training. There must be changes. We should do away with two-week contracts because the men on the rigs are not properly catered for or protected. We must improve; if we do not, we shall lose for the rest of the 1990s.

7.30 pm

Mr. James Paice (Cambridgeshire, South-East): I want to remind my hon. Friend the Minister and other hon. Members of my long interest in training. I thereby declare an interest—albeit faint, but it is right that I should declare it—as I used to run a training company and I remain a director of the parent holding company. I have, therefore, a particular interest in training.

I have been listening to the hon. Member for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Eastham), with whom I served for about two years on the Select Committee on Employment. We cannot let him get away with one or two of his remarks. He referred to education. Most Conservative Members agree—although Opposition Members would not share the view—that many of today's problems stem from the failure of education to keep pace with the ever-increasing demands being put on it. To

pretend that it is simply a matter of money, as the hon. Gentleman did, is far from the truth. Literacy and numeracy are not expensive skills to teach. They do not require much equipment or fancy buildings. However, we fall down on those skills. We heard from the Chairman of the Select Committee on Employment, the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton), that many people on employment training are without proper literacy and numeracy skills.

The hon. Member for Blackley also referred to colleges of further education. Most of us would say that when further education colleges came into existence they did a good job. The problem was that they did not move with the times and that they became entrenched in the systems they had used in the 1950s and 1960s. Such systems were not up to date for the demands of the 1980s.

It was not until we moved into the training programmes which are the basis of this evening's debate—the youth training scheme, employment training and its predecessors—and which involved private contractors that employers started to place demands on further education colleges to which they had to respond. The hon. Member for Blackley referred to the public accountability of such colleges. The most important accountability is to the people who will employ those whom the colleges are training. The change has come about as a result of the introduction of private contractors, whom the hon. Member for Blackley spent some time rubbishing.

It is a matter of great concern to us all that Britain is still so far behind some of our competitors in training. However, we must not pretend that all is gloom and that nothing is getting better. We must not underestimate the fact that expenditure by all sectors of industry has increased dramatically in the past few years to £19 billion per annum. That is a major increase of about £7 billion on the figure shown in a survey carried out only three years ago. It may not be enough, but let us not talk ourselves into believing that nothing is happening.

It is even clearer to anybody who studies training over the past three or four decades that an awareness of a skills shortage is no new phenomenon. We have lagged woefully behind in training since the second world war. Why were the training boards set up if we did not have a skills problem? The Government of the time believed that the boards would meet that need. However, the training boards did not achieve their aim.

It has seemed right to Labour and to Conservative Governments to try initiative after initiative to improve the level of skills, but they have failed. When the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) referred earlier to the youth opportunities programme, which the Labour Government introduced in the late 1970s, my heart sank. Of all the initiatives tried by Labour and Conservative Governments, that must be pretty near the bottom of the pile. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman is not present to hear what I have to say. He referred to the real value of the wage being paid then, which was £19 a week. That underlines clearly the fundamental difference between the youth opportunities programme, and the youth training scheme—and now youth training. The youth opportunities programme was purely a make-work scheme—an opportunity to get people off the streets for six months and to pay them to do something.

When the youth training scheme was introduced in 1983, it was a major step forward. It was not a make-work scheme. It was not intended simply to provide work, so one should not consider the payments to trainees as wages. The young people were receiving training and, in the long term, training is of greater benefit to them than a few pounds a week would be.

We seem to have a regular mental block about the concept of integrating training with work experience. I am the first to accept that there have been times when standards in YTS, in YT and in employment training have been woefully bad to an extent that none of us as individuals would be prepared to support. However, we cannot and should not damn the whole scheme simply because standards are wrong.

I served on the area manpower board for Norfolk and Suffolk until I was elected to the House. I stressed time and again that we should be far more rigorous in trying to sort out the sheep from the goats among the providers, not by some easy division into public bodies and private bodies, but into those who were providing quality training and those who were not. The Government then introduced the approved training organisation status which was a major step forward, but it was not draconian enough in weeding out many organisations and managing agencies that were failing to produce the required standards.

We have heard much about money this evening. However, we must also remember the effect of the demographic change especially on youth training. In his maiden speech, the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Carr) referred to the fact that Bootle is about 18th from the top of the list of places with the highest employment.

Mr. Leighton: It is 28th.

Mr. Paice: That may be the case. However, there are many constituencies at the other end. My constituency is fifth from the bottom of the same table with unemployment of 1·2 per cent. That is great good fortune for my constituents and it means that businesses are crying out for people to work for them. Businesses recognise the market demand for them to contribute and to pay well to gain employees. They recognise the need to participate in youth training as the means of training their young people. We cannot glibly say that the allowances are not sufficient. In vast areas of the country, especially in the south-east and London, employers need young people to work for them. They recognise that the market demands that they pay a substantial contribution to employ those young people.

I welcome the changeover from YTS to YT. We are now moving away from something that has long been a weakness of the training schemes introduced by Governments of all parties, and emphasising outcome rather than time-serving. It is the outcome of the training that is important, and it does not matter whether it is achieved in a week or in five years. We are trying to enhance people's ability and improve their skills. To insist on a fixed period, as we have in training schemes going right back to the old apprenticeships, is to fail to recognise different learning and skill abilities and the great advances that have been made in training technology and techniques.

Many of those points apply equally to ET. What is missing—perhaps particularly from ET but also from YT—is motivation, not through money but through personal stimulus. I believe that part of the problem lies in the low calibre of many of those who run training operations and—I am sorry to say—many of those working in the

[Mr. Paice]

employment agencies. That is part of the reason—only a small part—why 46 per cent. do not progress from their interview at the jobcentre to the first action-plan work in a training agency: they simply do not have the necessary enthusiasm or motivation. We must examine more carefully why that is because we are talking about 46 per cent. of the whole. The Chairman of the Select Committee referred to other percentages, but they were percentages of the 54 per cent. who actually went along. In numerical terms, the biggest chunk consists of drop-outs who never even start on the scheme. We must consider that as a matter of urgency.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens), who has left his place—[HON. MEMBERS: "He is here."] He is hiding; I have to remind the House that, as he is behind the Bar, he is still outside the Chamber. My hon. Friend said that it is those in work who are the most important. The House spends a lot of time debating the 5·7 per cent. of the population who are unemployed. But if we are worried about Britain's economy and the importance of training to it, we should concern ourselves more with training for the 94·3 per cent. who are in jobs because, to a greater or lesser extent, they contribute to the wealth of Britain. For far too long we have failed to recognise that a skill learned at 19, 20 or 21 is not sufficient to last someone for the rest of his life. Updating and refresher courses are most important.

We must also recognise the importance of management training, as my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton said. Far too many people are promoted because they are the best technicians rather than because they will make the best supervisors or managers. We have gone a long way to improving high-grade management training. We have new MBA courses, and training for top managers is improving dramatically, but training for first and second-tier management often makes or breaks a company and we have a long way to go in that. It is perhaps more important in small and medium-sized companies than in large companies, which tend to have good training operations.

Let us look to the future. I have already referred to the failure of many previous initiatives. Should we now make the political choice to adopt a programme that mirrors more closely those of our major competitors, such as the United States, Germany and even Sweden? Those countries have operations where the employers are in the driving seat. The training and enterprise councils introduced by the Government are based on what is happening in those other countries. It has to be said that many of those countries would not experience the drop-out rate that we have with ET, for the simple reason that one's receipt of unemployment benefit depends on one's attendance of the scheme.

In that respect, our operation is far more lax than those of many other countries. The TECs that are rapidly coming into being will go a long way towards providing employers with the opportunity to get into the driving seat. We need look for no greater justification for the new arrangements than the fact that virtually the whole country is covered by TECs; the programme is already well ahead of the target set for it by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler) when he first announced the establishment of TECs only a little over a year ago. We must respect the opportunities that TECs give.

There is an alternative, about which we may hear a little more in a few minutes. We could go back to a compulsory levy, as the Labour party proposes. We could impose a 0·5 per cent. payroll tax and appoint more bureaucrats to administer it. That would mirror the failure of the industrial training boards: a bureaucracy was required to administer them and they failed to do what really matters.

I believe that the Government's policy on publicly funded training is absolutely right. We must devolve responsibility for the management of, and expenditure on, the schemes to those who can make real decisions—the businesses—and, through them, to the TECs.

If we debate this matter two or three years hence, we shall find that things have improved dramatically. We shall find that, whereas previous initiatives had failed, this initiative has worked.

7.47 pm

Mr. Jack Thompson (Wansbeck): Like most hon. Members, I have no objection to the allocation of money from the Consolidated Fund to support expenditure on improved training facilities, although, like many of my hon. Friends, I am somewhat concerned that £159 million has been taken out. We should have done training a better service had that sum been kept in, particularly had the money been spent in the interests of better opportunities in engineering and the development of engineering skills.

I make no apology for concentrating on the engineering aspects of training. We have to answer a fundamental question: can we afford training—or, rather, can we afford not to have training? That is the essence of the argument. If there is one thing that frustrates me it is Britain's attitude—this is not necessarily the Government's problem—to those in the engineering profession who are considered to be second-class professionals, whose skills come somewhere below those of lawyers, doctors, dentists, artists and financial manipulators.

"Engineering The Future", a document produced in January this year by the Engineering Council and the Secondary Heads Association, says under the heading "Proposals for action":

> "The Finniston Report made this point in 1981: 'Long-term improvements in the supply of engineers will be to no avail—indeed, may not occur—unless the contributions of the current stock of engineers are harnessed to greater effect than hitherto'."

What applied in 1981 still applies in 1990. The document continues:

> "A young Oxbridge graduate made a similar point this year: 'At (a household name in British industry) I would have been a junior assistant engineer in ten years' time. At (a London-based business consultancy partnership) I could be advising the Chairman of that company in less than a week'. In this comment, and in the comparative salary figures he quoted, there is a major issue for industry itself to resolve."

In this country the people who are producing the wealth are not recognised as they should be. We have forgotten that the modern economy of this country has been built on the skills and expertise of the legions of engineers who, over the past century in particular, created the wealth of this nation. People such as Stephenson, Parson, Swan and Armstrong, all from my part of the world, and numerous others over the years have given this country a sound industrial base. However, that has now been weakened by the Government's short-sighted policies.

We do not acknowledge those skills as we should. Often the public's perception of engineers is one of greasy overalls and unpleasant working conitions coupled with comparatively low pay at a professional level—that was the impression of the student to whom I referred. That is not an accurate description of an engineer's work. Engineering can be an interesting and rewarding career for a young person. However, unless attitudes change—and the Government can help in changing those attitudes—serious problems will arise as we move towards closer economic links with Europe. In general, engineers in Europe receive proper respect and remuneration, reflecting their position in the professional social structure. Most western European countries understand that their economic future depends to a large degree on professional engineers as wealth creators.

Why has the need for the continued development of craft skills suddenly become of interest to the Department of Employment? Why has the Department suddenly woken up from its deep Rip van Winkle sleep during the 1980s, when the limitations of the YOP, YTS and ET became evident, and suddenly introduced the training credit scheme described in a press release on 27 March from the Secretaries of State for Employment and for Education and Science as

"A revolutionary new approach to training in this country"?

That is a fine expression. In some parts of the world revolutions cause those responsible for the regime under attack to be shot. I do not advocate that the previous Secretaries of State responsible for inadequate training schemes should be treated in that way because I do not support capital punishment. However, that revolution is being somewhat delayed and the revolutionary torch will not be lit before April next year. Even then it will produce only a glimmer in the dark.

From time to time there will be a number of pilot schemes involving about 10 per cent. of the national total of 16 to 17-year-olds at a time when we lag seriously behind the rest of our western European neighbours. Over a number of years I have had the privilege of being linked through my constituency with a town in Germany on the Rhine called Rhemsied. I have visited that town, which is part of the engineering area of the Rhine valley, on several occasions. It has an engineering training establishment which caters for about 1,000 male and female apprentices —or trainees as we would call them.

That engineering training establishment provides a full range of engineering skills from motor mechanics to electronics, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. It covers the whole gambit of engineering skills to a very high standard. Indeed, I saw equipment in that training establishment which we do not have in factories in this country. The most interesting point was that that establishment was custom-built as a training centre in 1982 when unemployment in Germany was as high as it was in this country.

Even then, the Germans were prepared for the changes that would happen in the 1990s. They recognised that their economy was going to improve and they were preparing for it. I believe that that was a typical example of what was happening particularly in the northern parts of western Europe at that time. Such things are happening now as well. As my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) said earlier, that is why most of those countries have a greater number of skilled personnel than we have in Great Britain.

Some action has been taken here. I pay tribute to the Engineering Council, which has introduced the neighbourhood engineering scheme, and, in my part of the world, the northern engineering centre. The latter will develop neighbourhood engineering schemes linking three or four engineers with secondary schools in teams with teachers. My next-door neighbour is an engineer who will be involved in the scheme. As I understand it, he sent his application form off, but has not received a reply. If any scheme requires urgency, it is that one.

I hope that the neighbourhood engineering schemes will provide an opportunity to increase the interests of students and pupils in engineering as a career. I recognise that the Department of Trade and Industry has contributed £612,000 to that scheme. That is a fine gesture, but it is not enough. I argue that it is a little too little and a little too late.

The waste of the enormous engineering talent in the northern region following the demise of mining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering in the 1980s threw thousands of skilled personnel on the scrap heap. There should have been opportunities for proper training if those people had been handled properly. Not only did the people with the skills in those industries lose their jobs, but there were fewer opportunities for the apprenticeships that might have followed on in those industries. I saw the decline in my industry, the mining industry, and the lack of opportunity for young people to pick up those skills.

I believe that two generations have lost out in the 1980s. Their chance to pick up those skills will not come again. I believe that another organisation deserves public recognition for its activities in engineering. Through its education and training committee, the Machine Tool Technologies Association has established an educational trust fund with a contribution of more than £400,000. It has encouraged other sponsors for its design and building competition as a flagship scheme. It has accepted a commitment to fund both that and students to take an interest in machine tool manufacturing and to allow employees to continue their studies.

Government encouragement and financial support could assist in the rapid development of such enterprising schemes, but not all trade associations are able or willing to follow the example that I have given. The introduction of training and enterprise councils and the pilot schemes, including one in my county of Northumberland, which I suspect might be hit by the poll tax, and the training credit scheme, if successful, will not be effective until at least 1993 or 1994. Those projects must be seriously affected by the cut of £159 million in Government contributions.

It is already clear that the construction industry training board is prepared to introduce major cuts in its training programme at a time when there is a high demand for skilled workers. A report to that effect appeared in our regional newspapers this week. That cut will penalise the proper development and make vocational training even more industrial based.

That is a national issue. Over the next 10 years it is likely that the economy of this country will suffer severely from the lack of Government initiative in earlier decades. Complacency seems to have been the order of the day in

[Mr. Jack Thompson]

the Department of Employment. The country cannot afford that attitude if we are to catch up with our European and international competitors.

7.57 pm

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): No one would dispute the fact that the United Kingdom faces a skills crisis, and the Opposition can be forgiven for being deeply cynical about the widening gap between the claims of the ministerial team in the Department of Employment and the skills reality that they are supposed to be tackling.

After 11 years of the Conservative Government, training policies are in a mess. We still have no coherent strategy for 16 to 19-year-olds. We have no policies for the unemployed which do not smack of coercion and employees in the work force seem to be the least important part of the Government's strategy. Obviously there is a widening skills gap between the United Kingdom and Europe and each day that passes shows clearly a developing crisis here even in the funding and application of Government programmes.

Over the past two or three months, we have seen a catalogue of cuts and crises involving TVEI, the Rathbone Society, the Spastics Society and the YMCA, training providers, training agents and training managers who are all suffering not only from massive cuts measured against the previous budgets, but also from panic policy reactions which do the Government no good and certainly do nothing to help improve the quality of our skills base. Recent news from Europe suggests that we are officially at the bottom of the international skills league. That does not give us any satisfaction, but we hope that it shakes the Government from their complacency.

The damning report from the Employment Select Committee demonstrates what most people have believed for a long time—that ET does not provide quality or positive outcomes for the majority of entrants—and certainly has nothing to do with value for money.

Another crisis is creeping up on the country. It started with the election of this Government. It relates to the assault, the undermining and, finally, the dismantling of much of our training infrastructure. I shall spend my brief time talking about that part of the training infrastructure that has been privatised. Obviously, I refer to the privatisation of the Skills Training Agency. We have seen a scandal at the very heart of Government.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) referred to growing complaints from employers and private companies throughout the country which have been involved. There has been a shabby series of political blunders in the past few months. My hon. Friend was charitable when he described it as possible foolishness. There is growing evidence that the problem goes well beyond foolishness. It is a sensational tale. We want to reveal the serious charges to be levelled against the Government. I hope that the Minister will take those matters very seriously.

It would be bad enough if the debate were only about approximately £135 million of public assets being not sold but given to the private sector. It would not be so bad if the debate were about the £16·4 million of sweeteners that the Government have acknowledged in the estimates. It would not be so bad if the debate were about the £8·6 million that we believe was concealed in the trading accounts of the Skills Training Agency for the year 1988-89—£8·6 million that was destined to help out with early retirement. It would not be so bad if the debate were only about the way in which civil service employees have been treated.

The Liverpool lockout has been mentioned. There has been the laughable Lambeth matter, in which skills centres have been handed over to people with no experience, no track record and virtually nothing that would endear them to any sensible Government. Obviously, there is a deep sense of betrayal among civil servants at the launch of the Astra Training Services bonanza, whereby 400 civil servants were to be made redundant and removed from tackling the skills crisis in this country. As I said, that would be a sensational story, but we believe that it goes much further than that.

Opposition Members challenge the ministerial team within the Department of Employment for abandoning the Government's much-vaunted sound money approach for showing total contempt for accountability to Parliament, and blatant disregard and disrespect for taxpayers. We are seeing a crisis that was hatched under the previous Secretary of State for Employment, the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler). Sadly, that crisis was taken to its logical conclusion by an announcement in the House on 19 February that the centres were to be privatised.

Our charges are quite simple. First, I want briefly to refer to the role of the Ministers, Deloittes, and Mr. Bishell, Mr. Kent and Mr. Wells, who are now the directors of Astra Training Services and were formerly senior civil servants within the Skills Training Agency. Secondly, we wish to talk about the transformation of supply estimates that were brought before the House between March 1989 and February 1990. Thirdly, we want briefly to mention an extraordinary survey that we undertook yesterday with 10 telephone calls to the prospective bidders for the skills agency. What they had to say was cetainly damning of the Government. Unless the House takes action to remedy what we have heard, it will clearly bring Parliament into disrepute.

The Government announced that the three civil servants involved would be taken away from sensitive issues of policy and finance in April 1989, but later in a parliamentary answer we found that the three civil servants, Bishell, Kent and Wells, had been working on the privatisation management buy-out since the autumn of 1988. For seven months they had access to sensitive, highly confidential and commercial information about the future of the agency, and they were also working with Deloittes in that process.

The tragedy is that the management buy-out team was being advised by Coopers and Lybrand. The feasibility study for the same Department was undertaken by Deloittes Haskin and Sells. A few months later, they merged to become Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte.

To what information were they privy in that seven months between autumn 1988 and April 1989 which gave them a preferable bidding position in any privatisation process and also undoubtedly gave them a competitive edge when faced with the challenge of bids from any other participants in the process? As soon as an interest was declared by the three civil servants about a management buy-out, they should have been immediately taken out of that sensitive arena for the period autumn 1988 to April 1989. It is barely credible that, when faced with such

insider information, the participants in that bidding process could have felt anything other than a deep sense of dismay, anger and betrayal. As my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South has mentioned, those people are not traditional allies and friends of the movement and the party that we represent.

Serious charges are being made as to why this matter arose and why the ministerial team in the Department of Employment could not accept that it would be highly damaging. It also meant that people who were bidding for the skill centres would regard it as an elaborate charade.

In March 1989, the supply estimates showed not the accounts of the skills training agency but its income, expenditure and turnover. It was showing a surplus of £16·4 million in March 1989. Why did that surplus turn into a deficit of £22 million by February of this year? Eight months is not long enough for the information upon which the first estimates were based to be redundant by the time the Department of Employment, the Treasury and Ministers had submitted the estimates in February 1990. What is more intriguing is that those same estimates reveal that £40 million was taken out of the employment training budget, £19·2 million of which was then applied to the expenditure totals of the skills training agency. Another £19 million was used as a bookkeeping exercise to cover the Department's expenditure.

The Government may argue that they were going to privatise the agency earlier than anticipated. If that is true, it is simply incompetence. Indeed, we can be charitable and say that it is incompetence and financial mismanagement, and it is. We can say that the Government are complacent about the use of public expenditure—and they are. However, the more serious charge is that there are now serious doubts about the way in which the supply estimates that were presented to the House were handled by the ministerial team in that Department. It is clear that Parliament has been misled by the actions of Ministers when presenting the estimates to the House.

The other argument that the Government may advance is to say that they could not get sufficient numbers to fill the employment training schemes, so income went down. However, if they are arguing that the expenditure figure decreased because it was only a partial year because of the privatisation, how can they cope with a full year of income? The income from employment training and from employers decreased significantly. There was a 40 per cent. cut in the income of the skills training agency between March and February. In the country as a whole, there was only a 5 per cent. cut in employment training expenditure, and yet there was a 40 per cent. cut in the money taken from the skills training agency.

I have said that the Government have at least misled Parliament, but there is a suspicion that things were a great deal worse. We must ask why money is moving about so easily in the Department of Employment budget. Why does expenditure dip and then rise? Why does its income decrease, unrelated to anything that is happening in the country as a whole? In my view, the answer is simply that a combination of ministerial incompetence and of civil servants working to prepare estimates may have created a situation in which privatisation was the best solution for a problem that was created largely by the Government.

Our final points are convincing. Yesterday we telephoned 10 people who had been involved in the bidding process. They are too frightened to go public, but they levelled charges, and the dossier will be given to the appropriate authorities in the House so that they can investigate it.

Those people say that the bidding process was an elaborate charade and that there was no level playing field. They say that they were given desperately inadequate information upon which to base their bids. They are concerned because when the finals bids were submitted, but before they were accepted and announced in the House on 19 February, certain bidders were asked to rebid. That has implications for fair trading. I hope that the Minister will consider that point.

Most of the bidders were not given any idea that large tax handouts would be available as part of the restructuring. The Lakin consortium is a classic example because £0·5 million was given to each of the four centres and yet was denied to the bidder mentioned earlier by my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South. Those bidders believe that the management buyout had the bid sewn up from an early date.

If that is the case, we must ask who the Government are trying to fool. Are they trying to fool the 61 prospective bidders who had thought that they were making a real bid? Are they trying to fool Parliament, or are they trying to fool themselves by thinking that they could transfer nearly £200 million worth of publicly provided assets from the public sector to the private sector and yet provide no income either for the Consolidated Fund, the budget of the Department of Employment or to defray in any way the huge excesses that we have identified this evening?

We think that it is a scandal. We demand firm action from the Government and that they make a statement at the earliest possible date. We shall give our evidence and dossier to the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service so that it can investigate the misleading of Parliament in the supply estimates. We shall also seek further to expose the fair trading aspects of the bidding process and if our evidence is conclusive, we shall take it to the Law Officers. We look forward to the Minister's speech.

8.14 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. Tim Eggar): I begin by paying tribute to the maiden speech of the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Carr). We were all touched by his tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Allan Roberts, who was a very well liked Member. I was also touched by the hon. Gentleman's obvious commitment to the constituency that he is taking over. I was interested in and reflected on his comments that Bootle has provided a permanent majority for hon. Members representing his party. It must therefore be a shock for the hon. Gentleman to come to the House, where, of course, he will be in a permanent minority throughout his parliamentary career.

I am grateful to the Select Committee on Employment and to its Chairman for ensuring that the House has had this opportunity to debate the training estimates today. No hon. Member—of any party—underestimates the importance of training to our future economic prosperity and international competitiveness. Only with a skilled and competent work force will the country possibly be able to meet the challenges which lie ahead of us in the coming years.

I shall try to cover as many of the points that have been made as I can during the time available to me.

[Mr. Tim Eggar]

The hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) and several other hon. Members of all parties have drawn attention to the European Commission's report on relative skill levels in this country and other European Community countries. It is extremely difficult to make sensible international comparisons about such matters. That fact cannot be better illustrated than by the survey that was mentioned by the hon. Member for Fife, Central, which suggests that Greece has a more highly skilled work force than Germany. That may be Madam Papandreou's aspiration, but on an objective level, it is not thought likely.

We have heard a lot from Opposition Members over the last couple of hours about reductions in Government expenditure on training. The House must recognise that the Government will be spending £2·7 billion on training in the current year. That is a massive investment by any standards. Government spending on training has risen sharply, by 60 per cent. in real terms over the past four years. Over the same period, unemployment has gone down by 50 per cent. The hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) did not say that the current level of our training expenditure is nearly three times more in real terms than the amount that the Labour party spent on training in its last year of government.

Of course, the funding levels on youth training and employment training reflect changes in the groups that those programmes are designed to benefit. As the House knows, there has been a severe decline in school leavers. In conjunction with that, there has been a welcome increase in the number of young people staying on at school in full-time education, and a sharp fall in unemployment. It is right that Government programmes and expenditure should adapt to and meet those welcome developments.

As my hon. Friends the Members for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) and for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Paice) have said, it is important that a Government should work in partnership with employers on training. After all, employers are best placed to judge what training is needed and how best that training can be delivered. Employers spent £18 billion on training in 1987, and their contribution to the youth training scheme increased no less than sixfold between 1985 and 1989. We believe that it is right and proper that employers take the main share of responsibility for the investment in training.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) who stressed that employers need to consider taking advantage of recruiting older workers and women returners.

Mr. Nellist: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Eggar: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman. There is a lot of ground to cover and he was not present throughout the debate. I hope that he will forgive me.

Mr. Nellist: Yes, I was.

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Member for Newham, North-East drew attention to the Select Committee's report on employment training.

Mr. Nellist: Take that back.

Mr. Eggar: Employment training is the biggest programme of its kind in Europe. About 700,000 people have joined the programme since it started less than two years ago. More than 200,000 people are on ET at any one time.

Mr. Nellist: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Eggar: That is a massive achievement by any standards. Employment training is a voluntary programme and a popular programme.

Mr. Nellist: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Eggar: I should say to the hon. Gentleman——

Mr. Nellist: We have only 10 minutes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Clearly the Minister does not wish to give way.

Mr. Nellist: I do not wish to take longer than necessary.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I call Mr. Eggar.

Mr. Eggar: As the hon. Gentleman should be aware, about half of the people involved in ET at any one time are on a work placement. The hon. Gentleman suggested that the figure was one quarter. Employment training is helping a wide range of unemployed people, many of whom have particular disadvantages. My hon. Friends and several hon. Gentlemen referred to the need for ET to assist those with special needs of one kind or another. A third of all those who start on ET have been unemployed for more than two years.

Employment training has been of great value to people who lack confidence and motivation to take on a training course, let alone present themselves directly to an employer. Most significantly, the trainees themselves on ET value their training highly. As my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon said, and as the Select Committee knows, a recent survey showed that four out of five of those interviewed agreed that ET had increased their self-confidence and improved their chances of obtaining a job.

Mr. Nellist: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Eggar: In an excellent report, the Employment Select Committee expressed anxiety about drop-out from employment training.

Mr. Nellist: Is this a debate or a monologue?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister has made it clear that he is attempting to reply to the debate and is not prepared to give way.

Mr. Eggar: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman, but I have a great deal to cover. The hon. Member for Fife, Central raised several points that I wish to address. The Select Committee also raised several matters. If the hon. Gentleman had sat throughout the debate and had spoken, of course, I should give way.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Eggar: This is intolerable.

Mr. Nellist: You started it, sunshine.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Minister started it. If he had given way, this would not have happened—*[Interruption.]*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I am attempting to listen to a point of order.

Mr. Nellist: If the Minister had given way, we could have dealt with this more quickly. Given the constraints of the debate, it is not possible for everyone who wants to take part to speak. I spoke to the occupant of the Chair at the beginning of the debate and advised the Chair that I would not seek to take up the time of the Minister and other hon. Members but would seek to make only one point. I have tried to make that point to the Minister for the past four or five minutes. He should withdraw his remark that I did not take part in the debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is not a matter for the Chair, as the hon. Gentleman knows. If the hon. Gentleman had sought to catch my eye or that of my predecessor in the Chair, I am sure that every attempt would have been made to accommodate him.

Mr. Eggar: I was commenting on the Select Committee's report about drop-out from ET. We have introduced several measures designed to deal with the problem. I should like to run through them.

We made several important changes to the employment service's counselling arrangements designed to provide more effective help for people returning to work, particularly the long-term unemployed. Those include specific back-to-work plans setting out the agreed action at the end of each counselling interview and more rigorous and systematic follow-up of those who fail to take the agreed action. That should meet some of the Committee's anxieties.

Secondly, we have introduced more intensive help and advice for every unemployed person who remains unemployed after two years. From the autumn, those in that group who persistently refuse all options on offer will be required to take one of our short restart courses.

Thirdly, we have set the new Employment Service Agency a specific target for the number of long-term unemployed people who start on ET—rather than those who are simply referred to employment training. That will give the employment service clear responsibility for helping people to start on programmes.

Fourthly, we have streamlined the procedures for entry into ET, to cut down time from the initial interview to the start of training.

Finally, as I have said already, we set up an internal scrutiny group to examine the specific issue of take-up. Several of the measures that I have announced today address the scrutiny group's recommendations. We intend to make the scrutiny public and to decide on any further action before the recess. I shall certainly take into account the points made on the matter by both the Select Committee and hon. Members on both sides of the House when we come to make our decisions.

In the few minutes available to me, I shall deal with the points raised by the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and the hon. Member for Fife, Central. Both commented on the sale of the Skills Training Agency. On behalf of the Government I wish to make our position absolutely clear. There is no scandal. No one received favourable treatment and there were no sweeteners. The sale was conducted in an entirely fair and scrupulous way. All the organisations that expressed an interest were able to bid on an equal basis. All the bids that we received were evaluated on an equal basis by our professional advisers so that a proper comparison could be made between each bid.

In our final decision on the sale, we went for the combination which best met the Government's objectives for the sale. Those objectives started with the need to preserve training capacity and to offer the best return to the taxpayer. I resent the attack that was made on civil servants. I assure the House that those three civil servants were divorced from decisions affecting personnel and resource matters which might affect the new companies.

The right way to have the matter examined—I welcome the decision of the National Audit Office—is for the NAO to carry out a study into the sale of the Skills Training Agency. The appropriation accounts audited by the NAO show that the STA made a loss in all but one of the past five years. Estimates were laid before the House and were available for all hon. Members to sell. We expected to sell the STA in the financial year of 1989-90. We missed that deadline. We completed the bulk of the sale at the end of April, some four weeks after the end of the financial year in 1990. The House will recognise our difficulty in producing estimates to cover that time of flux. I am confident that the NAO will confirm the substantial loss of the STA indicated in the revised estimates.

I apologise to hon. Members on both sides of the House that I have not covered some points. In the time available to me, I have tried to deal with the issues as fully, comprehensively, and fairly as possible. I welcome the decision of the House to have this debate. I know that the hon. Member for Newham, North-East wishes to have the last word.

Mr. Leighton *rose*——

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. We still have time left.

Mr. Leighton *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I must listen to a point of order.

Mr. Nellist: We still have one minute left. Therefore, I rise to make a short speech.

Mr. Leighton: The Minister has kindly agreed to give ——

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Gentleman wish to put a point of order to me?

Mr. Nellist: I do not need to ask the leave of the House to speak a second time. Therefore, I rise to take the last minute if the Minister does not want it.

The scandal about this debate, which the Minister has refused to answer, is the point that——

The Questions necessary to dispose of the proceedings were deferred, pursuant to paragraph (4) of Standing Order No. 52 (Consideration of Estimates) and the Resolution [6 June].

Department of Social Security

Low Income Statistics

Class XIV, Vote 7

[Relevant documents: Fourth Report from the Social Services Committee, Session 1987-88, Families on Low Income: Low Income Statistics (House of Commons Paper No. 565), the Government's reply to that Report (Cm. 523), the Fourth Report from the Social Services Committee, Session 1989-90, Low Income Statistics (House of Commons Paper No. 376) and Memoranda laid before the Committee: Households Below Average Income: A regional analysis 1980-85, a study commissioned by the Social Services Committee, Session 1989-90 (House of Commons Paper No. 378-1), and The Income Support System and the Distribution of Income in 1987, a study commissioned by the Social Services Committee, Session 1989-90 (House of Commons Paper No. 378-11)]

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a further sum, not exceeding £991,572,000, be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1991 for expenditure by the Department of Social Security on administration, for agency payments, and for certain other services including grants to local authorities, voluntary organisations, and major capital works projects for the Department of Health, including telecommunications capital.—*[Mr. Nicholas Scott.]*

8.30 pm

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): I wish to thank the Liaison Committee for the time that has been made available to discuss the estimate. I draw the attention of the House to my entry in the Register of Members' Interests, where I am listed as parliamentary consultant to the Civil and Public Servants Association. Hon. Members might feel that my contribution will be unduly influenced by that responsibility. There will be a prize for anyone who can spot the bias. However, I warn the House that I will be judge and jury on whether the prize is to be awarded.

I thank Bob Twigger in the statistics section of the Library for the help that he gave the Select Committee with its report. I thank the specialist advisers Tony Atkinson, Richard Berthoud and Michael O'Higgins. I thank the two researchers from the Institute for Fiscal Studies who carried out the work for the Committee—Steven Webb and Paul Johnson. The debate gives me the opportunity, on behalff of the Committee, to thank our staff. They number only six and their performance is something that I and other hon. Members wish to salute.

The debate is about the estimate and the opportunity provided to carry out our traditional function as parliamentarians: to monitor how the poor fare, and especially how they have fared during the past decade. In fairness, the Minister may say that we should debate a slightly narrower span. We must be honest and complimentary about the Government, in that they have always been clear about how they believe they should carry out the responsibility of judging the welfare of the poor. They have not been interested, as historically we have been interested, in counting the numbers—indeed, the head count exercise has been abolished. Those hon. Members who have longer experience than I have—I am pleased to see my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) in his place—may say that that was because the Government knew what was happening to the figures. However, we all know that the head-counting exercise ceased operation half way through this Parliament.

The Government also said that they were not interested—as other Governments had been—in measuring whether the gap had grown between the living standards of those at the bottom of society and those on average earnings, let alone those on high earnings. They said that they were interested in only one thing—that if they could get the economy to grow, the living standards of those at the bottom would grow faster than they would otherwise grow in periods of more modest economic growth. We can understand why the Government, after abolishing the low income statistics and introducing their new analysis of households below average earnings, were so happy to fall on the results, which seemed to justify all that the Government had asserted—that if they got the economy moving, not just crumbs but whole loaves would fall off the rich man's table to those below the tablecloth.

We might ask why the Government so readily accepted the figures from their statisticians. Opposition Members and perhaps some Conservative Members—I would call them hon. Friends—might question whether the Government checked those figures. If they did, who did the checking? It was because the figures did not make sense to the Select Committee that we asked Parliament for money to ask the Institute for Fiscal Studies to prepare a report, and that report gave us very different findings to those published by the Government.

When the Committee examined the figures it asked how, with the big increase in unemployment, the figures could be true. How could they add up when the Government had had a strategy of trying to get people into low-paid jobs? Indeed, the Government subsidised people who took low-paid jobs. How could the figures make sense when there had been cuts in child benefit? How could they make sense when the Government had abolished the link with earnings or prices, whichever was most favourable, for payment of long-term benefits? How could they make sense when a record number of people were becoming disqualified from benefit? How could they make sense when, in some instances, wages councils had been abolished or their scope impaired?

It is important to put the findings on the record. The Government's original report said that the poorest 10 per cent. had experienced an increase in their living standards of twice that experienced by the average household. We questioned that. The findings of the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that, far from the gain for the poorest being twice that of the average household, it was only half. To some extent, therefore, this debate is genuinely seeking information from the Government about how they operate, and I hope that the Minister will not treat that cynically when he replies.

Do the Government use those figures? When they were setting the recent benefit increases, did they look at their findings on what was happening to the living standards of those on below average earnings, and especially the poorest? If so, how did that affect the uprating? What will the Government do at the next uprating when their figures must be put aside and they are aware of the Select Committee findings, which show a different picture? If the Government pay no attention either to their figures or to our figures, why collect them in the first place and why go through the charade of pretending that they are important?

I wish to explain what the Committee hopes that the Government's approach will be. The Minister may emphasise the favourable parts of our previous report which welcomed the new data published by the Government. The Committee did not suggest that it was a foul and unnecessary exercise; it said that the information was an important collection of data on what was happening to the living standards of those on below average incomes.

For instance, it allows us to relate how the living standards of those at the bottom are rising compared with all other groups in the community. It allows us to check the numbers. Unlike having a lowest 10 per cent.—and there must always be a bottom 10 per cent.—if the Government pick a point at half average earnings, it is of interest to know whether their policy on targeting is working. If it is, we would expect the numbers on below half average earnings to fall. If the numbers were increasing, that might suggest that the targeting policy was not as successful as the Government have claimed. Therefore, the Opposition and the Select Committee welcome the introduction of the new data, although we might make a plea for it to be better checked next time.

We have said that it is important to run that data in parallel with other data counting the numbers on benefit, not because it will prove a political point but because the House sets the rates of benefit and it has a duty and a responsibility to determine how many people are claiming those benefits and—probably more important—how many people who may be eligible are not claiming and therefore have living standards below that level.

In making a plea for the reintroduction of the old series, to run parallel with the Government's series, I hope that no one will use that as a definition of poverty. That would be a sterile debate. It would mean that if a Government increased the real value of benefits, one side could say that the numbers of poor had gone up, even though the living standards of those groups had risen.

Equally, if the Government reduced the real rates of benefits, they could proudly tell Parliament, "We have achieved the target of reducing the numbers in poverty," although at the same time they would have to admit, if they were honest, that they were making the survival of the poor that much more difficult.

I am not, therefore, asking for such a reintroduction so that we can return to that sterile debate. We need it because historically, for more than a century, we have examined the rates laid down by the House—in the Poor Laws, under the old unemployment assistance board, in terms of national assistance, under supplementary benefit or now under income support—to see how the numbers claiming are rising or falling and, of particular importance, whether people are below that level.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Is the Chairman of the Select Committee saying that, when there is economic growth in a country, all people, whatever their income—whether they are in receipt of income or earnings or benefit—should benefit from that economic growth? Does he agree that that should be the objective of any Government, Labour, Liberal Democrat or Conservative?

Mr. Field: Yes indeed, and the two Conservative Members seated below the Gangway—the hon. Members for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) and for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price)—were Members when a Conservative Government put on to the statute book regulations to ensure that that happened. They were also Members when, sadly, the Government abolished the link between earnings and prices, using whichever was the most favourable to claimants, and thus ensured that during a period of record economic growth those at the bottom did not participate in the way in which the hon. Member for Macclesfield described.

If all hon. Members who wish to take part in the debate are to get in, we must be disciplined and limit ourselves to about 10 minutes, so I end with three further questions, and I hope that in the Minister's 10-minute reply he will give a hint of an answer.

First, the Minister is in a superior position to the rest of us, except for his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security, whom we welcome to the debate, in that he has seen the results of the data concerning living standards between 1985 and 1987. Would we be right in thinking that one reason why the Government have not published those figures relating to the period up to 1987 is that the results for the poorest show an even worse outcome than the revised figures that the Select Committee published for 1981 to 1985?

Secondly, given that the biggest reforms since Beveridge —that is how—the Government billed them—were introduced by income support in 1988, will the Government undertake a special analysis of the data for that year so that we can see who gained, who lost and how effective that whole policy review was?

If the Government say that their resources are limited and their statisticians overworked, and similar circumsta nces with which we can sympathise, may I ask them, thirdly, as the Conservatives favour contracting out, to consider contracting out the whole of this operation to the Institute of Fiscal Studies? Not only might that result in fewer mistakes, but, considering the performance of the institute, we would have the results much sooner. Might that be the reason why the Government do not want to go in for a bit of privatisation on this front?

8.43 pm

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): I support the general thrust of what the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) said. The House will recognise that he was speaking as Chairman of the Select Committee on Social Services. As such, he should—I am sure that he does—command the respect and attention of the House. The hon. Gentleman was so comprehensive in his remarks that I can be mercifully brief.

I have only one general point to make. It is that the more accurate measurement of low incomes is essential to the implementation of this or any other Government's social policies. For many years it has been agreed across the party spectrum that there should be a floor in society below which nobody—I emphasise "nobody"—should be allowed to fall.

I remind my hon. Friends that we in the Conservative party have been committed to such a proposition certainly since the wartime coalition Government and their 1944 White Papers, and many could argue, much earlier. In "The Right Road for Britain," a policy statement of our party in 1950, we said:

"The social services are no longer, even in theory, a form of poor relief. They are a co-operative system of mutual aid

[Sir David Price]

and self-help provided by the whole nation and designed to give to all the basic minimum of security, of housing, of opportunity, of employment and of living standards"—

I ask the House to mark the following words—

"below which our duty to one another forbids us to permit anyone to fall."

"The Right Road for Britain" was only a spelling out of what our then leader, Winston Churchill, declared to our Brighton party conference in 1947, which I attended, when he said:

"The scheme of society for which we stand is the establishment and maintenance of a basic minimum standard of life and labour below which a man or woman of goodwill, however old and weak, will not be allowed to fall."

The obvious question which arises from such clear social purposes is how we collectively, as a society, set and then monitor that basic minimum standard. That is the issue before us tonight.

The current mechanism by which we deliver financial assistance to those at the lowest levels of the income scale is income support and housing benefit, following, historically, supplementary benefit. But how are we to know whether that income support is at any moment set at a level sufficient to achieve that purpose? How do we know when it is failing because it is insufficient? Are there any objective measures by which income levels can be set? Is that an impossible statistical exercise? Must we be content with more subjective factors to determine minimum income?

I confess that I seek some objective measure which all can recognise and accept as a fair description of minimum income at any moment, an objective measure that is resistant to political disputation. Perhaps I express a faint and distant hope. But only by that means can we do right by the poorest of our fellow citizens. As the great Lord Kelvin stated:

"When you can measure what you are speaking of, and express it in numbers, you know that of which you are discoursing. But when you cannot measure it, and express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a very meagre and unsatisfactory kind."

None of those who study these matters would claim that current figures are very meagre. That would be a reckless assertion. But I hope that we can all recognise that they are far from fully satisfactory. The hon. Member for Birkenhead began to illustrate their unsatisfactory nature.

As I see it, the current discussion about how to measure low income—some would say how to measure poverty—is a choice between using social security benefit or using some defined point in the distribution of income. The second key issue, whichever yardstick is chosen, is what can be bought at that level of income—in other words, what standard of living that income permits.

The third issue is who is living at or below that standard of living—what are the composition and characteristics of the lowest income groups? Are they permanent groups or do people move in and out? The use of social security benefit scales, as the hon. Member for Birkenhead said, has an obvious appeal because there is a clear policy relationship. To some extent, the scales represent the levels of living for others that we as a community are willing to pay for. Therefore, there is an obvious interest in how people are faring in relation to those income levels. Their use also means that the choice of that cut-off point does not lie solely with the interpreter of the figures, although there has been some disagreement about whether the appropriate cut-off point is 100 per cent. of the scale, 110 per cent. or 120 per cent.

However, the benefit scales approach can be positively misleading. As the hon. Member for Birkenhead said, Ministers and officials have, for at least 20 years, made that point by saying that if benefit rates are increased, the effect is to raise the number of people in poverty. Equally, if benefits fall relative to the incomes of the rest of the population, the use of benefit scales as a yardstick will mask an underlying increase in poverty. In some ways, by using that yardstick, one can determine how great the poverty is, rather than the reality of the poverty.

The value of a criterion based on a particular point on the distribution of income has the advantage of allowing the effect of policy changes to be examined. But that depends on the criterion chosen. A crude choice would focus on, for example, the bottom 10 or 20 per cent. on the income scale. But as there will always be a bottom 10 or 20 per cent., such a choice is not of itself illuminating. That is why the usual choice in such an analysis is to examine the numbers or characteristics of people below a particular proportion of the average in the distribution of income. That approach runs into the objection that it is not a measure of poverty or low income, but of inequality in the distribution of income. Therefore, both the favoured measures seem to have major disadvantages.

I hope that I have said enough to demonstrate to the House the difficulty of measuring low incomes accurately, and why the current measures are not totally satisfactory for determining the floor in society that all hon. Members are determined to achieve. That is why we on the Select Committee have been encouraging further examination of the issues and why, next month, we shall hold a seminar to try to advance the issue. I hope that we have the fullest approval of the House for a noble cause—improving the lot of the poorest of our fellow citizens.

8.54 pm

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): The hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) has postulated a noble and worthy objective. The only problem is that the Government have not delivered it—indeed many Opposition Members would say that they never had any intention of doing so. I do not say that about the hon. Member for Eastleigh, but I certainly say it about the Government.

I wish to start my remarks constructively. We all agree that the House owes a considerable debt of gratitude to the Select Committee on Social Services for its report. I pay warm tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), who chaired the Committee, and all its members for so strikingly bringing to light a dark corner of this nation's life about which there has been so much obfuscation and deception. It showed the Select Committee system at its best, and I offer unstinting praise to all its members who have persevered to discover the truth and publish it. I recognise that it had a Conservative majority.

The report puts poverty squarely back on the political agenda. The Government have striven vigorously, by every trick in the book, to prevent that. First, they denied that it even existed. In 1986, the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), obviously an authority on the subject, judging from his string of City directorships, said:

"Poverty is just not an issue."

The Prime Minister said in the House:

"Everyone in the nation has benefited from the increased prosperity—everyone."—[*Official Report*, 17 May 1988; Vol. 133, c. 801.]

When the Government could deny the existence of poverty no longer, they decided to muddy the ground by altering the basis of the statistics. A good maxim of this Government is always, "If the facts are embarrassing, change the method of calculation." They have done so repeatedly, most notably with the unemployment figures, which have been changed no fewer than 27 times. But they still cannot get the figure lower than the one they inherited in 1979. They have also done so by massaging the trade figures, culling the hospital waiting lists and, most recently, trying to fiddle the retail prices index. There have never been a Government who have so shamelessly doctored the figures. It is well known that there are many senior officials in the Government's statistical service who are deeply unhappy at the political abuse of their professional services.

The Minister for Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Scott): Not true.

Mr. Meacher: It is well known, and has certainly been widely reported. If the Minister wishes to challenge it, I shall send him the evidence on which I base my remark.

In the same vein, as poverty mounted in the mid-1980s, the Government announced a technical review of the methodology of calculating the level of poverty. The review reported in 1988—just in time, because at the same time, the 1985 low-income families' figures were published showing startling increases in the number of people living on the lowest incomes. Therefore, using the review as an excuse, the Government promptly shut down the statistical series that produced such embarrassing results.

I hope that it is not unfair to say that the Government's motto is clearly, "If you can't beat them, close them down." I suppose that is roughly the Prime Minister's attitude to the Greater London council. The Government's new line was that supplementary benefit rate should no longer be used as the benchmark of poverty, for the reasons given by the hon. Member for Eastleigh. They said that in future the yardstick would be average earnings, and those below various fixed proportions of average earnings, and those below various fixed proportions of average earnings.

That approach is flawed in three ways. First, the Government closed down the first statistical series in 1985, which the review committee never recommended. It is impossible to have continuity in estimates of poverty throughout the 1980s. The Government have succeeded well in blurring the comparison of what happened in the first half of the decade with what has happened in the second half.

Secondly, the new statistical series produced a howler, as we know, that was convenient for the Government. Far from admitting the huge increase in poverty that was taking place, the Government used the new figures to claim that the poor were becoming better off at twice the rate of those on average income, as my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead said. That is such an absurd mistake that one cannot help wondering, as my hon. Friend did, whether it owed more to politics than to arithmetic. However, I suppose that we must accept that it was an official error. Like my hon. Friend, I would simply add that, if Ministers did not immediately regard such a conclusion as totally contrary to all practical experience as unemployment tripled in the mid-1980s, and did not then immediately demand that the figures should be rechecked, their judgment loses all credibility.

The third flaw in the Government's approach is that, having produced a new statistical framework that was not only discontinuous with what went before but started life with a palpable falsehood, they are publishing no information at all on the subject. In 1979, the low-income family figures were published every year. Today, poverty statistics are five years out of date. The 1987 figures of households having below-average incomes were promised before last Christmas, then early in the new year, then before Easter. They have still not been published. If the Government expect revised poll tax assessments for millions of people to be processed and dispatched within a matter of weeks, failing still to produce poverty statistics that are now three years out of date smells more of political deviousness than administrative incompetence.

What is so contemptible about the Government's response is that, while they reject the traditional definition of poverty—and I understand the objections—they refuse to produce any definition of their own. It is not difficult to understand why. Whatever definition one chooses, poverty has sharply increased over the past decade.

Suppose that one adopts the traditional definition based on those living on, below, or only just above the supplementary benefit line. That is a reasonable definition, because it represents the minimum income on which Parliament expects people to live. It is also a distinctly conservative definition. Today's income support rate for an adult over 25 is £36·70, or £57·60 for a couple. Compare that with today's average wage of £295 per week, according to the Government's figures.

That means that a single adult on supplementary benefit has to survive on one eighth of the average wage, and a couple on less than one fifth. I wonder how many right hon. and hon. Members, and particularly the Tory Members to whom I am addressing this remark, could live on such a small income for a week, let alone for months or years on end. One former Conservative Member, Matthew Parris, could not manage to do so when he tried.

Taking even an extremely meagre definition of poverty, it is a matter for urgent attention on this country's political agenda that, in 1979, 4 million people were living on supplementary benefit but by 1985, there were 7 million. In 1979, a further 2 million people were living below the supplementary benefit level, but by 1985 the figure had risen to 2·5 million.

Because supplementary benefit involved entitlement to single payments for such items as bedding and fridges, until the former Secretary of State abolished them in the infamous Fowler reviews, and because such items are worth up to 40 per cent. of basic supplementary benefit rates, it is relevant that, in 1979, a total of 5·5 million people were living just 40 per cent. above the supplementary benefit line, but by 1985 the figure had risen to 6 million.

By a highly conservative definition of poverty, by 1985 an extra 4 million people, making a total of 15·5 million, were living on extremely low incomes. That is about one in four of the population, according to the Government's own figures. It is particularly worrying that the number of children living below the supplementary benefit line nearly doubled in the six years to 1985, to 2·5 million. That puts an entirely different gloss on the upbeat picture that the

[Mr. Meacher]

Prime Minister so often and so misleadingly paints, when she says that average earnings have increased by 31 per cent. since 1979. The right hon. Lady omits to mention that that increase is confined to those in work and excludes all who cannot work and who are dependent on benefits. They account for one third of the whole nation.

The Prime Minister also manages to avoid mentioning that that group has increased—not decreased—by as much as one third under her regime, and she has been forced to eat her words that the poorest one tenth of the population have enjoyed a rise in their real living standards of double the average. As we now know, the actual rise of 2 per cent. per year is little more than one third of the national average.

Even that 2 per cent. is an average figure covering 5 million people, which suggests that large numbers of them have almost certainly enjoyed no increase. In other words, there has been a growth in absolute poverty during the Government's first six years.

We continually talk about percentage increases for this group or that group. At the risk of sounding banal, let me point out that people do not buy things in shops with percentages; they pay money. The Government's use of percentages is a gross concealment of what is happening in our society. Let me give three examples.

The Government have now been forced to admit that the poorest tenth of the population have had an average income rise of 2 per cent. a year; the average worker—the Government are constantly complaining—is receiving a rise of 9·5 per cent.; but a recent survey in *The Guardian* showed that the chairmen of Britain's top 100 companies paid themselves a 33 per cent. increase last year.

That implies that the average worker did four times better than the lowest-paid tenth of the population, and that the top chairmen did four times better than the average worker; but that is not the case. The percentages are calculated on completely different bases. Those percentages actually mean that the poorest tenth of the population have been receiving about a 70p rise a week and the average worker a rise of £27 a week, but that Britain's top chairmen have been paying themselves rises that average £2,400 a week.

The Government should stop their pretence that ours is a percentages society. They should stop veiling the reality of inequality in Britain today and spell out the facts of poverty in pounds and pence, which everyone can understand and with which everyone can identify. If they will not do that, it is because they do not want the truth to be known, but Opposition Members do. In future, we shall regularly give the straight money facts about poverty and wealth in cash figures for all to see.

The Government last published figures five years ago. It is a scandal that they have shut down the low income family series, thus depriving us of the only comprehensive data that analyse the performance of social security and its ability to provide an income safety net for those in need. That, of course, is precisely why the Government shut it down. Nevertheless, despite all the Government's attempts to conceal, there are pointers to what has been happening post-1985.

I am sure that all hon. Members take the point so nicely made by my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead about privatising, but there is one form of it that we would all favour. It was the Institute for Fiscal Studies that exposed the Government's howler pre-1985, and it has now produced estimates for 1987 on a similar basis to the low-income family series. It found that the number of people in families living on, below or no more than 40 per cent. above the poverty line had risen to 18·5 million—7 million more than in 1979. What makes that all the more remarkable is that it was after the longest burst of economic growth since the war, as the former Chancellor —who is not known for his modesty—constantly reminds us. On that basis, one wonders what is happening now, when the economy is in stagnation and on the brink of recession.

For more than a century, Governments have been keeping an annual check on the position of low-paid workers. Throughout that century, with monotonous consistency, the lowest-paid tenth have maintained their pay at 65 or 66 per cent. of the national average: that was exactly the position in 1979. Today their pay has been cut to 58 per cent.—probably the lowest relative position that low-paid workers have held for 100 years.

We have a two-thirds/one-third society with a vengeance. The wealthy have been showered with gains beyond the dreams of avarice; the middle two thirds—at least until the poll tax and bruising interest rates—have done well; whereas for the bottom third—we must not forget that that means nearly 20 million people—there has been unrelieved disaster.

Poverty, however one defines it, has been sharply on the increase in the past decade. To deny it, misrepresent it, conceal it and then ignore it—which has been the Government's response—may be the cynical politics of complacency, but there are clear signs that that is distasteful to an increasing majority of the electorate. As the recession bites and unemployment rises, I predict that poverty will rise on the political agenda. That is one more reason why the Government's days are numbered.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that this debate has to end at 10 o'clock and that quite a number of hon. Members wish to participate. If they confine their speeches to six minutes each, that will enable more hon. Members to be called and allow time for the Minister to speak.

9.12 pm

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): I do not feel tempted to follow the argument of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) although I think that he introduced a rather specious note into a debate that was getting on rather well. To put the lie to his claim that the Government wish to sweep things under the carpet, I have a letter from the Central Statistical Office, dated 12 December 1989, signed by Mr. T. Griffin, which came about as a result of work done by Martin Lloyd, the managing director of the Isle of Wight development board, and some parliamentary questions which I asked about the gross domestic product of the island. The Central Statistical Office has agreed that the island, along with the border regions of Scotland which were previously grouped with Lothian, should have distinct statistics for GDP.

Lest anyone come to the debate with the spurious view that these issues affect only areas other than the south-east, may I say that the Isle of Wight, which I represent, has a

GDP which is 77 per cent. of the United Kingdom average and the highest seasonal unemployment in the United Kingdom.

I do not know whether my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security will find my contribution helpful or enlightening. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) put his finger on it when he said words to the effect, "Some hopes that we will ever debate this subject and agree on a definition."

I want to draw to the Minister's attention the fact that the Rural Development Commission, in conjunction with the Isle of Wight development board, has funded a study by Ernst Young, the first stage of which has just been completed, and deals with the curent economic position of the island and its evolution over the past decade.

The study shows that, although the economy has grown substantially, reflecting the expansion of our manufacturing and service base, we are still 25 per cent. behind the United Kingdom and 33 per cent. behind the rest of the south-east. When we study the figures, an extraordinary situation is revealed. The study has only just been published and we are awaiting phases two and three to enable us to create an economic strategy for the island. It reveals that, while the average gross weekly full-time male earnings on the island are substantially below those in Hampshire and the United Kingdom as a whole, car ownership, which is generally taken as a reliable indicator or personal wealth, is much above the average for the United Kingdom. That is the point that I wish to draw to the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister.

There is a continual contradiction within our local economy on the Isle of Wight: for some years we have worn the badge of low wages, without the consequent economic deprivation, and we score "Z" factors in local government terms.

The degree of hardship that one might have expected to find, given the level of wages, is absent. Although there is a seasonal level of unemployment, the black economy has to be taken into account, but I am far from certain as to how it can be measured. It will not divide the House either politically or in any other way if I say that my constituency is an economy in its own right.

The excellent report from Ernst Young, with two additional phases to come, may be more constructive than what was said by the hon. Member for Oldham, West in his harangue. The Isle of Wight might be an appropriate place in which to look further at the problem of defining statistics. Both my hon. Friend and I know that there are "lies, damned lies and statistics."

The extraordinary feature of the Isle of Wight is that wages are low, though home ownership and car ownership are well above average. That is incompatible with wage levels on the Isle of Wight and the level of economic activity.

9.16 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): The House will forgive me if I do not follow the wholly economics-driven argument advanced by the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field). This is an important debate. I echo the tributes that have been paid to the Select Committee for the valuable work that it has done. I agree with the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) that this is exactly how Select Committees should work and that the Government ought to be cross-examined rigorously about these important subjects.

There is a danger of getting too hung up on methodology—of concentrating too much on statistics and forgetting that human beings are the object of the exercise: to make life better for those at the bottom of the financial league table.

Most of my points are derived unashamedly from the Select Committee report. For obvious reasons, I am anxious that more information should be provided on a regional basis. There would be difficulties over sample statistics in the case of the English regions and the nations of Wales and Scotland. There is a big difference between the economy in the south of the country and that in the highlands and islands, the borders and Wales. Living standards are quite different. Temperature plays its part, as do transport costs. There are many other significant factors.

I wholeheartedly endorse, therefore, the plea for more information to be made available on a regional basis. The Department made a limp excuse in the memorandum that it submitted to the Select Committee. It said that it would cost too much money to do that, but then it said that it would cost about £100,000. If the Department of Social Security wishes to guard itself against the charge of massaging the figures and hiding the truth, it would do itself a favour if it provided statistics on a regional basis.

I agree with the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) that it is important to know exactly who the poorest members of the community are—not just the numbers but the composition of the group. Do the poorest 10 per cent. of the population stay in the lowest decile or do people pass through it? Is there a pattern? That information is vital in determining Government policy.

The Select Committee drew attention to the impact of benefit and the extent to which the incomes of the lowest 10 per cent. of the population are determined by benefit. Nearly 2·3 million people have been on long-term benefit for more than three years. They represent a significant group of people and we must turn our attention to help them more in future if these debates are to mean anything.

It is also important to study the impact of the 1988 changes. The Select Committee was right to say that the combination of the introduction of water rates being charged at the full level and the 20 per cent. contribution to local government finance—offset by the £1·30 flat rate one-off payment—have made a significant impact. My constituency casework has reflected that. The statisticians will have to consider that as a matter of some urgency. The Select Committee was right to say that the living standards of the poorest 10 per cent. in the community have fallen by about 3 per cent. as a direct result of those changes. If that is true, the Government should address that matter urgently.

The Select Committee correctly identified housing tenure as a factor that needed attention. Housing costs —particularly for single elderly pensioners in my constituency—are becoming a much bigger proportion of people's income.

There are difficulties in measuring poverty, and I am sure that the Select Committee is right to carry out a longer-term study on minimum income. I hope that I can get a ticket to the seminar and I also hope that the tickets are free. The longer-term study is a valuable piece of work, if only to concentrate the Department's mind. The fact that the Department has someone at its shoulder will keep its mind concentrated, especially as the Select Committee is so capable and has access to so much expert advice.

[Mr. Archy Kirkwood]

Explicit income levels that may well require subjective and in some cases arbitrary judgments are necessary, even case by case, to establish a target, an objective or a standard by which other things can be measured. I agree entirely with the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) that setting poverty levels is a spurious game. In the past, Governments of both political complexions have run up against that problem. I hope that he will agree that the work that has been carried out by the family budget unit and some other organisations to put a real cost on people's economic situations is nothing but helpful. Of course we must be careful about how we use that information, but it provides a comparison with the level of benefit that we are offering claimants. I consider that, by that standard, benefits will be found inadequate, but that is not a new argument.

The technical review that was carried out by the Department of Social Security was flawed because it did not take any independent advice whatsoever. It was an internal review. The Minister is looking shocked and horrified by that suggestion, but it would have been much better had the Department taken representations from outside experts. I am sure that the experts in the Department are reliable and technically sensible, but the results would have been accepted more readily had there been some input from elsewhere. There were a number of objections. The use of household incomes instead of family incomes was a mistake, and I entirely endorse the pleas that have been made from both sides of the House today that the new series and the old series of statistics should be run in parallel if we are to achieve any sensible comparisons throughout the decade.

The quality and timing of the statistics are a scandal. I do not know whose fault that is and I am not trying to make a cheap party political point. However, not to have data available for five years on such a crucial issue of public policy is indefensible. I do not know what the statistical problems are. I understand that the family expenditure survey takes a wee while to generate and that the figures are drawn from that. However, it is not acceptable that it has taken so long to produce information that is so essential to any Government's promulgation of sensible policy in this area.

9.25 pm

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I will accept your advice, Mr. Speaker, to be brief. There is one area in which I am in agreement with the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), which is that the activity of the Select Committee on Social Services displays the work of the Select Committees at its best. The Select Committees do an excellent job. They are a most important part of this House and it is clear to me how important they are when we say to the House that we have spotted a major discrepancy in Government figures which clearly has had a bearing on Government policy.

The Government have accepted with a good grace that they are wrong, and it is most unfortunate that the hon. Member for Oldham, West did not pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for his outstanding work. I am often critical of my party's Government, but I believe that the hon. Member for Oldham, West could have praised my right hon. Friend for his excellent work since he has held his present office. On all occasions, he has done his best to represent the interests of those for whom he is responsible and to improve the benefits payable.

I also give the same praise to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security. I have known him in the House for many years. He has given outstanding service to the Department of Social Security and I only regret that he was not placed in his present position sooner to bring his guidance and dynamism to the job. I am convinced that he will do a great deal more good.

The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), who is Chairman of the Select Committee on Social Services, inspired us to take on our inquiry into minimum income statistics and he was right to do so. The Select Committee has provided a fine service to the House.

Four major themes came from the contribution of the hon. Member for Birkenhead and from the excellent contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price). They referred to the errors in the low income statistics and to the policy implications of those errors, which the Select Committee discovered and highlighted. They also spoke of how best to measure poverty/low income and about the trends in poverty/low income in recent years. I do not want to go over the ground that has been covered so capably by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh and by the hon. Member for Birkenhead.

I wish to point out to Ministers that there are problems facing us today. There are people who have not benefited from the fairly substantial growth from which so many have benefited. The hon. Member for Oldham, West pointed out that the greater percentage of people have benefited from the improvement in economic growth over the past 11 years. However, some people in my constituency are falling deeper and deeper into debt.

As the hon. Member for Birkenhead knows, my area has seen tremendous strides made in recent years. We have had immense economic improvement in our area and it is scarcely recognisable compared with what it was 20 years ago. I have seen an immense improvement since I have been the Member of Parliament for Macclesfield. *[Laughter.]* I must say to the hon. Members for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) and for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) that I do not claim full credit for the improvements, although I claim some of it. However, I still have some objectives to achieve before I finally hang up my political boots.

For a limited number of people in my area, the problems are becoming so acute that the citizens' advice bureau has had to employ a debt counsellor for the first time ever. That finding is highlighted in the CAB's annual report, and the bureau believes that, sadly, there is worse to come. The report said:

"Some consider that the problem is confined to the feckless, but experience shows that money difficulties are being experienced across the social strata."

The list includes people who have fallen into multiple and single debt and those who cannot pay fuel bills, rent and rates, and, in severe cases, some who face bankruptcy.

The bureau manager, Liz Goodman, says that at least one new person every day seeks help from the Macclesfield advice bureau:

"It is getting out of hand. It spills over into family problems"—

I find this sad, and I am sure that the hon. Member for Birkenhead shares my concern—

"marriage problems and also alcohol problems."

Mrs. Goodman said that people on social security were finding life very difficult for a number of reasons because of the changes in the benefits system which took place in 1988.

I have full confidence in the objectives that the Government have set themselves. I agree that we should target those who need help and give them more generous help, but let us also realise that the Government's objectives have not yet been achieved in the policies that they have implemented.

I have been a member of the Select Committee for many years and I am concerned about what is happening. The Committee has done a valuable job in highlighting certain areas of concern, such as the need for more accurate statistics. I endorse the comments of the hon. Member for Birkenhead about that, which were taken up by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh. Let us use the expertise of the Institute of Fiscal Studies to produce accurate statistics which the House and the Government can use in developing social security policy.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh quoted Sir Winston Churchill. It was Sir Winston Churchill who talked about the importance of the welfare state as the net below the ladder of life, which was there so that those who slipped off the ladder, through no fault of their own, could rely upon an adequate standard of living and adequate support from the state. As a Conservative, I hope that that is what we shall achieve.

9.32 pm

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): I represent Bow and Poplar in the borough of Tower Hamlets and unfortunately my constituency contains many poor people, a number of whom are in the lowest income brackets. The policies of this Government have dramatically increased their problems over the past 10 years, and no amount of statistical manipulation or massaging of the figures can disguise that stark fact. Every Friday evening at my surgery, men and women weep when they tell me of the problems they have in managing on very low incomes.

In the current edition of the "Households Below Average Income" report, published in May 1988, the Government claimed that there had been an increase of 8·4 per cent. in real terms in the incomes of the bottom 10 per cent. of the population. This was found to be untrue by the research of the Institute of Fiscal Studies, which showed an increase of only 2·6 per cent. Moreover, the noted social scientist, Peter Townsend, using data from the Department of Employment, demonstrated that there had, in fact, been a decrease, rather than an increase, in the incomes of the bottom 10 per cent. of the population. That has not been refuted.

The evidence is there for all to see. Young people can be found begging in every major city in the country, and the Victorian problems of child prostitution and hunger remain. Hon. Members need only take a short walk down to the south bank to cardboard city to see for themselves the reality behind the statistics, if they have the will to do so. They would see the human tragedies behind the report that we are considering tonight.

The statistics speak loudly of the injustice and the Government's failure. Between 1979 and 1985, the number of families on low incomes rose from 6 million to more than 9 million—a rise of more than 3 million. According to the fourth report of the Social Services Select Committee, in 1988 the proportion of families—with children—on or below the supplementary benefit level increased from 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. between 1979 and 1985.

The Government's response to that increase in poverty has not been to introduce policies to help poor people, but to stop collecting the figures. Furthermore, they have frozen child benefit and many mothers with no independent incomes are now having to cut household spending to pay their poll tax. One of the little-mentioned effects of the poll tax has been to rearrange finances and resources within the family, leaving men with more money in their pockets and women with less. We rarely find poor children with mothers who have money to spare, but more often find poor children whose fathers might have money to jingle in their pockets.

The Government argue that people on income support levels and below are relatively poor and not absolutely poor. However, relative to what? Perhaps it is relative to freezing or starving. On the other hand, Peter Townsend defines poverty as being a level of income so low that one is excluded in all kinds of ways from the normal activities of the community in which one lives. That is the kind of poverty that requires people to count every teabag they use. It takes a terrible toll in stress, which undermines health and personal relations between people. Insecurity and constant worry about every penny make life a misery for men and women alike, and the work burden for women is massively increased.

It is fortunate that members of the Social Service Select Committee were not satisfied with the Government's failure to produce the necessary statistics and commissioned research from the Institute of Fiscal Studies. The institute's provisional figures show that the number of people in families on low incomes increased to at least 10 million by 1987. The indications are that further research will probably reveal an increase to 12 million—a colossal figure.

As we have heard, the official figures are not available because the Government, who talk so piously about the individual and pay lip service to the family, have decided that individuals and families are not important when counting people who live in poverty. The Government now want to make the household the unit of measure.

The Government how appear to believe that every person in the household will share out their income equally. That flies in the face of reality. Does any hon. Member believe that, on a Friday night, all the members of a household sit round a table, put their money in the middle and divide it up equally and fairly? That does not happen. The Government are preparing the ground for a return to the pre-Beveridge 1930s household means test. That is what is behind the changes and that is what is really happening.

The response of the Department of Social Security to the massive increase in poverty has been to insult poor people. On 11 May 1989, in the St. Stephen's club, the then Secretary of State for Social Security, the right hon. Member for Croydon, Central (Mr. Moore) delivered a speech entitled "The End of the Line of Poverty" in which he airily claimed that poverty no longer existed. That speech proved to be the end of the line for his ministerial career. Unfortunately, poverty did not disappear so easily.

On 15 June 1988 Mr. Hickey, the assistant secretary for policy on family benefit and low income at the Department

[Ms. Mildred Gordon]

of Health and Social Security, told members of the Social Services Select Committee that the word "poor" was one which the Government actually disputed. The Government seek to eradicate poverty not by helping poor people, but by removing the word "poverty" from their dictionary. That is their response to the huge increase in poverty and human misery over the past decade.

The hollowness of the Government's claim that wealth has trickled down to the poorest people has been clearly exposed. Poor families know exactly what is going on. They know that their income and standard of living have been the target of Government policy.

9.39 pm

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): From the bustle, I gather that it may be convenient if I speak for less than my allotted six minutes, so that hon. Members may have limited experience of the eloquence of the hon. Members for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley).

I shall concentrate on targeting. I do not believe that it helps to talk about groups of people as though there were no strong differences within those groups. The problem in the approach of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) and that of his party over many years is that there is insufficient discrimination within groups. Therefore, it does no good to talk about child benefit alleviating poverty if child benefit is available to a mother on the day on which she puts down her son's name for Eton. However, it makes great sense to talk about child benefit alleviating poverty if that benefit is targeted specifically and with discrimination.

The same applies to the Opposition's policy on pensions. We are promised that, in the remote future when they finally become a Government—not a terribly likely contingency—their immediate action to alleviate poverty will include an across-the-board basic increase for pensioners. That approach is flawed if the aim is to alleviate the poverty that is suffered by the poorest pensioners.

Within the group we call pensioners are those who enjoy substantial occupational pensions and who have paid into such schemes all their lives. In the same group are those for whom, when they were working, occupational pension schemes were not so universal, who do not have the benefit of such schemes and must rely wholly on the state pension and whatever additional benefits they may qualify for. There is a vast disparity between the circumstances of those two groups, yet all that the Opposition can offer is an across-the-board increase that will benefit rich pensioners as well as poor pensioners.

If we are to target, it makes sense to limit across-the-board increases and spend the money that is saved on those who actually require additional help. That would help those pensioners who did not have the benefit of an occupational pension, who became pensioners at the beginning of the last Labour Government, who have suffered years of inflation during which their savings have been eroded and who have since had to survive on the results of that period of Labour Government. They are the people whom we must help. The Opposition must take that point on board. They are not talking about alleviating poverty and alleviating the circumstances of the poorest; they are talking about popular, easy, uncosted and totally unrealistic measures that help nobody except those who do not need help.

9.42 pm

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe). I congratulate the Select Committee on its valuable work. The results bear considerable thought. We want figures that honestly and effectively highlight the real problem of low pay so that we can have policies that correspond to it.

We in Wales know what low income means. If the European definition of pay decency is adopted—in 1989 it was £163 a week—35 per cent. of all employees in Wales are below it. In 1989, whereas the average weekly earnings of all males in Britain was £270 a week, men in Wales were earning £31 a week less. In some parts of Wales matters were chronically worse. In Dyfed, the average male manual earnings were the lowest of any county in Britain —20 per cent. of all workers in Dyfed earn less than £120 a week. Four out of 10 men and six out of 10 women in my county of Gwynedd earn less than the European decency threshold.

One of the tables in the regional analysis has shown how patterns are changing. In Wales, 41 per cent. of families earned less than 20 per cent. of average family income in 1980-82. By the period 1983-85, that had worsened from 41 per cent. to 47 per cent. below the 70 per cent. level, whereas in south-east England the figure had decreased from 29 per cent. to 24 per cent.—which means a 5 per cent. increase in that area.

If those trends continue, we in Wales will have a serious problem. That is why it is vital that we have more up-to-date statistics than those which have been made available. It is ridiculous that we do not have the figures for 1985-87 now. I hope that the Minister will give some thought to what can be done to overcome that difficulty.

I turn to the Committee's conclusions about the inaccuracy of the lower decile, where the increase in real income was only 2·6 per cent. compared with the claimed 8·4 per cent. That must lead to a change of Government policy. If the figures are that different, we must have a change of policy to respond to them.

Two or three groups of people need our particular attention. The figures relating to families have shown how those with children are overwhelmingly likely to have an income level that is below the average. To that extent, I believe that child benefit is an effective way of trying to get money to those who most need it. I take the point made by the hon. Member for Maidstone that some who do not need it will receive the benefit. However, when we consider the failure to take up other benefits—the report highlighted this, and I am aware of problems in my own constituency about the take-up of family credit—the price of giving the benefit to even those who send their children to Eton is more than made up for by ensuring that those who need the benefit actually get it.

I should like to draw the attention of the House to something of which I know hon. Members are well aware. I refer to the poverty and low incomes of those who care for disabled people and for the need to establish a carer's benefit or payment to ensure that we are not taking unfair advantage of people who are working for next to nothing. As there are 6 million disabled people in our community, that must be important to all of us.

When we have finished arguing about the way in which we calculate the figures, it is the policy that the figures lead to that is important and the way in which we can overcome the problems of low income and ensure adequate pay. I believe that we need a national minimum wage. Although there is no time to discuss this now, I have studied some of the work on the subject that has been carried out in other countries. We need to look closely at the family credit system to ensure that it responds more quickly and sensitively to those on low incomes, and especially to those who are self-employed and on a low income, of whom I have many in my constituency.

As I have said, child benefit and provisions for carers should be improved. We have a tremendous responsibility to get the policies right and to respond to what the figures are telling us. I hope that the Minister will tell us how the Government intend to do that.

9.47 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): In the few minutes available to me, I join my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) in pleading with the Minister to make the 1987 figures available to us. From the questioning of his civil servants, we know that those figures have now been placed on his desk. It would help all of us if he could give us those figures at the earliest possible opportunity and certainly before he and his ministerial colleagues appeared before the Select Committee in two weeks' time to answer our questions. We need time to consider the figures carefully.

I heard the pleas for more targeting that were made by the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe). However, it seems odd that the whole thrust of our report was that, despite the Government's claims to have carried out so much targeting in at least the first five of their 10 years in office, targeting had missed. It had failed to reach the target. We should therefore call into question that whole process.

I regret that the Government are not prepared to consider publishing budgets to show the way in which Ministers think that the money should be spent. However, I understand why they do not do it—because they know it is an impossible task. Nevertheless, it would be helpful in the task of convincing the rest of the country and in ensuring that other people are prepared to take a little bit less so that people on the lowest incomes can have a little bit more. In the early part of this century, it was people such as Charles Booth and those involved in the Rowntree effort which showed people the impossibility facing those who had to survive on the lowest incomes who convinced people that we had to start a system of benefits. Publishing budgets would be a useful approach.

I plead with the Government to look carefully at the problems of those who are in poverty for long periods. My hon. Friends have challenged Ministers on whether hon. Members could live on benefit for a week. We know the difficulties that at least one of our former colleagues encountered when trying to do that. For many people, the greatest problem is the long period in which they are in poverty.

What help can the Minister offer one of my constituents whom I visited the other day? He is 65 and a widower. He is on basic pension and a little income support. He has not worked for the past eight years, not through any fault of his own but because he was one of those made redundant to make industry in Denton leaner and fitter.

My constituent's flat is spotlessly clean, but everything in it cries out his poverty. He has a black and white television. His only form of entertainment is a black and white television. His cooker and his fridge are extremely old and worn. He has worries about the safety of his electric kettle, but he has patched it up. There is nothing new in the flat. Even his newspaper comes pushed through from next door a few hours late to keep down his expenses. His carpet is threadbare. His curtains need replacing.

My constituent has lived in poverty for eight years since he lost his job. He is just starting life as a pensioner. His prospects are that he will live the rest of his life in poverty. It is long-term poverty. He has lost any savings that he had.

What sort of help can the Minister offer my constituent? There are many millions of such people in this country. What hope can the Minister offer that, in the next few years, their lives will be made more pleasant and that they will enjoy some of the luxuries that some of us take for granted?

9.51 pm

The Minister for Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Scott): I hope that the House will understand that in replying to such a wide-ranging debate in the minutes that are left, I cannot deal with every point that has been raised.

The subject of the debate is immensely complex. Anyone who studies it carefully rather than superficially knows that poverty cannot be solved by waving a wand or by any particular policy approach. Indeed, when one reads some of the academic work on the subject, one is convinced that it is not merely complex but arcane in the extreme. Yet, for some reason, some people use it—I might limit myself to saying one person—as a political ping-pong campaign simply to score points against the Government, knowing full well that when their party was in office—this would be so if it were in office again—it found that the problem was not susceptible to easy, simplistic solutions.

Mr. Meacher: I did not say that there were simplistic solutions, but we could make some improvements.

Mr. Scott: If the hon. Gentleman will resist making sedentary interventions, I shall deal with some of the points that he made.

I listened carefully to the points made by the hon. Members for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) and for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) and my hon. Friend the Member for the Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) about regional differences. I am not convinced by the arguments. I shall read each of their speeches in detail and the points made, as well as the comments of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the regional work that it has done. I am not convinced that we would benefit greatly from putting considerable resources into regional work. There would be differences between regions and within regions. The special position of particular towns, communities and hamlets within a region might mean that simple regional work is not particularly illuminative.

I am grateful for this opportunity to respond to the debate and, indeed, for the work of the Select Committee. I was never a Chairman of a Select Committee. I was what

[Mr. Scott]

the Americans would call a majority leader on a Select Committee at the beginning of the experiment. The Select Committee system has developed effectively.

The Select Committee has done effective work in producing its report. Neither the Chairman nor the members will expect me to agree with every word of it, but we shall respond constructively in due course to the suggestions that they have made. I hope that that will be acceptable.

I shall make some general observations on the issues before the House tonight before dealing with the speeches of individual hon. Members. To some extent, I repeat my opening remarks when I recall the remarks made in the *New Statesman and Society* in its debate on poverty. It said:

"The debate . . . has become the modern equivalent of the Schleswig-Holstein question, which, said Palmerston, only three people ever understood—but one had died, one had gone mad, and the third [Palmerston himself] had forgotten all about it."

It is easy to get to grips with the subject briefly, but it is difficult to sustain a command of all of it.

I was especially impressed by the speech of the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), who is Chairman of the Select Committee. However, he made a few points with which I must take issue. He mentioned the position of the poorest in our society, and his remarks were echoed by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett). I know that there are people in our society who suffer poverty. They do not go in and out of poverty, but suffer it for prolonged periods. It would have been proper for the hon. Member for Birkenhead to recognise the steps that the Government have taken recently to help the poor, especially pensioners and families with children, by seeking to concentrate the resources available in an attempt to alleviate their position.

In case I do not have the opportunity to advert to it again, I must say that I had considerable sympathy with the comments of the Select Committee on the need to make some study of the composition of the lowest decile of the poor—the extent to which people move in and out of poverty, what traps people into those circumstances, what might move them down from higher in the scale, and what might be done to alleviate it.

The hon. Member for Birkenhead asked me three particular questions. First, he asked when the 1987 figures would be available. We are anxious to produce them as soon—

Mr. Frank Field: Soon?

Mr. Scott: Yes, as soon as possible. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has written to the hon. Gentleman explaining the time scale. We want to respond to the Select Committee, publish the figures and meet the sort of suggestions put forward by the Committee in producing both the reports.

Secondly, the hon. Gentleman suggested that we might privatise all that work and hand it over to the Institute for Fiscal Studies. It is interesting that such a suggestion should come from an Opposition Member. I do not doubt that the Institute for Fiscal Studies has done excellent work, but it has done so with the fullest and most constructive co-operation of the statisticians within the Department, who work with tremendous dedication and utter integrity.

At the risk of not being able to respond to many of the other points raised, I wish to deal with some of those raised by the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher)—

Mr. Frank Field: The Minister has not answered my third question. Has he seen the 1987 figures, and are they better or worse than the 1985 figures?

Mr. Scott: I have seen only a preliminary analysis of those figures. Obviously, I want to see the final outcome of that work. I shall see that at about the same time as the House and everyone else sees it. The hon. Gentleman has made a brave effort to rescue his hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West from some of his more absurd allegations.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West suggested that the Government withdrew the low-income families figures because they showed an uncomfortable rise in 1985. If he had taken the trouble to look at those figures, he would know that the numbers on supplementary benefit or below 140 per cent. of that level actually fell, not rose, between 1983 and 1985, so the hon. Gentleman's allegation was absurd. Secondly, he alleged that we have made it our policy to delay and conceal the low income statistics, but that simply does not stand up to the light of day. On only one occasion did we publish the statistics on the day that the House rose for the recess.

None of the hon. Gentleman's allegations stands up to analysis. He said that the Institute for Fiscal Studies had produced figures in the low-income family series for 1987 showing that the number for those below income support for that year was 18·5 million—7 million more than in 1979. That is an utter perversion of reality. The figure does not refer to those on supplementary benefit, but to those on or below 140 per cent. of a hypothetical income support level—

Mr. Meacher: That is what I said.

Mr. Scott: I shall consider carefully what the hon. Gentleman said, but in any case it is a wholly discredited low income level. Had the hon. Gentleman read the IFS report in full he would have seen on page 2 the following words, which are underlined:

"These tables are not low income families' tables for 1987."

The IFS was doing its best to ensure that no misguided reader would compare the figures with those for 1979, but that is precisely what the hon. Member for Oldham, West has done. The report goes on to describe in seven lengthy paragraphs three major reasons why the 1987 IFS analyses could not be compared with the low income families figures for earlier years. I hope that the hon. Member for Oldham, West will withdraw his remarks.

The Question necessary to dispose of the proceedings was deferred, pursuant to paragraph (4) of Standing Order No. 52 (Consideration of Estimates).

It being Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to paragraph (5) of Standing Order No. 52 (Consideration of Estimates), to put forthwith the deferred Questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on Estimates, 1990-91 (Class VI, vote 1 and Class XIV, vote 7).*

CLASS VI, VOTE 1

Question, That Class VI, vote 1 be reduced by £100,000 in respect of Subhead H1 (Skills Training Agency running costs), *put and negatived.*

Resolved,

That a further sum, not exceeding £1,286,770,000, be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending on 31 March 1991 for expenditure by the Department of Employment on improving, promoting and disseminating training among individuals, small firms and employers, encouraging enterprise, running services for small firms and the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, providing training programmes for young people and adults, providing employment rehabilitation services, technical and vocational education, work-related further education and the costs of the Skills Training Agency until privatisation, on the administration of training and enterprise, and central and miscellaneous services.

CLASS XIV, VOTE 7

Resolved,

That a further sum, not exceeding £991,572,000, be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending on 31 March 1991 for expenditure by the Department of Social Security on administration, for agency payments, and for certain other services including grants to local authorities, voluntary organisations, and major capital works projects for the Department of Health, including telecommunications capital.

Overseas Development and Co-operation

10.1 pm

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I beg to move,

That the draft International Fund for Agricultural Development Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 8th March, be approved.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development—IFAD—was set up to help the most-disadvantaged sections of society in rural areas of developing countries to increase food production. Its focus is the small farmer, nomadic pastoralists, artisarial fishermen, the landless and rural women. IFAD's operations are relatively small-scale. In its first decade of operations, it has committed $2·8 billion for roughly 260 projects, an average of $10 million per loan.

Smallness is a characteristic of the organisation in other ways. It was designed to have only a small professional core staff, and to work primarily through other international agencies. Funding has also been on a relatively modest scale. These factors have shaped the institution and explain the rather special place it occupies in the network of institutions channelling assistance to developing countries.

Partly because of those various influences—its specific mandate to assist the rural poor, its small size as an institution and the relatively modest financial resources at its disposal—IFAD has been making greater efforts over the past few years to target its activities more closely on disadvantaged groups.

The causes of rural poverty are complex. They include scarcity of land, harsh environmental and climatic conditions, isolation and lack of assets to cushion the poor against unforeseen events or emergencies. Improving access of the poor to resources—water for irrigation and sanitation, fertilisers and seeds for increased agricultural production, marketing facilities for the sale of produce and so on—is one of the main aims of IFAD-assisted projects.

IFAD gives high priority to beneficiary participation in all stages of the project cycle, from design and appraisal onwards. One way it does this is through group lending—that is, village groups, farmer organisations, women's groups and other grassroots organisations. IFAD has pioneered a number of ways of facilitating access to credit by the rural poor, who are frequently ignored by traditional financing mechanisms.

Group lending, because of peer pressure, reduces the risk of default, as well as making it cheaper to reach small-scale borrowers. Perhaps the best-known example of this is the Grameen bank in Bangladesh, which has successfully provided credit to those traditionally regarded as the greatest credit risks, the landless or near landless and women. About four fifths of the loans are to women, whose repayment record, I am sure the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) will be glad to know, is better than that of the men, although the bank's overall default rate is extremely low.

The loans finance a wide range of income-generating activities, including livestock, poultry and fisheries, small-scale processing and manufacturing, and trading or shopkeeping. IFAD was the first international agency to provide assistance to the Grameen bank.

A similar group lending approach has been used in the small farmer development programme in the hill regions of

[Mrs. Lynda Chalker]

Nepal, in the village development fund project in Mali, in the small-scale rural operations project in Senegal, and in many other IFAD-assisted projects.

IFAD is conscious of the link between rural poverty and environmental degradation, and how the weight of population growth in many regions, especially Africa, will exacerbate these pressures. Last year, IFAD produced an excellent discussion paper on the need to ensure effective integration of environmental issues into its lending operations. IFAD recognises that unless those issues are directly addressed, its efforts to alleviate rural poverty will be frustrated and the long-term sustainability of its projects undermined.

In Mali, IFAD has a project which aims to rehabilitate a poor pastoral community in an area devastated by drought, by focusing on improved soil and water conservation techniques. In Senegal, an agro-forestry project is helping to arrest environmental degradation caused by overcropping and excessive tree clearance. In Bangladesh, IFAD's ox-bow lake fisheries project is helping small-scale fishermen to develop sustainable fisheries by introducing biologically sound management practices.

Another policy orientation that we welcome is IFAD's efforts to promote the economic welfare of rural women by incorporating specific components into projects that are targeted at their needs. I have seen this recently in Bangladesh, where a credit union scheme through BRAC —the Bangladesh rural action committee—is working very well. We are now supporting BRAC through a new project which will extend the geographical coverage of BRAC's rural development programme and establish a new rural credit finance mechanism. The total cost is US$50 million. We will contribute 25 per cent. A recently approved Smallholder project in Ghana, for example, was preceded by a socio-economic survey that indicated that households headed by women accounted for more than one third of the target group; and a credit allocation of appropriate size specifically earmarked for women was incorporated into the project.

In India, the Tamil Nadu women's development project will offer opportunities in a wide range of income-generating activities, from horticulture and silkworm rearing to business courses and marketing skills. There is a dovetailing of formal and informal credit schemes with women's groups. The project is targeted to benefit some 40,000.

In the north-west province of Cameroon, an IFAD project has helped to increase food output significantly, and women farmers have been able to sell surpluses of maize to neighbouring areas. The project has introduced a soil conservation programme that promotes integrated crop and animal husbandry and safeguards the environment.

Because of these efforts to target assistance more effectively towards the poorest and most disadvantaged groups, IFAD attaches great weight to evaluation activities. It needs to weigh which approaches are successful, and which are less successful. We welcome its efforts systematically to incorporate lessons learned from previous activities in the design of new projects. The bulk of IFAD's resources, some two thirds of the total, are concentrated on the poorest countries.

IFAD also operates in middle-income countries, however, in areas where there are pockets of poverty. To some extent, IFAD's desire to maintain a broad geographical coverage is understandable. But its projects are small in size, and the active loan portfolio in any one country is also small—often no more than two or three projects. We think that operating in so many countries is not warranted given IFAD's small size; and we should prefer to see a greater concentration of resources and effort in the poorest countries, espicially in Africa and Asia.

There are calls to the contrary, of course, especially from Latin American members of the fund, but we think management risks overstretching itself in attempting to respond to those demands. In our view, IFAD would stand a better chance of demonstrating the effectiveness of its approach to rural poverty alleviation if its resources were not spread so thinly across the globe.

Apart from the issue of regional allocation of resources, IFAD's credentials are solid. It has a dedicated team of professionals under the leadership of its president, Idriss Jazairy, a national of Algeria. Given its poverty-focused mandate and efficient operating style, the question may be asked why it has such difficulty in raising the resources it requires. The answer to that conundrum lies in the institutional structure of the organisation. IFAD was founded on the basis of a partnership between three distinct groups of countries. Each holds one third of the voting power and one third of the seats on the board of directors. Category I consists of OECD countries, category II of OPEC countries, and category III covers non-oil exporting developing countries.

Because IFAD is a partnership, it receives its funding from contributions negotiated jointly between category I and category II. It started off for the period 1977-80 with just over $1 billion. Of that, 57 per cent. came from OECD countries and 43 per cent. from OPEC countries. The western donors argued from the outset that categories I and II should contribute equally, as each holds an equal stake in the institution. That was resisted by OPEC members and has been an issue at the root of IFAD's subsequent funding difficulties.

The third replenishment negotiations were concluded last year. In an effort to raise a higher total than last time, and in recognition of the continuing financial constraints on OPEC members, a two-pronged strategy evolved. First, OECD donors agreed that they would match contributions by OPEC donors in the traditional way, in a burden-sharing ratio of 60:40. That was the ratio established during the second replenishment negotiations. That element became known as the core funding.

Secondly, OECD countries agreed to match contributions in convertible currencies by other developing countries in a favourable ratio of 3:1, in the expectation that exceptional efforts by that group of countries would act as a spur to the OPEC donors. This became known as the supplementary funding element.

In the event, category II, OPEC donors, pledged $124·4 million, compared with $184 million last time. That sum will be matched by category I, OECD donors, in the ratio 60:40—that is, $186·6 million. The United Kingdom's share of that core-funding element is $8·9 million, representing 4·78 per cent. of category I's total contribution.

Category III, other developing countries, set itself a target of $75 million. Pledges of $63·8 million were realised. The OECD matching element for that

supplementary financing, therefore, will be $191·5 million. The United Kingdom share will be $10·9 million. Thus, the total resources raised in the third replenishment, will be $566 million. Of that, OECD countries will provide $378 million—two thirds of the total. That will cover IFAD's operations for the period up to 30 June 1992.

The outcome was more successful than the second replenishment, which raised only $487 million. Nevertheless, the underlying issue of the relative burden sharing between OECD and OPEC countries remains. Category III, other developing countries, regard their efforts in this replenishment as an exceptional measure, not establishing a precedent for future replenishment exercises.

The results of this replenishment have reinforced the view that serious examination must be given to IFAD's future financial basis before the negotiations on the next replenishment begin. A so-called high-level intergovernmental committee began consideration of these issues in 1986, but after some useful initial work, its work was suspended while the third replenishment was negotiated.

The committee will be resuming its work soon, in an effort to find a more acceptable solution that will put IFAD's resources on a more secure footing for the future. The crucial aim, as we see it, will be to engage OPEC countries in a frank and open dialogue, to see how their perceptions of the assumptions underlying the original foundation of IFAD have changed. We may need to realign the structure, and the voting power, so that it better reflects relative financial stakes in the institution.

The draft order authorises the Secretary of State to pay the British contribution to the new replenishment. Subject to parliamentary approval, we shall contribute £11·3 million, which is equivalent to over $19 million at the agreed exchange rate.

As I said earlier, our share of the total OECD core contribution remains the same as for the last replenishment—about 4·8 per cent. We intend to pay in three instalments, by depositing non-interest-bearing promissory notes. The first of the notes has to be deposited within 30 days of our instrument of contribution coming into effect, the second on the anniversary of the entry into effect of the replenishment, and the last by 30 June 1992. We expect them to be encashed over a period of years from about January 1992. The arrangements include provision for other countries to modify their contributions pro rata if one or more donors fail to meet their obligations in full.

I know that some of this may seem complicated, but the hon. Member for Cynon Valley wanted to know the detail of the IFAD replenishment, and as it crops up only once every few years, and I thought it worthwhile to put it on record. I commend the draft order to the House, in the conviction that its approval will help IFAD to continue its profoundly important work with the full support of the British Government and people.

10.16 pm

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): The Minister's enthusiasm for the International Fund for Agricultural Development is widely shared. IFAD plays a vital and unique role in development. As the only multilateral agency with a mandate to focus exclusively on agriculture, and particularly on poor farmers, it deserves our full support.

IFAD's focus on agriculture is unusual in today's world of economic adjustment. Its social focus on poor and marginal people in developing countries is even more remarkable. Most important of all, it succeeds in reaching and assisting poor farmers. The democratic basis of IFAD is also unique, thanks to the equal distribution of power between the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries and developing countries. IFAD has the full confidence and participation of Governments of developing countries. It is perceived in both the north and the south as more responsive to the needs of developing countries than other United Nations or World bank institutions.

The importance of agriculture in development cannot be underestimated. More than two thirds of the labour force in most African developing countries work in agriculture. For the poorer citizens, agricultural production is the basis of their livelihood. Nothing—except perhaps water—is more important than the production of food. Farmers rely on what they can grow, and herdsmen rely on what they can obtain from their cattle.

The importance of agriculture is increasing for several reasons. With the world's population set to double to 10 billion, it is essential that agricultural production increases at the same rate. However, that is not happening. Agricultural output per head is declining in many countries, especially in Africa, where there were 100 million undernourished people by the early 1980s. Urban populations are increasing rapidly and that puts an extra burden on farmers, who must produce enough to support themselves and urban dwellers. The importance of agriculture is also increasing, because the pressure of rising population makes improvements in agriculture not only more urgent, but also more difficult.

In many areas there is not enough fertile land. Pressure on the land causes declining crop yields and overgrazing. Competition for land pushes farmers on to marginal land on the edge of the desert or in newly cleared forest. That only exacerbates the process of soil erosion, land degradation and the encroaching of the desert. Those environmental problems are mounting. We know now that the effects are cumulative and tend to be irreversible. It has proved only too easy to set off the vicious circle of land clearance, soil erosion, decreased fertility of the land, disappearing vegetation and an increasingly arid climate. There is no evidence that we can so easily reverse the process to achieve thicker vegetation and improved land fertility, humidity and productivity.

Therefore, immediate action to invest in environmentally-sound agricultural techniques is essential. That means that the long-term value of IFAD's investments in environmental protection, such as its projects to assist families with soil and water conservation in Lesotho, is immeasurable.

Despite the overwhelming importance of agriculture, it has been pushed to the sidelines over the past decade. Many donors and institutions tried with enthusiasm to work with small farmers in the 1960s and 1970s, but encountered problems and gave up. They are now focusing on structural adjustments, macro-economic planning and free markets.

IFAD continues to promote agricultural development. It is persevering and succeeding where many others have failed. For example, in Niger, IFAD projects have resulted in a 40 per cent. increase in crops.

[Mrs. Ann Clwyd]

Unfortunately, the British aid programme of the Government puts less priority on agriculture than other donors and institutions. In 1988, according to the OECD, only 9·1 per cent. of British aid was committed to agricultural developments, less than average for the Development Assistance Committee of OECD donors. It is a poor comparison to the 22 per cent. of Irish aid, 26 per cent. of Danish aid, 23 per cent. of Dutch aid, 21 per cent. of Swiss aid, 17 per cent. of Belgium aid and 23 per cent. of EC, World bank and United Nations aid.

Therefore, a renewed focus on agriculture is urgently needed. More research is needed on agricultural techniques which are appropriate for poor farmers, and on methods of adapting to a warmer climate, but the Government are cutting funding for agricultural research.

If IFAD had invested in agricultural developments by funding large private high-technology farms, producing cash crops from the labour of landless peasants, I would probably not have bothered to be here tonight. The strength of IFAD is that it works with the poorest and the most marginal in society. It supplies credit for investments, as the Minister said, to exactly those people who have least access to credit from the usual sources.

It is not just the quantity of agricultural crops produced that matters, but the quantity of food available to families. Too often development planners overlook the critical issues of food security in their eagerness for gross national product growth. Markets do not supply the family food; the family does. IFAD's approach recognises that.

Working with the poor is difficult at times, but also essential. Let me take Ethiopia as an example. Even if the rains fall for the next harvest, many farmers will have no tools or cattle to work with; they sold them off in sheer desperation to obtain food. IFAD has made loans to 70,000 peasants to buy oxen so that they can produce their own food next time round .

A major factor in IFAD's success is its willingness to take up new ideas and new approaches, particularly ideas from farmers at the bottom, not the planners at the top. By building institutions within the local community, it provides projects with a secure foundation. Making loans through peer groups has achieved repayment rates of 95 per cent. in many countries.

Development funds have shifted away from the poor since the 1960s commitment to basic needs. Too many development planners are forgetting what development is, or should be, all about—improving the quality of life for the majority of people in developing countries. It is not just about percentage changes in gross national product, or about tonnes of concrete or miles of roads, or about changes in the trade balance. They are important, but they are only means to the desired end of improving people's lives. By working directly with poor farmers, particularly women, IFAD goes straight to the heart of development.

Of course IFAD could do even better. On the ground, it is not quite as ideal as it appears to be on paper. Like many international organisations, it faces the problems of bureaucracy and inflexibility. Its lack of field staff compounds the problem. Implementation of projects is slow. Its commitments to working with women and to taking full account of the environment are yet to be fully translated into action at every level. However, there is evidence that IFAD is doing better than many in limiting these bureaucratic difficulties. I hope that the Government will play a constructive role within IFAD to ensure that it intensifies its efforts to reach women farmers and to adapt to their special needs, such as lack of legal status or of property to serve as collateral.

Given the importance of IFAD's work, the third replenishment is disappointingly inadequate. It does little to make up the losses suffered in the second replenishment. When IFAD began work in 1978, it had $217 million a year. That is equivalent to $396 million in 1990 terms. Therefore, this year's funding of $211 million represents a cut of 47 per cent. since 1978. The third replenishment would need to be increased by 40 per cent. if IFAD were to regain its initial financial strength in 1991. Nevertheless, with the Minister, I am glad that agreement has at last been reached on a third replenishment.

I particularly applaud the exceptional contributions made by category 3 members—the developing countries. Nigeria, Gabon, Venezuela and others have increased their contributions, despite going through a difficult period of economic adjustment. I welcome the decision by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development members, category 1, to match these contributions on a ratio of 3:1. I am glad, too, that a high-level intergovernmental committee is considering the future financial situation of IFAD. I hope that at the meeting in Rome next Monday, and in future meetings, the United Kingdom Government will seek to ensure stable and sufficient funding for IFAD in the future. I welcome the Minister's assurances on that point.

The third replenishment was disappointing, but the Government's attitude to the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa is, I am afraid, lamentable. The special programme for sub-Saharan Africa was launched in 1977 to enable IFAD to give greater support to agricultural development in Africn countries, stricken by drought and the encroaching desert, at a time of acute economic crisis. Since then there has been general approval of its work. By the end of the year, IFAD will have 30 projects in 24 sub-Saharan countries.

However, when a second phase of the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa was suggested in January, the Government stood out alone against a chorus of support to oppose the proposal. France, Belgium and Italy all supported the programme. Every African member of IFAD supported it. Latin American countries—Colombia and Argentina—supported it. Australia and Pakistan gave their support.

Why did the United Kingdom oppose it? There can be only two explanations of the Government's opposition. First, perhaps the Government believe that the first phase of the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa has not been successful. I ask the Minister whether the programme has been successful in raising the target funding of $300 million through voluntary contributions. Has it been successful in committing those funds for projects in sub-Saharan Africa? Has IFAD successfully co-ordinated the special programme with the work of the regular programme in sub-Saharan Africa? Has the Minister evidence of that? Does the Minister agree with the analysis of the United States and other donors that IFAD's work in Africa is generally positive? I doubt whether the Minister can answer no to any of those questions. The right hon. Lady can surely not oppose the second phase of the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa on the ground that it has not worked.

Possibly the only other reason for opposing the extension of the special programme is a belief that the situation in Africa no longer merits the programme. Is it believed that there is no longer an extreme and urgent crisis that needs priority attention? Is that what the Minister really believes? We are faced with the facts that GNP per capita is only $330, and has fallen by 2·8 per cent. since the 1980s, that debt service is 15 times greater than export earnings in sub-Saharan Africa, and that agriculture production per capita is falling. Surely no one can argue that Africa has recovered from the economic crisis of the 1980s.

Given the crisis in sub-Saharan Africa, especially that of agriculture, the region must be a priority for IFAD. The special programme ensures that Africa receives the special attention that it needs. If the programme is not extended, funds for IFAD's work in sub-Saharan Africa will be cut by 40 per cent.

Why should Africa be a priority for IFAD's work? Given the severe economic crisis, African countries do not have the funds themselves to invest in agriculture. In 1988, for example, $21·7 billion were transferred from Africa to the industrialised countries. As a result, investment in rural infrastructure and agriculture has plummeted. Donors are spending billions of dollars on structural adjustment programmes. Therefore, there should be an adequate response to the needs of the poorest who suffer the worst impact of recession.

The projects of IFAD assist those who are at the sharp end. The programmes of other donors that are aimed at alleviating the social impact of adjustment work mainly with urban consumers who are hit by higher prices for basic goods and the problems of those who lose their jobs in the trimming of state bureaucracies. In contrast, IFAD works with the very poorest. It can both shield them and help them to take advantage of opportunities that are provided by an improved economic climate.

As everyone knows, agriculture is even more important in Africa than it is in other developing countries. Eighty-four per cent. of Mozambicans, 77 per cent. of Ethiopians and 79 per cent. of Tanzanians work in agriculture. Most of the farmers are smallholders and women. Women produce 80 per cent. of family food.

The World bank has described the immense challenge facing agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. It says:

"The task facing African agriculture in the 1990s and beyond is formidable indeed. It must cope with the needs of a rapidly growing population. It must achieve sufficient growth in food crops not merely to maintain output per person, but also to reduce food calorie deficits and to lower food imports. In the process, it must be a major employer of Africa's growing labour and compete on world markets to earn the foreign exchange that Africa needs to fuel its economic growth. And it must do all that while reversing the degradation of natural resources that threatens long-term production. This challenge requires a transformation of agriculture."

The World bank estimates that to meet that challenge, agricultural growth should reach 4 per cent. a year compared with a record of only 2 per cent. over the past 20 years. Clearly that will require an enormous effort on the part of farmers, African Governments, agricultural researchers, western donors and IFAD.

We all know that the environmental problems in Africa are immense. We have heard much from the Overseas Development Administration about protecting the global environment, and about projects for the rain forests, biodiversity and energy efficiency. However, in our concern for the headline issues of global warming and tropical rain forests, we must not forget the mundane environmental problems that threaten millions of Africans every day.

Deforestation in arid—not tropical—areas has been a major problem for many years. Women in Africa spend hours every day hunting for fuel wood. Only when deforestation became a problem for the atmosphere, not just for the poor, did the world start to sit up and take note. If this Government are truly committed to caring for the environment for the sake of the poor, and not just to producing glossy brochures and green platitudes, they will invest in tree planting projects in arid areas, in soil conservation and in local small-scale irrigation with the same enthusiasm that they put into tropical forests and biodiversity. If the Government emphasise such a commitment, IFAD and its special programme for sub-Saharan Africa provide a suitable channel to translate that commitment into reality.

There is now a new threat to Africa—the risk of the diversion of funds to eastern Europe. The Government have repeated many times that there will be no diversion of aid funds from Africa to eastern Europe this year, but they will give no assurances for future years. The sorry comparison between the Government's eagerness in setting up know-how funds for eastern Europe and the bank for European reconstruction and development, and their opposition to a second phase of the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa tells a different tale. It is clear that Africa will lose funds if the special programme fund is not extended. It is shocking that the United Kingdom Government are the main opponent of that extension.

The most recent threat to Africa came from the Foreign Secretary last week. He waved the big stick, threatening to withdraw aid if African countries did not toe the line on free markets and elections. Many of his goals—democracy and economic growth—are desired by us all, but threatening to withdraw aid from the world's poorest is not the way to achieve them. The Labour party, of course, wants to see the Governments of developing countries pursue sound environmental policies, promote social progress and respect human rights. We do and will encourage such aims. However, democracy cannot be established overnight, and during the transition period we should not be penalising the impoverished citizens of those countries when we could be helping them.

Voluntary contributions to the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa have partially mitigated the effect of the overall cut in IFAD's regular funds on the poorest, most drought-stricken countries. The special programme enables donors who are willing to give extra support to the worst-off countries without breaking the principle of equal shares between OPEC and OECD in the regular programme. As long as OPEC countries feel unable to commit more money, and as long as OECD countries, particularly the United States, are unwilling for OECD contributions to outstrip OPEC funding, the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa will be essential to fund IFAD's work there.

Ideally, in the long term, the special programme will be incorporated into the regular programme. I hope that the high-level group currently working on IFAD's future funding will establish a system so that a high level of funding and a high degree of commitment to sub-Saharan Africa can be maintained through the regular programme.

[Mrs. Ann Clwyd]

But that will not happen yet. Until such a system is established, it is essential to extend the special programme for a second phase.

Thanks to the first phase of the special programme, 50 per cent. of IFAD's funds have been devoted to sub-Saharan Africa. If the special programme is ended, less than 35 per cent. of IFAD's funds will go to Africa. I stress again that that means that Africa's support will fall by 40 per cent.

I suggest that, by opposing the second phase, the Government are trying to deny Africa millions of pounds. They are actually trying to prevent other donors from making contributions that they are willing to give by closing down the channel for those funds. Surely, even if the Government do not want to contribute to the special fund, there can be no reason for closing down the options of other donors.

I hope that the Government will not only support the idea of extending the special programme for a second phase but will make a sizeable contribution. After all, had the third replenishment reached the original target of $750 million, the United Kingdom's share would be an extra $6·4 million. We should be ready to put that much and more into the special programme.

Even when the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa was launched, the United Kingdom was a recalcitrant supporter and an ungenerous donor. The Government contributed $12·7 million, whereas Belgium contributed $33·7 million, France $34·6 million, Italy $33 million and Sweden $21·5 million. So the United Kingdom's share of the OECD contribution on the special programme for sub-Saharan Africa was 4·41 per cent. of the total from all countries.

I hope that the Minister will not dismiss the idea with the argument that the Government give extra support to Africa in other ways. The proportion of British aid that goes to sub-Saharan Africa is 42 per cent., compared to 69 per cent. from Ireland, 68 per cent. from Belgium and 57 per cent. from Italy. Certainly we give aid to Africa through other multilaterals, but it is not targeted on the poor.

What should the Government do? They should support the special programme for Africa and make a large contribution to it. More important, they should increase the shockingly low overall aid budget, so that the United Kingdom could afford to make extra contributions without denying funds to other worthy projects. The current aid budget of 0·32 per cent. of gross national product is one of the most miserly in Europe. It is planned to increase by less than 1 per cent. a year in real terms, even on the Government's optimistic inflation forecast. That is despicable.

Only when the Labour party is in power, with a commitment to reaching a 0·7 per cent. of GNP target in five years, will the United Kingdom even approach playing its full role in supporting developments around the world, and particularly developments in Africa.

10.44 pm

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): I almost hesitate to intervene in this debate after we have heard two eminent ladies discuss this very important replenishment. They both dealt fully with the amount of money that goes from the fund to women in Africa. Although I am a mere male, I have had a tremendous interest in the development of IFAD and its work, and I thought that I should support and welcome the third replenishment and the comments of my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development.

The hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) struck a slightly discordant note. My right hon. Friend the Minister told us how the proportions of support for IFAD were renegotiated from its original context. The OECD countries should be commended for picking up the shortfall of the other partners. I welcome the contributions made by the developing countries, but the fact that we have taken on a higher proportion of the assistance to keep the fund going should be commended and not criticised. I remember how critical the lobbying was in earlier years for the fund to continue. I welcome the change of atmosphere which my right hon. Friend the Minister revealed in that we are now considering a normal replenishment and we are taking a long look ahead at the way in which it can continue.

All of us who follow these matters support the IFAD principle and operation. That reflects great credit on Idriss Jazairy, who runs the organisation. We should seek to develop agriculture especially among the poorest wherever they are in the world. We all recognise that over the next decade and beyond it is essential to retain that commitment to rural improvement.

We recognise more clearly now that, although food is important and of course we want to encourage people to develop self-sufficiency and to provide the amount of food that they require in their communities, we must also encourage them to diversify from the traditional crops. Part of the problem with developing countries is their history of producing basic commodities for export. Those commodities can be profitable one year, but disastrously unprofitable the next because of changes in world commodity prices and the way they function.

I realised only relatively recently how little development of agriculture has taken place in many of the poorest countries with regard to the ability to exchange trade one country with another within regional groupings. My right hon. Friend the Minister referred to Mali. That country produced a surplus of wheat last year, but, because of a lack of infrastructure, it cannot sell that surplus to its neighbours which desperately need wheat. Mali's neighbours have to import it from hard currency countries. There is much that we could encourage IFAD to do, not only in improving the quality of growing food, but with regard to the range of crops and the development of regional markets, so that people in the countries concerned can improve their own position by trading with each other.

We must also consider the proportion given to the poorest families. I am not sure whether my right hon. Friend the Minister can tell us what the criteria are for the poorest families. Those criteria are critical. Those of us who travel widely in marginal areas know just how difficult it is to support those families and how difficult it is to get alongside them. We know how difficult it is for extension workers to operate in what are very often hard conditions and spend the necessary time to bring about a change in pastoral habits and nomadic practices. We are not talking about schemes that will last one, two or three years or even, in parliamentary terms, four or five years. Often it will take 20 or 25 years for schemes to come to fruition and change those habits. That is why it is so important to recognise the criterion, the poorest, and to ensure that a large proportion is given.

The next point is how we link IFAD's priorities and operations with the ODA's aims and operations. Until I heard the speech by the hon. Member for Cynon Valley, I had always imagined that 68 per cent. of our ODA funds went to the poorest. I understand also that a high proportion goes to agriculture. A Select Committee report entitled "UK Aid to African Agriculture" analyses the figures.

One can often get an odd impression of what is agricultural and what benefits agriculture. Those of us who travel widely know that a road, for instance, may not be mentioned in the agricultural budget. However, a road that enables poor farmers to get their produce to big markets is essential to the development of rural agriculture. One has only to go to Kenya to see that. In countries such as Tanzania, food surpluses are produced in the highlands and in some other parts, but farmers literally cannot transport it to Dar es Salaam in time for the population to eat it before it gets overripe. Therefore, more food is imported to feed the urban population.

When we talk about necessary proportions for agriculture, we should recognise that agriculture requires access to markets. That is part and parcel of the development that we should encourage.

I have been involved in several recent conferences at which concern was expressed about the diversion of aid to eastern Europe affecting Africa and other developing countries. That topic is raised in almost every third-world country that one visits. I understand from the European Commissioner, my right hon. Friend the Minister and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary that there is no question of diverting ODA funds to eastern Europe. Although we want to assist eastern Europe, no country in eastern Europe is sufficiently poor to qualify for ODA funds.

As far as I am aware, know-how funds, industrial funds and so on for eastern Europe have been additional to the agreed, expanding figures for ODA budgets. I assure my right hon. and hon. Friends that any suggestion that there should be any diversion of ODA funds to eastern Europe would be severely resisted. I am convinced that that option is not being considered. Norway's Minister responsible for overseas development made precisely that point.

The Americans have been the only people to divert short-term funds. I understand from their Minister that they have clawed it back. It was a matter of short-termism. The Italian Government have diverted funds in the first year. Again, I understand that the money will be clawed back. Funds that are desperately required for development in the third world should not be used for eastern Europe. That is a wholly different matter, even though it might come within my right hon. Friend's responsibility.

I disagree with the interpretation by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary at the conference on prospects for Africa. We are talking about political conditionality and withdrawing aid from countries that do not meet certain standards. The voices that I have heard come from Africa as much as anywhere else.

[Mr. Jim Lester]

If we want to see economic recovery and the standards of living of the poorest in such countries increase, I should have thought that we would need to ensure democratic accountability. That is one of the conditions that we have accepted for eastern Europe. We need Governments who seek to be free from corruption and who follow policies that profitably and sensibly utilise the resources that we want to transfer to them. It makes no sense to offer funds to Governments whose track record is such that the funds do not achieve the objectives that we all seek for the people of those Governments.

There is no suggestion that that would in any way damage humanitarian interests in countries such as Ethiopia, the policies of whose Government we have never supported, but we have none the less given millions and millions of pounds of humanitarian aid to ensure that people do not starve. If the Ethiopian Government began to have policies that we could see were benefiting the people, I would be one of the very first to encourage a development programme for that Government.

I do not accept that there is a "big stick" or that we have made anything other than a gradual incremental suggestion in line with the World bank and with many others, especially from the countries concerned, who seek the same standards as those enjoyed by countries in the west and which are now appearing in the east. We must ensure that the transfer of resources that many of us seek and want to see encouraged through IFAD and whatever other means are used to the advantage of the people we seek to assist.

Therefore, I commend the order to my right hon. Friend. I am glad that it has been moved. I hope that we shall continue to work actively with IFAD and to support its objectives. I further hope that we shall see the fund increase and diversify in some of the ways that I have suggested.

10.56 pm

Mrs. Chalker: With the leave of the House, I should like to respond as briefly as I can to some of the points that have been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) and the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd).

Perhaps we could get one or two things straight at the beginning. The Foreign Secretary's speech to the Overseas Development Institute was not a new message and the prescriptions are not Thatcherite, as the hon. Lady said on the radio. As the hon. Lady would know if she had read it thoroughly, the World bank study on sub-Saharan Africa reached the same conclusions on the need for good government and economic and political liberalisation. It stated:

> "Equally worrying is the widespread impression of political decline. Corruption, oppression and nepotism are increasingly evident. These are hardly unique to Africa, but they may have been exacerbated by development strategies that concentrate power and resources in government bureaucracies without countervailing measures to ensure public accountability or political consensus".

The report contains many similar comments. We believe that it is absolutely essential that there is good government because without it our efforts, whether in Africa, Asia or anywhere else, will not be as valuable as they could be to the people who need our help. The hon. Lady should think a little harder about what the Foreign Secretary said, because comments such as she made do not bear on the reality.

The result of economic activity in Africa has shifted increasingly to the informal sector. We need to help people in such countries to realise their own ambition. Things will be done if the people are involved, and that means good government. Without it, one cannot be successful.

My hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe has almost dealt with the hon. Lady's other point about aid for eastern Europe. I simply reaffirm what he said: aid to eastern Europe is separate from, and additional to, the aid to developing countries that is provided through the aid programme. There is no diversion of funds. The £150 million over five years of the know-how fund for eastern Europe compares with a total of more than £1,600 million this year in assistance to the third world. Although I know that that fear has been raised, I assure the hon. Lady that, whatever she may think, we are not diverting funds to eastern Europe from the third world. There is a separate line in the public expenditure survey committee and that is what we are using.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Will the Minister give way on that point?

Mrs. Chalker: I shall give way briefly.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not see why it has to be briefly. Can she assure us that that principle will apply in subsequent years?

Mrs. Chalker: I assure the hon. Gentleman that, where we have a PESC line for support for Africa, the money intended for Africa and the third world will be spent there. I also assure him that, in all that we have agreed, the money for eastern Europe is separate from and additional to other money. I cannot bind successor Governments. I cannot make promises that my successors might wish to alter. What I can say is exactly what I have agreed and what I intend to do. I shall not be deflected from that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe made a balanced and realistic speech. He said that agriculture is more than just growing food. How right he is. It is the ability of growers to get the food that they grow to the people who need it. That requires infrastructure and many of the other things that are taken care of by other programmes.

Let us consider what IFAD is. IFAD's aid to Africa is about one third of total IFAD resources. We have always felt that IFAD was useful but that it was not alone. It is not the whole answer for the development of sub-Saharan Africa in agriculture and associated matters. It is but one instrument among many.

The hon. Member for Cynon Valley made great play of her view that the United Kingdom contribution to the special programme for Africa was miserly. She must remember the United Kingdom's total aid to Africa. United Kingdom bilateral aid to Africa rose from £305 million in 1987 to £422 million in 1988. Over the period from 1988 to 1991 we have committed £250 million to the World bank special programme of assistance for sub-Saharan Africa. We have cancelled the aid debts of 15 African countries at a cost of £284 million. Half of IDA9, which we have just negotiated—some $15 billion—will go

to sub-Saharan Africa. Over 90 per cent. of the European development fund goes to sub-Saharan Africa. In 1990 the EDF will total about £950 million.

My hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe asked about the criteria for the poorest countries. Two thirds of IFAD's aid goes to the poorest countries with special emphasis on the least developed and low-income food-deficit countries. IFAD seeks increasingly to target its assistance on those poorest sectors by undertaking socio-economic base line surveys before it implements the projects. It does a total job in its own way. However, it is only part of the whole, and we should always remember that, even though tonight we are dealing with the replenishment of IFAD.

We should also remember that IFAD works through other organisations. It relies on them for the implementation and supervision of projects. I know that IFAD is conscious of the need to intensify its efforts in these areas. There are increasing staff inputs for a greater direct IFAD role in project implementation. But if that were to go on and on, as the hon. Member for Cynon Valley seems to want, it would change the character of the organisation, which is essentially to target those who need special help.

IFAD was never designed to be a project-executing agency. That is done through other organisations. It is a funding agency and it is in funding special projects, which are clearly targeted, that it has had considerable success. However, if we try to make it outgrow what it was intended to be, I fear that it might well fail.

Of course, there is anxiety about IFAD's future. But there is a growing feeling among OECD donors that IFAD may not be able to continue as they originally envisaged unless OPEC countries live up to their collective responsibilities for their share of the basic funding. That is why the high level intergovernmental committee that will sit again shortly is important. I hope that when it resumes its work next week it will make sure that the issue of how to deliver the resources most efficiently to those most in need will receive the careful scrutiny that it deserves.

The hon. Lady asked about IFAD's policy towards women in development. I mentioned that in my opening speech. It takes a positive bias in its approach to the problems of rural women and enlists them as creative partners in the rural development endeavours. There is a special programme for women in development, which is designed to enhance IFAD's technical capacity to meet the challenges posed by poor rural women and its efforts to integrate them into the development process. It is a specialist job designed to meet a special need.

The hon. Lady spent a long time making great play about the third replenishment and asked why we could not contribute more. The size of our contribution depends on the overall size of the replenishment. That is decided by negotiation with other members of the fund and on the basis of burden sharing. The OECD members in this replenishment have made considerable efforts to achieve a satisfactory outcome. Of the total of $566 million raised, $378 million—almost 70 per cent.—is being raised by the OECD countries.

The hon. Lady asked why we had contributed less in percentage terms to the core contribution of this replenishment than we did to the last replenishment. She did not put it quite that way, but I think that that is what she meant. Our share of category 1 core contribution is down by 0·1 per cent.—from 4·79 per cent. in the second replenishment to 4·78 per cent. in this replenishment. The reason for that is that Greece has transferred from category 3 to category 1 membership for the first time.

There are many more technical details that I will not discuss tonight for the sake of my hon. Friends. However, I must say that the net flows of official development assistance to Africa have remained strongly positive throughout the 1980s. One would never have thought that when listening to the hon. Lady. We all know that the problem with IFAD has been the sharp reduction in the OPEC pledges. The OECD does not feel that it should be putting up more than three fifths of the resources, although the voting power remains equally shared. The second replenishment only raised a disappointing sum—$400 million—and that was why we had the voluntary fund, the special programme for Africa. That programme, which was proposed in 1985, was important as it came in the wake of the famine and at a time when the finalisation of the second replenishment was still in doubt. The pledges were voluntary, not negotiated, and the target of $300 million was reached. It focused on 24 countries suffering from drought and desertification. However, that programme does not finance famine relief but is used for longer-term development, and it was there just at the time when we were having trouble with the second replenishment.

I do not think that we can continue to have special programme after special programme; we do far better to concentrate our resources on mainstream programmes and ensure that they get through to the people for whom they are intended. Special programmes cause extra costs in administration. One of the problems is that, as time goes on, donors tend to put more and more money into such funds and less and less into core programmes. Those core programmes then break down and fail to deliver the real intent for which they were established.

In the case of IFAD, a voluntary fund of that special sort and size also poses some clear dangers to the process of negotiated contributions on which the institution is founded. Only OECD donors with token sums of support from the countries have made contributions. When we announced our contribution of £7 million, we made it clear that we regarded the programme as justified, but only in the context of the disappointing outcome of the second replenishment. We expect the activities that were taken up by the special programme for Africa to be fully incorporated into IFAD's regular programme in the next replenishment. That is important if we are to keep down the bureaucratic costs of special programmes.

We are not in favour of continuing to increase special programmes. We are in favour of targeting effort to those most in need, of making sure that our approach is rounded, of seeing that it focuses not only on the growing of food but on the delivery of that food when grown, on its efficient and sound storage and on the sensible use of the resources that are available.

I am certain that the special programme for Africa has been valuable. The hon. Member for Cynon Valley said that it breached the principle of burden sharing. That is not the case. The SPA relied almost entirely, as I said, on contributions from OECD donors. We are not opposing others contributing; we merely make it clear that in relation to a case for an extension of the programme, the circumstances are now very different from those of 1986, when the programme was put forward.

[Mrs. Chalker]

Looking again at the World bank's long-term perspective study for sub-Saharan Africa, one realises the importance of agriculture—which accounts for over one third of Africa's GDP—both as an engine of growth and as a major contributor to improving food security. One appreciates the constraints on land availability. That means that growth must come largely from increased productivity. That, in turn, can come only through technological change. Such changes must be conservation-oriented if they are to be sustainable. That is why the World bank has the right approach to the whole question of agriculture in the long term.

That study also described Africa's decline in economic performance over the last 20 years. None of that is new. But, above all, that study managed—we should focus on this in discussing agricultural development in Africa—to accentuate the two main priorities. They are, first, the need to increase the role of the private sector in pricing and marketing agricultural products and farming inputs and improving financial services to farmers; and, secondly, the need to identify and disseminate new technologies to increase productivity.

It is important, in the latter context, to revitalise Africa's agricultural research and extension institutions, which are currently not doing much useful work but are doing it at great expense. We are not cutting back on that. We are making sure that in our programmes we target our aid to deliver what is really needed. IFAD is but one instrument. It has been most effective and useful, but it cannot do everything and it was never intended to do so. It would be wrong to try to develop it beyond its natural life, particularly if the funding is to remain solely on the shoulders of the OECD countries.

The hon. Lady also mentioned the environment. IFAD recognises environment as a key issue. It has focused on environmental sustainability alongside rural poverty alleviation. Given that focus, it is clear that it has become increasingly aware of the systematic linkages between environmental degradation and rural poverty alleviation.

IFAD's two reports last year detailed the approach to environmental sustainability and rural poverty alleviation, and the policies outlined in those reports are totally compatible with the policies adopted by other institutions. I believe that we can get on with the job well if we use IFAD as one useful instrument, but remember that we have many others and that we should work in all the spheres to tackle the many and varied problems as they arise.

There is no way in which I would favour cutting back on what we do to help agricultural development in Africa, but that must be approached in an intelligent and widely based way and not in the rather simplistic way that the hon. Lady suggested tonight.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft International Fund for Agricultural Development Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 8th March, be approved.

Catheters

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

11.14 pm

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): I am grateful for the opportunity of raising a problem that involves one of my constituents, but is also faced by many other people. The more I have looked into the difficulties faced, not only by my constituent but by others in her position, the more sympathy I have with the case that I am pressing. I hope that the Minister will be responsive this evening.

Many people who require essential medical treatment are not exempt from prescription charges, and it is absolutely necessary that they should be. The specific problem to which I draw the Minister's attention is the difficulty faced by those people—mainly, but not exclusively, women—who have to use catheters regularly, several times a day, but who have to pay for the prescription that they get on the health service from their doctors for the equipment that they need.

The constituent who brought the matter to my attention is a woman in her early 50s, who had a job that she found enjoyable and satisfying, helping elderly people. She had an accident at work that led to a spinal injury which resulted in problems with her nerves, and she required a great deal of treatment. She has been left with permanent nerve damage and is unable to pass water in the normal way. She has to self-catheterise herself at least three times a day. She finds it difficult to come to terms with that. Having spoken to doctors and continence advisers, I find that that is not unusual for such patients. She finds it an embarrassment and a disability, and also frustrating.

My constituent is also angry that, at the same time that she is having to cope with this difficult medical problem, she has to pay for the prescription for the equipment she requires. She feels that that is unfair, and I agree. There are three reasons why I believe my constituent is right to feel that she, and others in a similar position, have a genuine grievance.

First, we are talking about an essential bodily function. My constituent manages by using catheters three or four times a day. If she did not do so, the National Health Service would be faced with a patient in a crisis, and it would be an emergency. My constituent has no alternative; there is no way that she can cut down on the prescribed items she uses. Her needs are essential, on a day-in, day-out basis.

Secondly, many other comparable items of equipment are exempt from prescription charges. Colostomy bags are, in many ways, comparable. Those who need colostomy bags receive them free. The Minister may say, as one Minister has in a letter to me, that there is a difference between needing catheters and needing a colostomy bag. The reason that Ministers have given in the past is that if a patient needs to use catheters he or she does not have a permanent fistula. That is the distinction which Ministers have made when deciding who should be exempt from presciption charges. I do not accept that it is as simple as that or that that should be the deciding factor.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Colostomies are reversible.

Mrs. Taylor: As my hon. Friend says, colostomies are often reversible. We are talking about similar problems. Both conditions involve essential bodily functions and, on occasion, there is an option available for some people who choose to self-catheterise, rather than have a permanent fistula. Some of those involved were given the option of having a urostomy, which is a permanent fistula. If a urostomy——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Which is also reversible.

Mrs. Taylor: —which is sometimes reversible, though not always—is performed, the appropriate bags are available on prescription with no charge being levied. One woman in my constituency in her early 30s suffered nerve damage after intense gynaecological surgery and was left with the problem of lack of bladder control because of nerve damage. She was given the option of having a urostomy, but chose to use catheters instead, despite the difficulties—perhaps because of the dangers sometimes associated with irritation and the other difficulties that can arise with a fistula.

It would be ludicrous if a patient, having been advised that she could opt for either treatment, chose a urostomy on the ground that it would not cost her anything in the future because all the prescription items she needed would be exempt. If the same patient chose a catheter, thus saving the health service the cost of the operation, she would have to pay for every prescription. Patients should not have to make a decision on that basis.

There is also a straightforward medical reason why the items required should be available free of charge. I refer to the serious risk of infection that arises from reusing catheters. I understand that two different types are in regular use. One kind, preferred by many patients, is supplied already lubricated, which makes for ease of use. The other kind is not and has to be lubricated by the user. That second type may not be as good at preventing infection.

Manufacturers of the prelubricated catheter recommend that they are used only once. I appreciate that it may be in their commercial interests to give that advice, but there could be a problem, in terms of the possible transference of infection if further lubrication is required. For that reason, many users feel far safer using a catheter only once.

When patients have to pay for the catheters they obtain on prescription, there may be a temptation to wash and reuse them, giving rise to associated health risks. While patients may get away with that practice to a limited extent, it is surely wrong to encourage them to do anything that increases the risk to their health. Many users who self-catheterise are strongly dissuaded from reusing their catheters overmuch by their medical advisers, doctors and continence advisers. They are certainly dissuaded from reusing them outside their own homes, as that introduces additional risks. In any event, the risk increases if, because of the cost involved, users decide to reuse their catheters.

Let me sum up. The Minister should take the matter seriously for the following reasons. The equipment is needed for an essential bodily function; other comparable items are exempt from charges; moreover, there is a risk of infection from the reuse of catheters, involving a subsequent cost to the health service.

There may not be many cases of self-catheterisation at present—although we do not know the exact number: the information is not collected centrally, and even the health centres must rely on information from hospitals, which is sometimes slow in arriving. Nevertheless, it is an increasing problem. I spoke to Mrs. Anita Barker, a continence adviser based at one of the health centres in my part of West Yorkshire and she gave me an insight—for which I am grateful—into the many problems that arise. Her specialty is relatively new; I understand that the first continence adviser was appointed only about 10 years ago. Now, however, there is increasing awareness of the problems that face many people, most—although not all—of them women, and some of them relatively young.

New techniques are being developed. When the lists were first drawn up, the fact that catheters were not exempt from prescription charges was probably not a problem, as very few people were self-catheterising. I gather that the constituent of mine who raised the matter was one of the first people in the north to be taught how to do it. Now, however, more people are being considered as candidates for the technique, although it is not suitable for everyone.

The Department should spend more time thinking about the number of people who could be affected. I understand that such problems as incontinence—which are not the glamorous end of medicine, by any means—have not been the subject of a great deal of work recently. A 1984 study showed that 3 million people suffered from incontinence, although that was thought to be an underestimate: as I am sure the Minister will agree, many people do not want to tell others that they have such a problem. I am told that many sufferers buy the equipment that they need by mail order or from the chemist without seeing their doctors, because they mistakenly see their problem as one of which they should be ashamed.

Although the debate is specifically about catheters, may I suggest to the Minister that all incontinence equipment should be available from GPs free on prescription? That might help to reduce the stigma associated with such health problems.

The Minister may say that many people who use catheters will in any event be exempt from all prescription charges for other reasons. Incontinence or bladder control problems are sometimes a consequence of a larger health problem, such as multiple sclerosis or a colostomy. That does not apply to everyone, however. I am told that many young men with spinal injuries must pay for the male-incontinence sheaths that they have to use regularly.

It is all very strange. Some patients are exempt while others are not. Some items are exempt, such as collection bags—which are necessary following urostomies—and the same items, if issued by a health authority, can be given to patients free of charge.

I hope that the Minister will look sympathetically at the problems affecting an increasing number of people, and I hope that he will realise from the debate that there is a need to carry out more research into this issue. When the prescription exemption list was first drawn up it was very rare for people to self-catheterise. It is now becoming increasingly common. Perhaps there will be further technological advances, which will make it a suitable procedure for more people.

I hope that the Minister will not close his mind to the possibility of helping people who are faced with this situation, because it is essential to every one of them. Having to pay for the equipment required adds insult to injury for many people.

11.31 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Stephen Dorrell): It is a great pleasure to respond to the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor). She and I spent quite a long time in each other's company when I was in an earlier incarnation in the Whips' Office. We both served on the Criminal Justice Bill Standing Committee. On that occasion she had plenty to say and I was unable to respond to any of it, so it is nice to be able to respond, even if I am not in total agreement with her, this evening.

The hon. Lady advanced the case of her constituent who feels that there is an injustice associated with the fact that the supply of catheters on prescription leads to a prescription charge and that, in her own phrase, that "adds insult to injury" to the position in which her constituent finds herself.

The hon. Lady drew attention to three arguments which, in her view, justify her case that her constituent should not be required to pay a prescription charge for the supply of catheters: that the bodily functions involved are essential and that if self-catheterisation did not continue it would lead to substantial problems for the health authority and, of course, for the patient, the hon. Lady's constituent; that other similar conditions lead to free prescriptions; and that there is a significant health risk attached to the hon. Lady's constituent. The hon. Lady also made some general remarks about research on unglamorous medical issues, which I shall return to at the end of my speech.

General policy on prescription charges is one of the issues that has been hotly debated ever since the national health service was set up, and perhaps it is a debate which, over the years, has generated a great deal more heat than light. It is hard to think of anything new to say on the subject of prescription charges after 40 years. It remains the Government's view that it is reasonable that those who can afford to make a contribution towards the costs of medicines prescribed to them should do so, and that regimes of exemption from prescription charges should be properly directed and should be justified by medical or social considerations.

As a background to the debate it is worth remembering that, of more than £2 billion spent on pharmaceutical services, prescription charges now comprise £177 million, or roughly 8 per cent. of the total cost of the pharmaceutical services of the national health service. Therefore, the prescription charge, while it raises a significant sum, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be said to finance the majority, or even a substantial minority, of the cost of pharmaceutical services.

Furthermore, we should also remember that the charge that we are discussing is £3·05 for each prescription, with a maximum charge, because of the season ticket system, of £43·50 during the year. Not only are the charges relatively modest, but they are levied on only a quarter of all prescriptions dispensed, as 75 per cent. of prescriptions are dispensed free. That is the issue to which the hon. Lady has referred. She has argued that her constituent should be among the 75 per cent., not the 25 per cent.

To assess the robustness of that argument we must look at the rules and see who is entitled to free prescriptions. The main determinant, which covers the vast majority of free prescriptions, is income. We believe that those who find it difficult to meet prescription charges on income grounds should be entitled to free prescriptions. That is why the list includes all men over 65 and all women over 60, all children under 16, all students under 19 in full-time education and all those receiving income support and family credit—the main means-tested benefits.

Furthermore, there is an independent system within the NHS, outside the means-tested benefits system, to ensure that those over 16 on low incomes do not have to pay prescription charges. Expectant mothers and mothers with a baby of under 12 months do not have to pay prescription charges. Ministry of Defence disablement pensioners do not have to pay prescription charges if the prescription is related to the cause of their disablement. Finally—this is the only exception from the principle of income determination—there are those who are exempted from having to pay prescription charges because they receive a particular type of medical treatment. Viewed in the context of the entirety of that list, they are very much the exception rather than the rule.

With those who are exempt on grounds of the medical treatment that they receive, the list of treatments is relatively short. It originated when charges for prescriptions were reintroduced in 1968. The list is substantially unchanged from that which was introduced over 20 years ago. It was drawn up as a means of exempting some of the chronically sick from prescription charges. It has been reviewed on a number of occasions by Governments of both political complexions since 1968—most recently in 1986. On each occasion the conclusion of the review was that the exemption arrangements should not be altered.

There are two reasons. While the cost of adding any one medical condition, such as the requirement for catheters, to the list is not great, it is important to remember that if the principle were accepted for one condition, I should quickly be summoned back to the Dispatch Box on behalf of patients suffering from another condition. The case that the hon. Lady advances for those who need catheters is neither stronger not weaker than the case that could be advanced for those who suffer from cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis—which the hon. Lady mentioned as one condition that she wished the Government to consider—cancer, asthma and Parkinson's disease. If we sat down together for 10 minutes, I am sure that the hon. Lady and I could think of a number of other conditions for which a case, on medical grounds, could be made that was as strong as that for the conditions that are already included on the list.

Mrs. Taylor: I did not intervene when the Minister referred to the income aspect. However, many women who are in the same position as my constituent are in employment and earning money. Dependency adds to their difficulties. My point was that we are referring to a natural and daily bodily function. Absence of such equipment is life endangering. It would lead to a person having to be readmitted to hospital very quickly. It is the life-saving nature of the equipment that we are discussing. That is why I believe that it should be included.

Mr. Dorrell: I understand what the hon. Lady says. Neither she nor I is sufficiently well qualified in medical matters to be able to quote the treatment that would be required to deal with the diseases that I have listed. We would not be able to bandy treatments in that way. If, however, we were to compare those illnesses with the medical conditions that are linked with free prescriptions, it would be difficult to justify the inclusion of those that are

on the list and the exclusion of others, condition by condition. If the force of the hon. Lady's argument for including catheterisation on the list were accepted, the floodgates would be opened and it would be difficult to resist the arguments of those who campaign for other groups. Once the argument is accepted, the resource implications become more considerable than on the basis of the hon. Lady's argument alone.

That is only one of the two reasons that the hon. Lady should consider in reflecting on the force of her argument. The other concern reflects on what I said earlier about the exemption rules being principally income oriented, being designed so that those in most financial need are protected from the requirement to pay prescription charges while those who can afford to contribute something towards the cost of their medicines do so. Many of those who are chronically sick already qualify for exemption in one or more of the other groups. I understand that the exemption list would almost certainly not help directly those in most immediate need if the measurement of need was based on income. Only the chronically sick whose resources exceeded the low-income qualifying level would benefit from such a change.

Extending the list would provide additional assistance for those who are not in the greatest need when income is taken into account and measured. In my view, that would not be the best use of the resources that are available to the NHS.

I should prefer to see the use of scarce resources to secure other advances, and the hon. Lady suggested one or two in her concluding remarks. I do not want to commit myself at this time of night to a great research programme without having thought about it further, but her comment that the Department of Health should remember the need to undertake research programmes in the less glamorous aspects of medicine as well as in the leading-edge technologies, which can always guarantee good press coverage and media interest, is an entirely sensible proposition to advance. If the result of that research were to suggest that treatments were not being allowed to develop in the way that she fears, policy makers would have to take that seriously into consideration.

Mrs. Taylor: I am grateful to the Minister for his constructive comments. Would he be willing to meet some of those who feel that they are facing difficulties, and who could suggest areas of research and refer to others that are not being covered?

Mr. Dorrell: Yes. I should be happy to meet them and hear their proposals for research programmes, or how others might direct research programmes, to achieve the objectives to which the hon. Lady has referred. I hope that on that basis she will feel that she has made some progress this evening. I look forward to seeing her with a delegation.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at seventeen minutes to Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 15 June 1990

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

Disabled People (Public Transport)

9.34 am.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): I wish to present a petition from Mr. Keith Armstrong of the London Dial-a-Ride Users Association and 38,000 Londoners, who petition the House as follows:

The London Dial-a-Ride Users Association considers: That the opportunity for people with disabilities to travel on affordable public transport is a basic human right.

That door-to-door transport sytems for people with disabilities (such as Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Community Transport etc.) will always have an important role to play in any public transport mix.

Those who drew up the petition have provided much-needed transport and freedom for many people who could never venture outside their door before the advent of dial-a-ride and disabled access transport. They recognise the work that has been done, and petition the House and the Government for more to be done in the future.

To lie upon the Table.

EEC (Economic and Political Developments)

9.35 am

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): I beg to move,

That this House considers that Britain's entry into the exchange rate machanism of the European Monetary System must be seen as a stepping stone towards the early creation of a single European currency; regrets that the Prime Minister has encouraged Her Majesty's Government to adopt a far too shrivelled and isolationist approach towards changes in the European Community; and believes that the interests of the British people will be served best in the future by the positive approach contained in Labour's new policies on economic and political developments in the European Community.

My father died on 20 November 1939 when the German battleship, the Scharnhorst, sunk HMS Rawalpindi. Churchill spoke about it in the House. As a result of the ravages of this Europe "des patries" torn apart by war and prey to nationalism and race, I knew little about my father, but from what I have been able to glean from my mother I am sure that he would have been pleased that I am moving the motion today and seeking to set out a framework for a Europe that is prosperous, peaceful and free in which my son and his grandson can grow up. That Europe will be produced not by new weapon systems, nuclear devices on German soil or NATO reborn but by the interplay, and to some extent the interweaving, of cultural and social life inside a stable political framework.

That framework can be provided only by the European Community. Accordingly, it is time that Left-wing Members regarded the European Community as a stunning opportunity rather than a upas tree of woe. Nothing is for ever, but I have no doubt that Britain's future in the next century will be ultimately bound up with economic and political developments in the European Community. As we awaken from our isolationist slumber and are released from our imperial past, there must be exciting prospects ahead and young people in Europe certainly expect us to seize the major opportunities for political and cultural changes that are opening up.

Young people in Britain today have no interest in Labour's post-war corporatist approach or the callowness of modern Thatcherism. Europe is the arena in which a new kind of politics can emerge. Yes, there will be battles, some ideological; yes, it will sometimes be difficult to keep up with the pace of change; but only politicians of the past will want to opt out.

Often in politics there is a natural dynamic that is critical to the development of ideas and actions. The politicians who serve the people of their country and parties best are those who can harness that dynamic. The others end up whistling in the wind, fumbling in the dark, or whatever metaphor one wants to use.

In the 21st century the dynamic for Britain as regards the development of ideas and action will, I expect, be European, and within Europe the European Community is the only institution that can make the thing work. Of course, there are those who disagree and those who are afraid, particularly in the Conservative party, where the old certainties have given way to doubt and scepticism. Thus, the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), a recent chairman of the Conservative party, told us that the Deutsches Bundesbank is

"the monetary successor to the Panzer".

[Mr. Brian Sedgemore]

Tory historian A. L. Rowse tells us to turn our back on Europe because the British are a practical people—

"not theoretical like the Germans nor arrogant like the French".

Lord Denning, a high Tory judge in despair of the European Community and the Delors report, even quotes John of Gaunt:

"This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world
Is now leas'd out . . .
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself."

I refer to this soporific phoney Tory romanticism, not to begin on a contentious note, because that is not my nature, but to enable the Minister to repudiate, on behalf of the Government, the views of this distinguished, if unholy, trinity. It is not as though the right hon. Member for Chingford is alone in his isolationist views. They seem to be shared to some extent by the Prime Minister. I do not want to turn this into a contentious debate, but I must say that I think that an aura of arrogance clings to the Prime Minister's shrivelled view, as she blocks progress time and again in the European Community. Like a tiny minority of Labour Members, she preaches a 17th century version of sovereignty which is unhelpful if only because it preceded the rise of both socialism and capitalism. As the Prime Minister moves from false premises to false conclusions by a logic that is somewhat suspect, is it any wonder that the Government dither about when Britain will join the ERM, fulminate against plans for monetary union, or the idea of a single European currency and believe that proposals for political integration threaten the very existence of the only version of democracy that they seem to understand?

I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition is not in his place today. In contrast to the Prime Minister's negative approach, my right hon. Friend is to be congratulated on his support for a new European idealism. Both history and the moment, as well as perceptions of youth, are on his side. Anyone who has read Labour's policy document, "Looking to the Future"—I am sure that that means everyone here—will know that my right hon. Friend, backed by the shadow Chancellor, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), considers that joining the ERM is but a part of a developing economic and political process that should be pursued with enthusiasm.

The Prime Minister and the Government are worried that Labour's non-misty-eyed and practical approach to the European Community nevertheless carries with it a certain amount of political glamour. Realising that, the Government are anxious to steal Labour's clothes and get Britain into the ERM, preferably later this year—I am told that the preferred date is November—and certainly before the next general election.

I think that the Government are right to press ahead, even though they may be doing it for the wrong reasons, and until this week pressing ahead was what was being talked about, until we discovered that the Government's guru, Sir Alan Walters, had returned. Even as I speak, he may be in that study in Downing street with the Prime Minister's political advisers determining Britain's economic future. We all know that Sir Alan is opposed to entry into the ERM, and I should like the Minister to tell us whether his presence back in Britain means that entry will be delayed, or even permanently postponed. What is the Government's position?

It is possible that I have totally misread the situation. I do not know how many hon. Members have studied the works of Alan Walters, but I have read quite a bit of what he has written. Although he says that the ERM is a half-baked proposal, he believes that monetary union and a single European currency are valid theoretical and practical options. Perhaps he has been brought in to push on faster with stages 2 and 3 of the Delors report. There are signs that there has been a significant sea change in the Government's view, and perhaps I shall return to that in a moment.

The fact that Britain will be in the ERM by the time of the next general election presents a challenge to those Back-Bench Members on both sides of the House who oppose entry. Will any of them seriously go to the electorate calling for Britain to leave the ERM?

I hope that today we can bury the argument against Britain joining the ERM. Certainly there could be no question of the Labour party fighting the next general election on the basis of Britain leaving the ERM. To do so would be an act of supreme folly; it would be electoral suicide—akin to inviting my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition to take a cyanide pill on the opening day of the next general election campaign.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): It is refreshing to hear the hon. Gentleman talk so enthusiastically about European institutions. He said that the Labour party's policy is not ideological but practical. I do not think that anyone would have any difficulty in accepting that: the Labour party has changed its policy so many times in the past 10 years that it could not be described as anything other than pragmatic.

A year ago, when the Opposition first cottoned on to the idea of joining the ERM as part of their policy—not so long ago Labour was campaigning, not to leave the ERM, but to leave the EEC—one of the conditions laid down by the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) was that the ERM should get rid of its deflationary bias. For most of us, the purpose of joining the ERM is that it is an anti-inflationary mechanism, involving a commitment to maintaining low inflation. Can the hon. Gentleman tell us why that shift in Labour party policy has taken place and whether he still thinks that the ERM has a deflationary bias that ought to be cured?

Mr. Sedgemore: The hon. Gentleman implies that there is something wrong with politicians changing their minds. I remember, as a barrister, appearing before the Lord Chief Justice, who said to me, "That's your bad point, Mr. Sedgemore; what's your good one?" I am all in favour of politicians dropping their bad points and developing their good points.

I shall go into technical economics later, but one of the technical matters that I do not want to go into in great detail is the enormous difference between an anti-inflationary policy and a deflationary policy. I shall deal specifically with the question of how much deflation must be or might be involved in entering the ERM and how much would be involved in entry at any given rate. If the hon. Gentleman is unhappy with what I say, I am sure that he will intervene again.

I admit that in the past I have been bitterly critical of the EEC. The reason why I believe that we must take a firm stand now is that the idea of national economies controlled by national Governments is dead, and the electorate knows that. The argument today should be not about whether we should join the ERM but about when and on what terms and about what comes next.

Big bang and the development of global markets have inevitably caused some of us to rethink our positions. I grew up in the world of theories of comparative advantage in which exchange rates were driven by current account surpluses or deficits. I now live in a world where exchange rates are often driven by capital flows and where $200 billion crosses the foreign exchange markets every day, although 90 per cent. of that money is not used to finance foreign trade but represents speculative capital flows or hedging against currency changes. The power of exchange speculators is awesome. It is not constrained by, nor does it recognise, notions of political sovereignty. It can, and does, throw Governments off course. The joining of the ERM could prove critical in helping both Labour and Conservative Governments to deal with the damaging effects of currency speculation.

Some of my hon. Friends do not appear to accept that there is something heroically absurd in fighting currency speculators with political slogans and moral lectures. The unreconstructed Keynesians who met at the socialist conference in Sheffield told us that they were against Britain joining the ERM because they regard devaluation as part of the ark of the socialist covenant. I do not. Morever, I am aware—as they should be aware—that successful devaluations are often accompanied by deflation. That is usually the way in which a devaluation shifts resources from imports to exports. I am also aware that membership of the ERM could be a way of preventing sterling from rising too high as a result of forces beyond the control of the Government.

We also need to tackle the problem of inflation, which is caused partly by too much money chasing too few goods but is also part of the problem of income distribution. The public believe that the current high levels of inflation created by the Government are unacceptable. People want Tory Britain to stop leading the world in sustaining high levels of inflation. My fear—it is a real fear—is that, although there are several steps that the next Labour Government could take to reduce inflation, particularly Government-induced inflation, they will find themselves forced back into a statutory prices and incomes policy if we are not in the ERM. The political consequences of a return to such a policy would be disastrous and wholly unacceptable to the general public.

Last year I was asked at what rate Britain should enter the ERM. Answering intuitively and off the cuff, I said that we should enter at DM2.60 to the pound. I was interested to read over the weekend a discussion document by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research which came to a similar conclusion after using rather more sophisticated economic analyses.

One wants a real exchange rate which in the medium term generates a sustainable current account on the balance of payments. In theory, it is possible to use purchasing power parities using the cost of a basket of goods in different countries. But that would throw up results that were inconsistent with the colossal balance of payments difficulties created by the Government.

I conclude that the only feasible solution is to use the concept of the fundamental equilibrium exchange rate. I am sure that all hon. Members are even more familiar with that concept than me. On that basis sterling could enter the ERM in 1991 at about DM2·60 to the pound on either a narrow band of DM2·50 to DM2·70 to the pound or a wider band of DM2·45 to DM2·75 to the pound. In the transitional period—this is the point that the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) made—during which the performance of the British economy adjusts to that of our European partners, there would almost certainly have to be one realignment if we are to avoid excessive deflation. I do not believe that sterling could enter the ERM next year as a strong currency unless we are prepared to accept deflation. The blame for that state of affairs rests entirely with the Government, who have made such a terrible mess of the economy resulting in both soaring inflation and a colossal balance of payment deficit.

I hope that the Government will reject the hillbilly, wild west advice of those who argue that we should enter the ERM at an even higher rate than exists at present. Perhaps the most ludicrous suggestion has come from Credit Suisse First Boston where Giles Keating has suggested that Britain should enter the ERM at DM3·25 to the pound. That would surely be a recipe for disaster and a recession such as we experienced in the early 1980s.

Undoubtedly, the really big decision for the Government is one which effectively they have already taken. It is the decision about joining the ERM. Thereafter the development of monetary union, the best form of which is the creation of a single European currency, should be relatively easy. If Britain joined the ERM in 1991, a single European currency could be in place by 1997. The ecu would be the currency. We would be paid in ecu, shop in ecu and business transactions would take place in ecu. Foreign exchange transactions in Europe would disappear. The Queen's head would be dropped from the currency; but no one who takes these matters seriously will worry about that. Perhaps—I should welcome it—we shall see the heads of Rembrandt, Botticelli, Voltaire, Goethe and Helen of Troy on our bank notes.

The symbolic value for European unity in the creation of a single European currency would be incalculable. It would portend Tennyson's

"The Parliament of man, the federation of the world."

It would be an act of political affirmation as well as a sensible economic step to take.

I agreed with professor David Mayes when he argued in a recent publication called "The Ecu" that the creation of a single European currency would do more to expand trade in Europe than

"all the other modest changes now being introduced under the title '1992'".

I would go on to argue that the creation of a single European currency would change our very way of thinking about Europe and alter the horizons of the British people. It would be a dynamo for social and political change. It could offer hope of a cultural renaissance for this little, backward, fractious island off the coast of north-west Europe with a culture close to irreversible decline.

In more prosaic economic terms, the main advantage of a single European currency would be, first, the expansion of trade in Europe; secondly, the elimination of exchange rate risks in currency transactions within Europe and, therefore, victory over the currency speculators; thirdly, the improved stabilisation of the European economy with

[Mr. Sedgemore]

pooled reserves used more effectively; fourthly, improved macro-economic management as a result of co-operation with our European partners; and, fifthly, currency movement in the international market would neither make British industry uncompetitive relative to Europe nor stimulate British inflation.

The attitude of the Government is somewhat negative. It is based on the argument that macro-economic policy would be surrendered to European institutions. But a move to create a single European currency need not involve the British Government or other European Governments giving up the right to borrow and repay debts at their own risk. It need not involve economic union or the control of fiscal policy by centralised European institutions.

Jacques Delors, perhaps the greatest living European, got this part of his report completely wrong because of his federal bias. I am sure that Professor Alan Budd and Professor Goodhart are right to assert that in both theory and practice neither monetary union nor the creation of a single European currency requires a transfer of control of national fiscal policy from individual countries to a central Community authority. Binding rules over budget deficits would be neither necessary nor desirable.

Professor Goodhart in particular, drawing on the experience of the operation of the gold standard, has shown that the creation of a single European currency would not require the transfer of more executive powers to the European Commission in Brussels. The EC could evolve flexibly allowing other European countries such as Hungary or Czechoslovakia to join a single currency entirely free to choose whether they integrated economically or politically with the EC. For political reasons, I should like to see that integration, but the choice would be theirs. The Chancellor and I seem to be agreed on that point because we have discussed it in the Treasury Select Committee.

Of course, the creation of a single European currency would probably necessitate the establishment of a European central bank. Such a bank would need a degree of independence in its operation, but in my view it must ultimately come under the political scrutiny of the Finance Ministers of the member states of the European Community. A delicate balance would need to be struck between a central bank maintaining monetary integrity and ultimate political accountability. I see no inherent difficulties in resolving that problem. One could say that the same problem exists between the Treasury and the Bank of England now, with a legislative backstop. Moreover, those who are worried about the growing power of the Bundesbank over economic policy in Europe ought to welcome the creation of a central European bank which would clip the wings of the Bundesbank.

Only this week, on the issue of monetary union, Karl Otto Pöhl, the socialist president of Budesbank, expressed his support for the establishment of a European central bank. I see Conservative Members look at each other with unease. Karl Otto Pöhl is a socialist.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): He was.

Mr. Sedgemore: Was? Once a socialist always a socialist.

Ominously for Britain, Mr. Pöhl suggested the possibility of a two-speed system for joining the ERM, with Britain in the slow lane. Surely that would be disastrous for Britain. We should throw sterling to the speculators, as the Christians of old were thrown to the lions.

What is the Government's position on the two-track approach on the creation of a central European bank? That is a serious question because the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has suggested that we might be in the slow lane and that other European countries might go ahead with the creation of a central European Bank and Britain will be left behind. Is that view shared by the Treasury?

Of equal concern is the worry, shared I am sure by many of my hon. Friends, that intolerable regional disparities in the level of unemployment, output and living standards might arise. To meet that possibility there would be a need for a larger Community budget—at present it is between 0·5 and 1 per cent. of Community GDP—a substantial proportion of which should be devoted to regional policies to reduce those disparities.

I doubt whether many of my hon. Friends would cavil at the idea of regional planning inside the Community. I suspect that the economist Sir Donald MacDougall, who chaired the Marjolin group which considered the problem, massively overstated the extent to which the Community budget would have to be increased.

Until now the Government have made it clear that they are opposed to the type of plan I have outlined. Instead they have brought forward plans for competing currencies or currency competition in the run-up to the intergovernmental conference. In the Government's scenario, strong currencies such as the deutschmark would be attractive to lenders and weak currencies to borrowers because of the differences in their rates of interest. Currency competition would almost certainly favour low inflation currencies such as the deutschmark, not high inflation currencies such as the lira or sterling. The deutschmark is already the most widely used currency, and the unification of East and West Germany could reinforce that. Under a system of competing currencies, the common currency in the long run would almost certainly be the deutschmark and Europe would become a deutschmark zone. Unless the Government drop their competing currency idea, that is where they are leading us.

I doubt whether it is politically desirable or acceptable to other countries in the Community that we should become a deutschmark zone. The Bundesbank may not even welcome that because it would make the conduct of monetary policy in Germay even more difficult. Similarly, if sterling became the main currency, the Bank of England might not like it because the bank would have to worry first about the foreign holdings of sterling that affect interest rates and the exchange rate and, secondly, domestic holdings of sterling that affect monetary growth and domestic demand. From the point of view of the Bundesbank and the Bank of England, it would be far better to have the ecu as the single European currency.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I am following what my hon. Friend is saying with great interest and, surprisingly enough, with some agreement as to his prognostications. Whatever one calls the currency—deutschmark, sterling, ecu or some alternative yet to be suggested—does he not agree that the engine for that and

the economy that would probably dominate would be the German one? Although most of us—with the exception of a few backward people on the Conservative Benches—would agree on the idea of regional planning, where that regional planning takes place and of what it consists should not, according to most hon. Members, be centralised in a European capital across the water.

Mr. Sedgemore: I am pleased that I am swinging my hon. Friend slowly round to some of my arguments. He must live in the world as it is; he cannot stop it and get off. My hon. Friend has said that Germany will be the engine of economic growth in Europe, but that will happen whether or not Britain joins the ERM or a single European currency is adopted. Why does he state that as though stating some fundamental objection to my idea? My hon. Friend is a man of tenacity and perspicacity on this issue the like of which I have never seen and I look forward to his speech.

Regional policy will be about political argument and the transfer of powers in the Community—one can transfer them up or down. If my hon. Friend wants the Commission to give some of the money to the British Government and allow them to allocate it, he must use his powers of argument. He must think of new ways in which to sort out the problems, but he should not adopt the negative attitude that somehow, because Germany has a powerful economy—that is undoubted—therefore every suggestion on the Community is flawed because of that. Surely that dominance is one of the reasons for taking some of the powers away from the Bundesbank and sharing sovereignty in Europe.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Can the hon. Gentleman take us more into his confidence on the question of democratic control? He has said that his proposals would not affect sovereignty. Is he in favour of strengthening the powers of the European Parliament? If so, his hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) will have a heart attack.

Mr. Sedgemore: The short answer is, yes, I am, and I hope that my hon. Friend does not have a heart attack. I believe that some other hon. Members may develop that point, but I must limit the length of my speech.

Under the Government's competing currency proposals the situation is such that life becomes most difficult for the currency that wins the competition. It is an amazing proposal that the winner becomes the loser. The Government are apparently prepared to let sterling take the strain of that competition.

There is, of course, one other overwhelming objection to the Government's competing currency proposals: it is hard to find anyone in Europe who thinks that they are credible or desirable. In effect, Britain risks entering the intergovernmental conference naked on this issue.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Peter Lilley): Has not the hon. Gentleman read the report of the committee of advisers to the German Ministry of Finance, consisting of 30 of the most distinguished economists in Germany, which broadly endorsed the attitude expressed in the Government's evolutionary approach?

Mr. Sedgemore: I spend most of my time trying to contact European politicians. I have not read that report, but I have heard of it. I shall willingly give way to the Minister if he can name some leading European politicians in favour of the competing currency proposals.

Mr. Lilley: Mr. Balladur, to name but one, France's distinguished Minister of State for finances.

Mr. Sedgemore: Would the Minister like to mention two?

As the Minister has enticed me, let us consider the details behind this issue. It would be an unhappy state of affairs if we went to the intergovernmental conference supporting the competing currency proposals. I understand that the Government must present their proposals shortly, possibly next week. The Minister seems to be suggesting that the policy is still intact, but if that is true, that is not the message in the Chancellor's speech to the German chamber of industry and commerce on Tuesday.

That speech made no mention of competing currency proposals. Conservative Back Benchers, having read that speech, have been gob-smacked. He spoke about monetary union, the ecu and everything else except competing currency proposals. He spoke about moving on from stage 1 of Delors, but the only way to do that is to move to stage 2, which is a staging post for stage 3. The Chancellor seems to be talking about moving on to stages 2 and 3, and in paragraph 21 of his speech he spoke about the arrangements for stage 2 of Delors. In paragraph 24 he spoke about the ecu and said:

> "The third element might be to promote the use of the ecu. Can we help familiarise people more with the ecu? Can we develop ecu financial markets and techniques for central bank intervention in those markets?"

Let me repeat a question put to me by a Conservative Back Bencher this morning: what conceivable reason can there be for the Chancellor talking about the development of the ecu unless he is talking about monetary union and irretrievably locked exchange rates? I cannot understand his speech unless it is considered in that way. Having spoken about stage 2 and the ecu, in paragraph 25 of his speech the Chancellor said:

> "I think that these questions and others like them must be addressed in any rational discussion on how to progress to any form of EMU. It should be possible to devise solutions that are useful in themselves, whatever the outcome of our longer term debates."

That was a critical speech and I am sure that the Minister will wish to comment on it. There are two way of interpreting that speech. One is to accept the words for what they say, which is that there is a significant change in the Government's policy, that stages 2 and 3 are being thought about more seriously, and that the competing currency idea has been dropped. The other is the idea of the cynics. It is to say that it is classic British diplomacy—a stalling device—that it is the British trying to avoid the odium and opprobrium of our European partners at the intergovernmental conference.

There may be some rationale in that because some Treasury civil servants are now briefing journalists fast to the effect that the Chancellor is really a big stateman and that that is what it is all about. It is a stalling device. I ask the Minister to say whether we should accept the words used by the Chancellor or accept the briefing that Treasury civil servants are giving.

Many people will be pleased if we must accept the words that the Chancellor used in that speech because 83 per cent. of European business men questioned in a survey

[Mr. Sedgemore]

said that they were in favour of a common currency and would like to see the ecu adopt that role. Many Governments want it, but apparently not Her Majesty's Government.

Having taken up a lot of the time of the House, I will conclude with a political thought. When I began to rethink my views on Europe just over two years ago my starting point was economics. I was worried about the fact that the freeing up of global capital markets as well as changing trade patterns meant that some of the positions that I was taking were no longer credible. Nagging at the back of my mind was also a concern about where isolationism in Britain might take us. I concluded that the European Community had to be seen as an opportunity rather than as a threat. "A blinding flash of the obvious," some will snort. "An act of surrender," others will say.

In the past year, events have moved on dramatically. For anyone who has been awake, the politics, more than the economics, of Europe call on us to reassess our perspectives. I have no intention today of trying to set out a blueprint for Europe. Events change so quickly that most of what one says is out of date before the breath with which it is said dries in the air. But I will end by setting out a few guiding principles and my own general philosophical approach.

I do not want to see the people of Eastern Europe, who are enjoying new-found political freedoms, exploited by western capitalists, although I accept that they will need western capital. I do not want to see the countries of Eastern Europe become second-class Europeans and end up as associated members of the European Community, denied seats at the top table where the critical decisions are taken.

I do want to see the countries of Eastern Europe become part of a more democratic and accountable European Community which develops new ideas on social and economic integration. I want to see them join a European Community which links global economic and environmental problems to the condition of working people in their homes and workplaces.

Proceeding by way of economic collaboration, it should be possible to create a Europe, east and west, where wealth can be shared. It is not so much that socialists and environmentalists can join together to hijack the European Community as that the EC, despite being based on laissez faire economic principles, has a natural interventionist social and political dynamic.

That, if one likes, is the contradiction of the EC. That, if one likes, is where the dialectic of the 21st century will be fought out. I do not see that dialectic ending up in crisis. Rather, it will be a way of dealing with practical problems that go beyond the boundaries of the nation state and the solutions of which therefore must be international.

The task of politicians is to bring a sense of idealism and purpose to the opportunism and utilitarianism that might otherwise dominate, to widen horizons for minorities and the disadvantaged and to protect the interests of working people.

I end where I started. Kundera once said that the struggle of the people was the struggle of memory against forgetting. Today is a day for not forgetting the awfulness of nationalism, mysticism and race—the awfulness of the Europe "des patries" followed by the awfulness of Stalinism in the east. Today is a day for remembering that the future does not have to be like the past. It can be better, as Tennyson proclaimed joyously:

"For I dipt into the Future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be."

10.13 am

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): I congratulate the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) on his good fortune in the ballot and on the way in which, using his usual elegant wit, he entertained us and on occasions persuaded us to agree with the odd bon mot, to borrow a European phrase, that he came up with.

The hon. Gentleman said that once a socialist, always a socialist. I presume that that will be the motto on the frontispiece of the Labour party's manifesto at the next general election. He drew out a soupcon of debate from his hon. Friends, which persuades me rather of the truth of the adage that old socialists never die, they just feud away.

I look forward to later contributions from the Front Benches, and I apologise to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) that I shall not be present to hear his summing up as I must attend a constituency engagement. Also, I fear that I shall not be present to witness the seamless robe way in which the debate moves on to deal with the Church and state in the next motion.

I perceive a few inconsistencies in the motion, no doubt not because of any failing on the part of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch but perhaps because of a failing on the part of his hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury. When I saw the reference in the motion to a single European currency and the claim that

"the interests of the British people will be served best in the future by the positive approach contained in Labour's new policies"

I went hot foot to examine what Labour's new policies, as contained in "Back to the Future", or whatever it is called, actually said. In that document I found not quite the hon. Gentleman's hopes as expressed in his motion. It said, in more hesitant terms:

"Joining the ERM is no panacea for Britain's economic problems . . . a Labour Government will negotiate Britain's entry at the earliest opportunity on the basis of the prudent and reasonable conditions which we have frequently outlined."

Presumably as part of wanting a European currency, the hon. Gentleman would have to have a central bank and so on, but the document continued:

"we would oppose the proposals for an all-powerful, but unaccountable, European Central Bank, as outlined in the Delors plan . . . we would not advocate an independent Bank of England."

The speech of the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury should be worth waiting for, to see how he reconciles Labour's policy with the speech of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch, whom I congratulate on bringing this subject forward for debate, for we must examine where the European Community is going in its politics and economics.

Those of us who have long supported the Community believe that its aims are the preservation of peace in western Europe, the bringing together of former warring nations and the furthering and advancing of prosperity through economic co-operation and harmony. I have always believed, further, that, at least in the past—perhaps

this is changing in the way that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch said—we have had the Community to protect us from some of the more expansionist threats from the east and some of the cultural threats from the west—from Moscow or from across the Atlantic. But the hon. Gentleman is right to say that Europe has been changing and that we must adapt, as must Europe and the Community also adapt.

I am with the hon. Gentleman in his references to the ERM. I have long believed that it would be right for Britain to join as soon as possible, and for me that is sooner rather than later. The experience of France and Italy shows that it has been helpful in reducing their inflation rates to the levels of Germany. The other side of the coin, Spain, proves that such a step is not always a panacea. That country's inflation and interest rates have gone up. But on balance it would be right for us to join as soon as possible and to benefit from the stability that that would give us.

I part company with the hon. Gentleman on the question of a single currency. I see its advantages in being simpler to manage and to trade, but the only time a single currency would be worth while would be when it was less inflationary than the strongest currency in its bounds. The strongest currency is obviously the deutschmark, as the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch conceded. I do not believe that a single European currency would be as strong and stable as the deutschmark.

Delors said that his system would be committed to price stability. In that, he mirrors the German experience and law, but he also reflects the fact that the German psyche has always, because of its history, been anti-inflation. That is not true of many other countries that would join that single currency and come within its control. Each country's representative would have a view on what the central policy of a central, single currency should be. Just as we have seen the trade-offs that come from the political PR systems of countries in Europe, we would inevitably see trade-offs in terms of the currency's direction rather than the benefits from the competition that exists in a multi-currency system which seeks to meet the achievements of the strongest currency, rather than drag that currency downwards.

I wonder how much the independence of banks is a mirage. Even when the Bundesbank in Germany was considering exchange rates with the ostmark, Dr. Otto Pöhl's determination not to have parity was soon overridden by the political will of the German Government. I do not blame them for that, but I doubt whether independence really exists.

I am looking for a Europe that is flexible. The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch was right to raise the issue of a new and widening Europe. We have a sort of Europe of "Jeux sans frontiers". Unfortunately, that phase is too often translated not just as, "It's a knockout" but "It's a lockout" in the British view, and perhaps the socialist view, of Europe. We must ensure that we are without frontiers in our ambitions to bring in other countries when they qualify and meet our requirements of democracy and stability. We must not allow economic or political obstacles to stand in the way of that wider membership.

We hope that East Germany will soon be within our Community. However, it is not just the Germans within the German-speaking community that we want to see in our Community. Why are we not doing more to encourage Austria to meet our requirements—followed perhaps by Hungary and Norway, which might be followed by Sweden, and perhaps even Iceland and Finland? When we look further we see other countries that might one day seek to join, such as Yugoslavia, which is beginning to disintegrate as a single nation. The Boznias, Crotias and Slovenias may all become capable of joining us, with separate seats at the table. Then we start to see the implications for the currency, the economy and the political stability of our Community.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way, and perhaps I should have stood up a little earlier when he referred to Austria because I want to ask about that. Does he agree that Austria could enter almost forthwith, and that it is wrong for the Government to seek to couple Austria and Turkey?

Mr. Bowis: The hon. Gentleman slipped in Turkey. I hope that Austria will be ready to come in sooner rather than later. I expect Austria to qualify very soon. Turkey is a different matter. We must ensure not only that it is economically stable, but that its human rights record and other democratic factors continue to improve to meet our requirements.

Mr. Forman: Before my hon. Friend gets carried away with his largesse in opening up the Community to all and sundry, does he realise that the Community has recently decided at Foreign Minister level not to enlarge itself until 1993? That must be wise when one considers the extent of the problems and opportunities that must be dealt with between now and then.

Mr. Bowis: I accept that 1993 may be a sensible date, but 1994 follows it. We want to ensure that we are developing a Community that enables us to look outwards and onward beyond short-term dates and the German reunification issue to how Europe's stability can be helped by that Community. It will be helped not by a closed door policy, but by being ready to be flexible and considering political structures.

If we are to have a representive from every country in the Community, the Council of Ministers' decision-making will begin to look unwieldy. Inevitably, the European Parliament, as the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shorditch hinted, will become more important in the supra-national decisions and debates. At the same time, because many countries that would be joining and many countries in the Community are increasingly concerned about nationalist rights and identities, so it will become inevitable that the question, "What is a supra-national issue?" will become less clear than it was a few years ago. We must continue to consider that. Europe will find its equilibrium and future if its structures are not too rigid and we do not rush into making such structures permanent.

We must look for ways of increasing harmony and co-operation. Where it is sensible we should pool sovereignty, as we have been doing over the years. But we should not make the pooled sovereignty the goal in itself. If we bear that in mind, we shall be moving towards the right sort of equilibrium.

I am concerned about the Commission's powers. It is the civil service of Europe, and all too often it has turned out to be the policy initiator of Europe. I would much

[Mr. Bowis]

rather see policy initiation by the Council, while that is still the appropriate forum, and by the Parliaments, both of the national Governments and the European Community, rather than by the civil service—the Commission. I hope that we can consider that as we adjust the political structures.

I question whether some of the decisions that are emerging are realistic. The present issue of the eight-hour shift being the limit right across the Community is one such decision. An eight-hour shift may be perfectly sensible for some work, but those working in mines and on buses and those on night guard patrol all have different requirements—[HON. MEMBERS: "What about here?"] I think that some of my hon. Friends are suggesting there should perhaps be an eight-hour shift for hon. Members. Perhaps, in the light of that, I should withdraw all my opposition and say that there is something in the eight-hour shift. But, in reality, it is nonsense. We can laugh about that, but the public stop laughing when they see some of the harmonisation such as the height in hands for the export of ponies and horses. The sensitivities of people in this country mean that they do not want young horses or ponies from Exmoor and the New Forest disappearing off to the dinner tables of Europe. We must bear that in mind.

It has been suggested that there should be a veterinary check on every game bird and animal that is shot to ensure that it is fit for human consumption. The mind boggles. I believe that 3·5 million birds are shot each year—the idea of 3·5 million veterinary checks begins to make the suggestion look absurd.

Frontier checks are being challenged. The more we can remove frontiers the better. But we should remove them only when it makes sense. Certainly, Interpol, Dutch border controls and our own police and customs are worried. Recent figures from Customs and Excise for example show that 40 per cent. of the drugs seized are found at routine customs checks, not by spot checks. That shows the importance of greater national common sense coming into some of those decisions.

In the great debates on pollution we hear criticisms of Britain, British pollution in the North sea and the way we pollute, from people who are themselves polluters. We do not seem to have the power in our Community to adjust and sift the balance of criticism so that the countries through which the three great polluting rivers of Europe —the Rhine, the Elbe and the Meuse—flow, and which criticise Britain, are highlighted as the real polluters and that action is taken. That is largely because the Community is strong on rhetoric and weak on enforcement.

Britain can be proud of its commitment to European initiatives. The part of the motion that refers to Britain's narrow-mindedness and isolationism is wrong. After all, Britain has been moving forward. We were the last to be criticised for our water and we were the last bar Portugal to be criticised for our beaches. Of the 79 or so directives only one has not been completely fulfilled by Britain, compared with some 50 by Italy. Sometimes also the Commission should be told, "Physician, heal thyself". I understand that the Commission has been polluting a local river in Brussels and that it is now before the Belgian courts for a breach of safety and pollution because of the asbestos in its buildings, but that is not often publicised. So perhaps there should be some humility from that great building.

Enforcement is ineffectual and we need to tighten up and make sanctions which can stick against countries that breach the agreed directives. The recent beef issue was a classic example. The only ultimate way in which Britain could achieve justice was through the European Court, but that would have been far too slow, so we had to resort to the old way of international political pressure to achieve that result. While we are on the subject of beef and the reactions of some of our colleagues in Europe, perhaps we should not be so slow to criticise some of their practices. If Italy wishes to stop our beef coming in, I suggest that we look most carefully at what goes into Italian salami. Recently it was revealed to me that at least some Italian salami contains donkey meat and the British housewife might want to know that before she dashes down the supermarket for some slices of donkey salami. Perhaps the beaches of Blackpool are threatened not only by pollution from the sea but by donkey rustlers who would collect the donkeys of Britain to put them on the dinner tables of Italy.

Beyond the donkey, there are many ways in which the Commission has been sensible, but all too often it has not been so sensible, and that gives Europe a bad name. However, that is the downside and I do not agree with the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch that Britain is nit-picking when it challenges some of the absurdities. Britain, the Government and the Conservative party are dedicated to membership of Europe and to forwarding the concept of Europe in a way which is to the benefit of all European peoples. After all, we are leading the way on the single market and competition policy. Our Government are promoting the global and environmental protection policies. We are leading Europe on matters such as police co-operation and the war against drugs. We have more ecu bond initiatives than any other country in the Community, we are far ahead in financial services deregulation and, most recently, we established the European bank for development and reconstruction, looking outwards beyond our borders.

There is so much that Britain can contribute to the leadership of Europe. We need to do that in the knowledge that Europe is a dynamic community. It has not closed doors and there are opportunities for countries to join it and to develop within it. I believe in Europe as I believe in one nation. I believe in the community of nations and peoples which we have joined and are seeking to assist to develop. It is a Community which is creative, co-operative, harmonious and tolerant. If we get those concepts through, it will be a Europe that I will continue to support.

I conclude with a note of agreement with the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch, not in terms of his criticisms of the Government which were unfair, or in terms of his support for his party's policies, as that would be irrational, but I agree with him that we are an island and we have never been and should never be insular. We are a community which must never be isolationist. On that concordat I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his good fortune and his choice of debate and I support little bits of what he said.

10.34 am

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) has made a speech of generalisation and abstraction which will appeal to many in the House and in the country. It is typical of the case that we hear time and again. Let me immediately draw his attention to two bits of nitty-gritty which show that his aspirations are not always as helpful as they appear.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) told us that when we joined the Community the effects on our balance of payments would be substantial and positive. Of course, they have been substantial and negative to the extent of £15 billion in manufactured goods alone. The hon. Gentleman mentioned Dartmoor ponies. Is he aware that so far neither the Commission nor the Council has agreed to the maintenance of our minimum value export order? Therefore, all the fears which many of us have expressed on that humane instrument which the House passed may be swept aside.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), a fellow London Member, on his choice ot topic, which demonstrates the extent to which the House is not properly dealing with these matters. My hon. Friend's motion advocates European monetary union, which is, in effect, a single currency. To my knowledge, the House has never approved such a proposal, yet when the Prime Minister went to Madrid she committed the Government, and, in effect, the House and all the citizens of the United Kingdom, to that very step. I congratulate my hon. Friend on bringing up the topic again.

Often attendance in the House is inversely proportional to the importance of the topic, and today is an example of that. One may ask why the House has never debated such a fundamental issue—perhaps one of the most important and fundamental issues that the House has neglected to debate this century. The answer lies in the inhibiting effects of free debate of the treaty of Rome. It could have been up to the official Opposition to initiate a debate, but they did not do so, although two Committees in the House suggested that they should raise the matter.

My hon. Friend has more in common with me than he might suppose. He referred to his father and the tragedy of the Rawalpindi. Rawalpindi house is in my constituency. It was established as a memorial to that sad event. Those of us who remember the events of 1935-36 and who survived, either in active service or as civilians, the bombardment of our towns and cities—I know that you are one, Mr. Deputy Speaker; we are a diminishing number but we are still around—join with all who want to ensure that that never happens again.

My hon. Friend was kind enough to refer to my tenacity. I make no apology whatsoever for telling him that tenacity on this particular issue arises from an equal concern. After that terrible conflict I had the privilege of going to Hamburg and helping the Hamburg international club rebuild the Gestapo headquarters into a youth theatre. For 40 years I have had exchanges with a family in that city as a result of a school exchange.

I hope that no hon. Member will again accuse me of being a little Englander or of operating from the wrong motives. As I hope to demonstrate, I do not think that the treaty of Rome is the way to achieve the objectives about which we often hear from my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch, the hon. Member for Battersea and even the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. It is not constructive in that mould.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch spoke about matters in which we share tremendous unanimity, and then he suddenly talked about the exchange rate mechanism. He says that we shall not achieve security for Europe or for the rest of the world through weaponry or threats. That is absolutely right. He rejects the tools of war and adopts the tools of finance. He is an expert in financial matters in the City and I and my hon. Friends all look to him for facts, leadership and analysis in such matters.

When it comes to world security, partnership and real internationalism, we should not look primarily to the tools of finance or the market. That is the flaw in the treaty of Rome. It is an economic treaty which moves into political realms and places its faith in mechanisms, first in finance and the market, and automatically calls for an expansion of political institutions based on those flawed and transient foundations. That is why I oppose the treaty. It seeks international results on a foundation of sand. It is not international at all: it is supranational, and always wanted to be.

Hon. Members who speak as individals have a great privilege. Those on the Front Bench who are constrained by corporate teamwork often have to speak in other capacities. Politicians, commentators and party members often forget that a person speaking as an individual and, quite properly, as a citizen can feel relatively unconstrained. An hon. Member who holds office or shadow office or who is the Chairman of a Committee speaks with another label. My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) often accuses people of reneging, but he should remember that people often have to speak in a corporate capacity.

I am Chairman of the Select Committee on European Legislation and in that corporate capacity I should like to put in a footnote about the recently published White Paper dealing with scrutiny by the House of EEC legislation. That is universally criticised, and it always will be, because our debates on it are advisory only whereas many of our other debates, thank goodness, are still definitive and we have power. That automatically puts them in a different category.

Yesterday the Leader of the House was asked whether the debate that we are expecting on this very important topic would be subject to a single vote to approve the Government's proposals en bloc. I suggested that that would not be a good procedure because Government proposals are many and varied: some are excellent and some are questionable. We should have an opportunity to debate them at large so that the Leader of the House can reflect on them. If we cannot do that, we are not proceeding in a proper and democratic manner, even when debating how to deal with advisory matters.

I shall give a couple of examples. There is a proposal for a number of special Committees to replace the occasional Committees that now examine European documents. There are 10 motions on the remaining Order of the Day. In the proposed Committees Members should be able to question Ministers; I do not think that anybody would disagree with that principle. More questionable is the fact that the power to decide whether to have a debate on the

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

Floor of the House at a convenient hour or upstairs is to be removed from the House where Standing Orders presently place it.

I shall now revert to my persona as an individual Member and speak on the subject that is before me. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch about the approach of some Conservative Members, some of whom he named. The Prime Minister's approach to international matters is to be regretted. In the right hon. Lady's past performances in defending the rights of Parliament I did not detect a great deal of concern about parliamentary democracy. I know that she was catapulted to the Front Bench at a relatively early age and perhaps that has something to do with it. However, the right hon. Lady is not the first person to come to mind when one thinks about the champions of parliamentary democracy and especially of its procedures.

One might think differently about the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, and in a sense that illustrates the other side of the polarity of the Conservative party. However, even the right hon. Gentleman exhibits flaws or illogicalities when dealing with this matter. When we debated the referendum in 1975 the right hon. Gentleman assured the nation on a number of occasions that the Queen would not be affected. I had some correspondence wth the right hon. Gentleman a few months ago and dropped him a line to say that I would mention the matter again this morning. I thought that he would be here. We hear him a great deal on radio and television, and he makes great statements, but he does not always come here for debates on this topic.

The Queen is affected, but not personally or physically. Any legislation passed in Brussels by the Council of Ministers as a directive requires this House, and perhaps another place and therefore the Queen in Parliament—because Parliament takes the powers of the monarch through our revolutions—to comply, thereby passing legislation at the behest of another legislative body. That affects the power of the monarch which resides in the Mace in this place. The regulation does not even come before us as such. It is self-enacting and does not need to be translated into a statutory instrument or an Act, although consequential legislation may be necessary. Therefore, the power of the Crown in Parliament—which is a better term than the King or Queen in Parliament—is entirely bypassed.

For a Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to claim, albeit 15 years ago, that the position of the Queen is not affected is quite wrong. I do not know how the right hon. Gentleman gets out of that. In his reply to me, he said something about matters coming before the House in the usual way. As I have illustrated, the documents that come before us for discussion prior to decision in Brussels are for discussion only.

In the context of the treaty of Rome and the European Community, we are talking not about co-operation, which we all want, but about the constitution and rules or order. We have to go back to the rites of any state to see how such things work. We all know that the four features of legislation, taxation, administration and adjudication are to be found in any modern state in some form or another, even in dictatorships. In our tradition we have said that representative parliamentary democracy, which was achieved as recently as 1928, shall provide the House with power over all matters in statute and power to call any Government to account. Such power comes from votes and from the free citizens of this country to those of us who are here. The way in which the EEC works and some of the proposals that are now before us do not follow in that tradition.

Let us take the question of a common currency, which should be at the centre of the debate and of economic and monetary union, to which we are apparently now committed. The power of currency is an ancient one, as it authenticates the unit of account—the head on the coin, as my hon. Friend said. In modern economies, it goes much further—for example, to the authentication of banks. I was recently talking to some City gentlemen and I asked them who decides what is a bank. They said, "The Bank of England." So, I asked, "If we get European monetary union, who will it be?", and their faces dropped.

There are other matters, such as the control of credit institutions and the laws relating to that, the rules of exchange and the management of the currency through inflation. In other words, when one has a currency, whether it be a coinage or authentication of credit, there must be some form of central authority. In the United Kingdom, such control is, by statute, in the hands of the Bank of England, which is publicly owned, although it may not be publicly controlled. If we expand our currency into an international or supranational currency, we must transfer that authority with it. That includes authority not only for the nitty-gritty of economic exchange and the authentication of institutions and currency, but the control and management of the economy of which that currency is part. That is the two halves of the job of the Treasury, and if I am wrong, the Minister will correct me. There is much debate about both aspects, and often the Budget debates are not as good as they might be because the two get mixed up.

On Monday, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) made a powerful speech about a Eurofed, because a Eurofed is on the cards and in the documents. Mr. Christophersen, the Finance Commissioner, has issued a document that should be more publicly known in which he advocates that step, which will probably be debated in the intergovernmental conference in the autumn. If there is to be a Eurofed that fulfils that regulatory and management function, as it must, to whom is it to be accountable?

My hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) who is the Front-Bench spokesman responsible for these matters, said in reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney that the majority of the Labour party would be in favour of a Eurofed provided that it was accountable. But it cannot be accountable to the House, so is it to be accountable to the Commissioner, to the Council or to the European Parliament? The latter was one of Mr. Christophersen's suggestions. What does "accountable" mean? Does it mean only that one can ask questions and get a reply, good or bad, or can one be dissatisfied with those answers and do something about it? Accountability means a whole range of things.

It might be thought that this is all rather theoretical, but it is not because these are the questions being debated inside the Council of Ministers and the working parties and they will surely arise when those conferences become semi-public, at least in Italy in the autumn. Whether we

like it or not—the hon. Member for Battersea and my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch appeared to like it—we are in the middle of a basic change in the management of our currency and economy. I agree with my hon. Friend that, even if these formal mechanisms do not come into play, there is the informal fact of the deutschmark and our £20,000 million deficit.

The Prime Minister, in advocating the single market, 1992 Cockfield version, to which the hon. Member for Battersea alluded, has unknowingly added another and vital dimension. When she advocated the single market and the primacy of competition, which is part of her political philosphy and, paradoxically, the philosophy of Tory Members who most object to the treaty of Rome and who would prefer a treaty of Bruges, she forgot that the free market does not mean complete freedom. Indeed, it means almost the opposite. The concept of a market includes rules. It is like a version of a football game. It is competition within given rules—the level playing field, the flat table. Somebody has to decide what those rules are —the specifications, what happens and so on. If the rules about commerce, money and markets are to be harmonised over the whole of the European Community, one has to go into many nitty-gritty matters.

We are concerned here not just with the money market but with specifications for many matters, from the design of a bus to the speed limits on our road and how much alcohol one is allowed to consume before driving, because without that there cannot be complete and perfect competition. So, rather than the state not being interventionist—a concept in which many Tory Members believe, as they would not have been elected as Tory Members of Parliament without that basic belief—the 1992 package, which will become more and more difficult as we go along, provides an enormous amount of intervention just to create the theoretical markets to which the Prime Minister is so much attached.

Like the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, who signed the treaty of accession, the Prime Minister and her friends took us through the Single European Act into the single market and the 1992 package under majority voting without any mandate. How is that for parliamentary democracy, which she claims to defend? Can any Tory Member who was elected in 1983 say that he had a mandate for the Single European Act and majority voting on this mass of legislation? I asked the Attorney-General to tell me what the limit on majority voting on article 101A was, and he told me that we do not know. Who is the authority to decide that limit? It is not this Parliament but the Court of the European Community, so the function of adjudication is therefore of fundamental importance.

Under the treaty of Rome, power in the European Community descends from on high. My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch said that Jacques Delors was the greatest living European. In some curious way, he is. He bestrides the Community like a prince and his Commissioners around him are something of a court. One has only to read the speeches made in the debate on this subject last week in the other place to understand that. There is a gaggle of retired princes along the Corridor. They act out of patronage.

Last week I was speaking to a senior industrialist—I shall not mention the industry or his company, which is a well-known household name that represents about 10 per cent. of our gross national product—and he asked me whether I was familiar with what the Commission was doing about such and such, and I said, "Yes, it is drafting regulations." He told me that he had tried to see the Commissioner but that he saw only the chap who is writing it out, who is the equivalent of a senior principal —my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch will understand what that is. He said "I am not listening to you—you must wait for the draft regulations." That is almost unbelievable, but it is how the Community works.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup has said that the Commission is less important than the Scottish civil service, but the Commission alone has the power to promote legislation. We can promote legislation in the House as individuals, but even the Prime Minister cannot write a proposition for legislation in the European Community.

Not only is the structure mistaken in terms of putting our faith primarily in financial mechanisms and, secondly, in the markets, but most of the characteristics of the political machine work not upwards from the citizen, but downwards from an emperor-like position of superiority. We are told that if we are good boys we can engage in discussion late at night, but the European Parliament may take the view that ultimately the Commission and the Council must decide. It is through Ministers alone that we have the last remaining channel of accountability to the Council of Ministers—hence the importance of both the House and the Council.

The treaty of Rome is a unique constitution. Although at first sight it does not resemble a super-state, it expands its competence bit by bit, and becomes a unitary state stage by stage. Its powers over the economy, legislation, taxation and administration expand to match.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch described our shared wartime experiences, and he was right to do so. I, too, had relatives who were killed in the war, although they were not such close relatives as my hon. Friend's; indeed, my hon. Friend and I could also have been killed. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney has encapsulated today's debate in an early-day motion. What better vehicle could there be than the Order Paper of the House? The motion was tabled in a truly international spirit, recognising that the rest of the world does not stop at Europe. There is now talk of a world economy and a world society. We want to end in the rest of the world what the French and Germans between them—thank God—have largely ended in Europe.

I shall close on a constitutional note by reading early-day motion 1052, which states

> "That this House believes that the most effective method of obtaining success in transnational endeavours is through co-operation between governments, parliaments and peoples, whether such be within the European Community, in wider Europe, or the rest of the world; and therefore calls on Her Majesty's Government to support and initiate actions that promote higher standards of environmental protection, improved standards of health and safety of employed persons and their conditions of employment by treaties and agreements that achieve their objectives without further prejudice to the rights of the House of Commons in respect of jurisdiction, legislation, and taxation which are the foundations of representative democracy in the United Kingdom."

I do not believe that any hon. Member can dissent from such a motion without telling us why, especially my hon. Friends, because our party was formed to fulfil its objectives in, by and through the House of Commons.

11.3 am

Sir Richard Body (Holland with Boston): The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) was right to emphasise that the question is not whether we should play a part in Europe, but whether we should do so supranationally or internationally.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) made a magnificent speech. All hon. Members who heard it enjoyed it enormously, but I warn my hon. Friends that I have known the hon. Gentleman for a long time—we were friends before we came into the House. There is only one thing wrong with him: he is a full-blooded socialist. On any issue, we can be sure that his objective is to ensure that this country becomes socialist. Although he argued attractively and persuasively for a common currency and more power for the European Parliament, my hon. Friends can be sure what his reasons were. Now that the socialist party is the largest in the European Parliament, he believes that there is a chance that power will be transferred from the House of Commons to Strasbourg. He wishes Britain to be locked inside a socialist union, and I fear that he will have his way unless my hon. Friends pay heed to what he is about.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch began his speech movingly by referring to his father. I thought then that we should prepare ourselves for an idealistic speech, but he galloped off to talk about tatty monetary matters—there is socialism for you. He spoke for some time about the exchange rate mechanism: of course, he wants monetary union. Let me remind him what Ralf Dahrendorf said a few weeks ago. No one can argue that he is not a good European—although perhaps not as good as Mr. Delors, the Prince of Europe—as he worked industriously to bring together 12 countries. He said that we should pause a while before considering monetary union in the 12—that we should wait to see how it works between East and West Germany. If it works there, he said, perhaps we can go on to consider something more ambitious. He reminded his audience that monetary unions have come and gone many times in Europe and that most have collapsed in crisis, causing great hardship to many people.

On the question of a common currency, we are merely dealing with intrinsically worthless bits of paper until whoever creates the currency gives it authority and makes it worth something. How can that be done in a monetary union embracing 12 countries—or, indeed, 13, as Austria is in the European monetary system—unless there is a supranational authority to decide the quantity of paper to bear the symbol, that makes it the currency of the European union? It has been recognised for a long time that there must be something far superior to our own Treasury or Bank of England to make the decision.

I suspect that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch has dipped into a book that came out in 1962. I recommend that all hon. Members read it during the current debates on monetary union. It is called "Britain and the New Europe", and was written by two distinguished federalists in this country. Although the book was written almost 30 years ago, the argument is still valid. They explain that we shall never achieve a united states of Europe except by stealth. They did not use that word, but that is what they mean when they went on to say that it would be necessary to take four steps. We have already taken three of them. The fourth step is a common currency. As the authors of the book explain, once there is a common currency there must be a common form of government which is responsible for every decision of any consequence that is taken throughout the member states of the monetary union.

If we on the Conservative side are honest about it, we know why our party became enthusiastic about entering the Community some 20 years ago. It was born almost entirely of fear of the Soviet Union. We feared the invasion politically, if not militarily, of western Europe. It was important, therefore, that the countries of Europe should be knitted together in some kind of union of self-protection. Nobody, mercifully, can advance that argument now. The events of the last 12 months have been exciting and have put our minds at rest. Although that threat has gone, another has taken its place. The threat that Europe as a whole now faces is potentially greater than any threat that Europe has known in the past.

The term "environmental security" has entered the political lexicon. Our continent, and the planet as a whole, is a less secure place than it was. In the 21st century it will become a very insecure place unless this generation does something about it. We must take action now if we are to prevent the catastrophes that most certainly threaten us. Individual European countries cannot act alone to overcome the problems that face us—global warming, acid rain, pollution or any of the other issues that add up to environmental insecurity.

We have to ask ourselves how the countries of Europe can deal with these problems. We need urgently some kind of institutional structure that will enable the countries of Europe to work together on environmental issues. We need to ask ourselves whether the European Community as it is is now constituted is sufficiently well equipped to fulfil that task. There are three reasons why I fear that the Community as it is now constituted is ill-equipped to fulfil it.

First, the European Community has decided to admit no new members until 1993. Even then, only Austria and Turkey may be admitted; the others will have a long and tedious wait before they can be admitted. We cannot refer just to 12 countries as, by themselves, constituting Europe and able to cope with issues of staggering importance for future generations. We can no longer speak of the European Community as Europe. Some of us like to call it Europe. Even the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch made a slip when he referred to the European Community as Europe. The European Community consists of only 12 out of some 35 European countries. Therefore it is too small, too narrow, too isolationist even, to fulfil that task.

Secondly, the European Community insists upon regarding the Twelve as a homogeneous entity, yet the environmental problems that we face are not one and the same throughout the Community. My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bovis) referred to the pollution of the rivers. He will agree that the Rhine flows through one country that is not a member of the European Community. No one, I hope would suggest that Greece or Portugal should make a financial contribution towards the cost of cleaning up the pollution of the Rhine. Why should the countries of southern Europe be called upon to pay the vast sums of money that will be needed to deal with the problem caused by acid rain? The European Community, consisting of 12 countries, is the wrong shape and the wrong size to cope on its own with the environmental

problems. There is not just one circle of interest; there are a number of overlapping interests. It would be harsh and unfair to expect each Community country to make a financial conribution towards solving the problems within each of those circles of interest and therefore to be part of the same common policy and the same common programme of action.

The third defect——

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): My hon. Friend speaks with enormous authority on these matters. He referred, tantalisingly, to the federalising effect of taking monetary union to its logical conclusion. Then he moved on to talk about other matters. He is now about to go even further away, and out of orbit. Is not monetary union the central problem that we ought to be addressing? How does one stop the de facto centralisaton of monetary control around the most powerful monetary force in Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany, from slipping into a formalised structure of monetary union that will lead to the federalising effects against which my hon. Friend so rightly warns? What is my hon. Friend's solution to that problem? I am interested in his answers because I share his anti-federalist feelings.

We need to come to grips with the alternative of formalisation along monetary union lines when we are faced with the stark reality that when the Bundesbank says today that interest rates must go up by 1 per cent. we have to fall overselves and follow, or our own monetary systems fall into decline.

Sir Richard Body: As Nye Bevan said, why ask the monkey when the organ grinder himself is here? The Financial Secretary to the Treasury is to reply to the debate. He, I suspect, will give a valid, coherent and persuasive explanation in answer to my hon. and learned Friend's question.

Mr. Lawrence: No, he will not.

Sir Richard Body: Oh yes, he will. He gave us a little soupcon of it earlier this morning.

Mr. Lawrence: All he will say is that monetary union is not federalisation.

Sir Richard Body: Despite being tempted by my hon. and learned Friend, I repeat what Ralf Dahrendorf said —that is wise advice which this country ought to take.

The third reason why I believe that the European Community, as it is constituted now, is ill-equipped to deal with these environmental issues that are of such huge and growing importance for the whole of Europe is its supranational nature. Every common policy or programme of action that it adopts is supported by laws and taxation—because invariably, both are required—that are supranationally decided. We know that they are decided in accordance with a democratic deficit, as it is commonly called, by the Council of Ministers. If all the countries of Europe are to accept and enforce the laws that will be required to make the necessary environmental changes, those laws must be welcomed, understood and wholeheartedly supported.

Unfortunately, some parts of the Community take a rather cavalier view of Community legislation. A friend of mine, the editor of the *New European,* was recently in Italy and found himself talking to a distinguished Italian politician. My friend asked, "Why do you like so many of your laws being made in Brussels?" The politician replied, "It's excellent. The further away from Italy our Government is, the better it is for us." That is the attitude taken by a large part of Europe. Other countries do not take the Community's laws quite so seriously as we do.

The sad part is that if laws are made supranationally and not by national Parliaments, they will not be taken so seriously. When laws are made by national Parliaments, the Governments of those countries have a direct interest in making sure that they are enforced, because they have the imprimatur of the people concerned and are supported by their will. Sadly, that is not the case in the Community, and that is why there is a desperate need to reconstitute it.

I believe, as I am sure does the hon. Member for Newham, South, that all laws should be made by national Parliaments, and taxes likewise levied by them and not supranationally. As long as we hold fast to the supranational approach, we cannot have democracy. The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch had a vision of western Europe embracing central and eastern Europe, as we would want to see the Community do—but how can he then argue that that will be democratic?

I do not know whether the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch agrees with Abraham Lincoln's three elements of democracy, but I have no doubt that he tries very hard to understand the hopes and fears of the people in Hackney. I do not doubt either that he does that very well—up to a point, anyway. But how on earth can any man or woman represent half a million people? How can any man or women be accountable to half a million people? If one imagines a European Parliament as a supranational authority over some 500 million people throughout all Europe, how many Members of Parliament would it have? It would have one Member of Parliament for every 1 million people. How could that be democratic? How could there be any sense of accountability? How could there be any real communion between a Member and an electorate as vast as that? We talk of a democratic deficit, but that would be the real democratic deficit—a European Parliment making 80 per cent. of our laws, yet with representation as inadequate as that.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the President of the United States is democratically accountable?

Sir Richard Body: I wish that the hon. Gentleman would have a word with someone who knows rather a lot about that matter, who is seated only a few feet behind him. I refer to the hon. Member for Newham, South. I must try not to be patronising, but I must explain that we are moving towards a unitary megastate, not a federal union. The United States has a constitution with numerous checks and balances, but even then, how many people vote when there is a presidential election? It is less than half the electorate. Even in the United States there is a feeling among millions of people that it does not matter very much whom they vote for. It is sad that in a great democracy such as the United States, with all its checks and balances, and with a welll thought-out and constructed constitution, there is a feeling that it does not matter much who is elected to the White House.

Those are the reasons why I believe we must urgently reconstitute the European Community, to make it an international not supranational body.

[Sir Richard Body]

Assuming that we are concerned about environmental issues, why is not greater use made of the one institution of Europe that was the first by many years to raise the important issues that concern us all now? As long ago as 1957, the Economic Commission for Europe, which now has 35 member states, was bringing together the countries of eastern and western Europe to deal with issues such as the environment, trade, agriculture, and so on. It dealt with some 14 different issues. It is sad that our Government have for some years not put their weight behind the commission. It is well-equipped to formulate common policies and programmes of action for the nations of Europe that feel that they have a problem in common and want to act together to overcome it.

The Economic Commission has proved its ability to fulfil that role. A long list of conventions has been prepared as a result of intergovernmental conferences and have been put into effect in this country, as in others throughout Europe. They have not necessarily been implemented in every country, because even if one supports the Economic Commission, one is not bound by every convention but can choose to adopt or not adopt according to whether one's interests coincide with those of one's neighbours. That is a more sensible approach to some of the issues that confront us.

I am all in favour of the European Community dealing with a wide range of issues, provided that it drops its supranational pretensions. The lesson of the past 30 years is that there have been very few occasions when agreements have been reached without friction and disharmony. Those of us who have studied the machinations of the common agricultural policy over many years know that a great deal of fraud has also been involved. In any event, I hope that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch will yet come round to the view that the supranational approach is undesirable. He should be a good internationalist like the hon. Member for Newham, South and help to make progress towards genuine co-operation throughout the whole of Europe, not just with part of it.

11.29 am

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): The hon. Member for Holland with Boston (Sir R. Body) is a decent and fair-minded man, but my disagreement with him is so wide that if I were to attempt a rebuttal I would not have time to say anything else.

Mr. Spearing: Have a little go.

Sir Russell Johnston: I will have a little go on the way.

Like other hon. Members, I welcome the initiative of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) in introducing the motion, and I very much welcome the way in which he did so. If I am too fulsome about it, he may regard it as an unfriendly act. As a Liberal, I found many of his words and phrases old familiar friends. Nevertheless, it was pleasing to hear them falling from his lips.

When I joined the Liberal party in 1954—it was not exactly a high time; in fact, there have not been many high times—the party's commitment to developing European integration was a major factor in my decision. I thought that liberalism was an individually based philosophical concept and that one's responsibilities did not stop at the national borders. I remember being proud when the small parliamentary Liberal party divided this House in 1959 on whether Britain should apply forthwith for membership of the European Community.

Strangely and sadly, the arguments against such a course of action that were paraded 31 years ago are still to be heard. It was most welcome to hear them so effectively and fluently debunked from the left of the Labour party. Many of them are atavistic and emotional and have little to do with economic disputation. Although we are supposed to be talking about economics and alternative economic theories, many of the views come much more from the guts than the head. They rest on a complex of beliefs which are held, I say to the hon. Member for Holland with Boston, almost as a matter of religious faith by many in the United Kingdom. They believe that we are better and more efficient and that we have better laws. The hon. Member for Holland with Boston said that the Italians are good at making ice cream but not at keeping the law.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that Italy has had to be taken to the European Court more frequently than the United Kingdom and that it is not particularly good at implementing its judgments? The record shows that the United Kingdom is speedy in implementing judgments that are adverse to it.

Sir Russell Johnston: There are differences between one country and another in the European Community, but I would not generalise about that.

I do not accept the idea we are better than everybody else, but nor do I say that we are worse than everybody else. *[Interruption.]* The Minister is muttering into his non-existent beard; I did not catch what he said.

Listening to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) on Monday, when he spoke of exchange control as though it were a holy object, one realised that his basic objections were not economic objections but were based on the belief that we can do things better within our own borders. I no longer accept that argument. The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch dispensed with part of it when he talked simply of the plain fact that so many economic matters cannot be confined within borders.

The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) delivered a passionate defence of the Bank of England, the the Treasury, my God, as if they were the last bastions of civilisation about to be overwhelmed by the visigoths of Brussles and Frankfurt.

Mr. Spearing: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Russell Johnston: I thought that might excite him.

Mr. Spearing: It is not accurate or fair to attribute words to me that I did not utter. I was not endorsing the attitudes, policies or habits of the Bank of England and the Treasury but illustrating the fact that, because of Ministers' accountability to the House, we have some influence or control over what they do, right or wrong, wise or unwise.

Mr. Sedgemore: Over the Bank of England?

Mr. Spearing: I said attitudes. If my hon. Friend becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer, he may have a good go at that. The transfer of powers and responsibility to Eurofed would diminish or extinguish the House's powers.

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman's intervention was effectively dealt with from a sedentary position by the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch. I shall deal with Eurofed in a minute and say how in practice —although democratic control of such matters is somewhat attenuated—we can exercise as much, if not more, control over it as we currently exercise over the Bank of England.

The Community was established in 1957. It is most interesting to read the discussions that took place at that time at the top of the Conservative party and within the Foreign Office. They were profoundly wrong because they believed that the European Community would not last a year or two. Since that time, Britain has not prospered comparatively. We have improved many things, but comparing the indicators with countries such as France Germany and even Italy, whose individual gross national product now exceeds ours, shows that we have not done well. I was too young to be in the war, but I was not too young for national service. In Berlin in 1958 I was getting DM12·5 to the pound. What is the rate now? That is a comparative example. The Government took office dedicated to conquering inflation, and 10 years later they are still dedicated to doing so. The comparative decline makes me doubt whether we have the capacity to conquer the problems, and I am quite prepared to consider other ways of doing so.

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): The hon. Gentleman has noticed that the mere rumour that we may be joining the European regulatory mechanism has not only boosted the pound but has been welcomed by the City —the engine room of the economy—because it redirects investment, which is what we all want to see. From my understanding, by the end of the year we may be a member of the European monetary system and the regulatory system. That will help to deal with the problem of inflation and perhaps will help interest rates.

Sir Russell Johnston: I do not propose to become involved in arguments about engine rooms, although I entirely agree with the hon. Gentleman's basic argument that the rumours of imminent entry—how imminent is a matter for dispute; the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch suggested that November is now the preferred time—have had their effect. Experience of the operation of the EMS has shown that, in other countries, it has introduced an external discipline that has produced significant reductions in inflation. It has moved countries away from stop-go economic policies and, in some cases, pulled down interest rates.

Mr. John Marshall *rose*—

Sir Russell Johnston: No doubt the hon. Gentleman wishes to intervene to give the classic opposite argument, but I do not think that it would get us very far if we became involved in a tennis match. The effects of the EMS can be observed, and although what I have said may not yet be true for Spain and certain other countries, it is certainly demonstrably so in France, the Federal Republic of Germany and even in the Republic of Ireland.

I propose to deal now with the political aspects of the motion. The words "federal" and "federalism" cause many people to experience a frisson. I am not sure why people are so afraid of the words. Contrary to what the hon. Member for Holland with Boston said, federalism does not mean a unitary state or a centralised system; it means a decentralised system, a tiered system. It accepts the concept of subsidiarity in which activities are pushed downwards. The nature of a federation is established and written down in a constitution that entrenches the powers not only of the federal government but of the state components of the federation. The erosion of power of our local administrative structure of government in the United Kingdom would not be possible in a federation because the law would prevent it.

Sir Richard Body: I agree wholeheartedly with what the hon. Gentleman has just said. But we are not moving towards a federal union. That is perhaps our complaint. We are moving towards a unitary megastate, which is essentially different.

Sir Russell Johnston: All that I can say to the hon. Gentleman is that I see no evidence of moves towards a unitary megastate. All the politicians whom I meet in the European Community—not just Liberals but Socialists, and I do talk to Socialists from time to time—are in favour of a federal solution of some kind.

Mr. Spearing: It is not federal.

Sir Russell Johnston: They are in favour of a federal solution of some kind—in other words, a division of powers. There are many different ways in which that can be achieved, but that is what they are about—collecting at the centre only those matters that are best dealt with at the centre. There is no general proposal from Socialists, Christian Democrats or Liberals in the Community that power should be concentrated for matters that can be dealt with effectively by the existing nation state components of the Community.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The hon. Gentleman and I have crossed swords on these matters on a number of occasions. Is he aware of the platform of the European People's party? Is he aware that Alber and Egon Klepsch have continuously and repeatedly called for a single Government and a single Parliament in Europe? He knows that that is so. Would he be good enough to tell me how he can claim that they are not asking for the inclusion of such ingredients in a new Europe?

Sir Russell Johnston: A European federation would certainly have a Government and a Parliament which would cover the whole of the Community, but that does not mean that all power would be concentrated in those institutions any more than it would in any other federation. Of course, a federation has a central federal authority. I do not think that Egon Klepsch, whom I used to know reasonably well when I was in the European Parliament, would argue for a unitary state. All the Germans whom I have met, of all political persuasions, are much attached to their own federal system, which works exceedingly well and avoids the undue concentration of power that exists in countries such as ours, which have a less dispersed form of government.

Mr. Hill: Let me bring hon. Members, up to date. The political strategy of Europe is now shifting to the CSCE,

[Mr. Hill]

and America and Canada are part of that process and the concept has gained tremendous credence over the past few months. Does not the hon. Gentleman realise that Europe is moving towards centralised political union in the CSCE and will move further and further away from EEC trading practices, which I suppose we shall have to have but which will slowly diminish in importance?

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman is right in saying that in most federations the federal Government deal with foreign affairs and international relations and with defence matters. That would also be inevitable in a federation of the European Community. But that is very much a question for the future.

I regard the European Community as more of a friend to the regions than the existing national Governments. Many of Europe's regions are neglected because their national Governments have neglected them. While I was in the European Parliament, I felt that there was as much concern in Brussels as in London about the highlands of Scotland, Scotland generally and the regions of England. There was a general concern to disperse——

Mr. Hill *indicated assent.*

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman is nodding. When he and I were in the European Parliament, he was the chairman of its regional committee. He did the job very effectively. I think that he would agree that there was a common view that the wealth of the Community should not be allowed to become concentrated at the centre but should be fairly dispersed. I suppose that it is inevitable that a centralised country such as ours should fear centralisation, but, in my view, our fear is misplaced.

While we are discussing political democratic models, I must refer briefly to our electoral system, which is unique in Europe and which is not often thought about. It profoundly affects our political style and the way in which we do things. Let me cite one statistic to illustrate my point. When there was a presidential election in Chile—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Holland with Boston does not look very keen on presidential elections, but they had such an election in Chile. When Mr. Pinochet was roundly defeated, everyone thought that it was a good demonstration of democracy. But Mr. Pinochet got 42 per cent. of the vote, which is exactly the percentage of the vote that the Government received at the last general election, which gave them a majority of 100. They are two rather different concepts of democracy. Is the Minister muttering again?

Mr. Lilley: Can the hon. Gentleman tell us any country which runs its presidential elections on anything other than the first-past-the-post system? It is hard to envisage proportional representation in a presidental election.

Sir Russell Johnston: The Minister has completely missed my point. Of course, one cannot have a presidential election on anything other than a first-past-the-post system. I was simply saying that the failed candidate in Chile received the same proportion of the vote as the Government of the United Kingdom, who have a majority of 100. That is not an encouraging comparison. Every other country in the Community has some form of proportional representation, and all of them use it in the European elections. The unrepresentative nature of the system is not the only important thing; it produces in British politics a profoundly non-consensual approach. Perhaps that is one reason why, although everyone says that the British are good at compromise, we are not, in fact, very good at it and are often out-manoeuvred in the Community councils.

Most of the speech of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch was on economic matters, and, to conclude, I should like to make a few remarks on economics. He spoke about the development of the ecu. I hope that the ecu will become a common currency in time. As I said on Monday, that would be welcomed by ordinary individuals when changing money because at present they pay 12 or 15 per cent. commission every time to no point. Also it would unquestionably give the Community much greater weight in international monetary discussions and place us collectively on a par with the dollar and the yen. As a single European currency, the ecu would be in heavy international demand as a medium of exchange and a unit of account. It would be a financial asset for the private sector and a reserve asset for foreign central banks.

Developments in eastern Europe increase the pressure for a common European currency to be established quickly. Otherwise eastern European countries will use the deutschmark or the dollar. As 1992 approaches, we should ponder the fact, and perhaps the Minister should do so, that there are no examples in the world of open internal markets which are not also monetary unions.

Mr. Lilley: What about the United States and Canada?

Sir Russell Johnston: One could argue in that way, but I do not accept that those countries act absolutely as one open internal market, despite recent changes introduced by Mr. Mulroney.

The arguments for the United Kingdom joining the ERM have been subsumed in the matter of currency union because unless we join the ERM—I believe that we shall—we shall not become party to economy monetary union.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch also mentioned the question of a European central bank. The great attraction of that would be its independence from both national and community authorities. The Bundesbank model is necessary, in political terms, to secure the agreement of Germany to the proposition. But it is also an objective requirement in itself.

As many hon. Members have said already, one cannot have an independent institution with such vast powers completely outside democratic control. That would be against the general thrust of making the Community more democratic—despite what some hon. Members have said, democracy does exist in the EEC—and it would be dangerous in itself. Therefore, the answer might be to distinguish between the operation of the bank and its overall accountability, to refer back to what the hon. Member for Newham, South said.

The bank should conduct its operations on its own responsibility without interference, and be seen so to do. However, it should be accountable for its actions to the Community's only democratic body, the European Parliament. In practical terms, that would mean that the Governor of the bank would have to present an annual report to Parliament and submit to questioning in debates.

In addition, members of the governing body who are not governors of the national central bank and the

president of the bank should be elected by Parliament or, following the United States model, be confirmed by Parliament.

I finish by again congratulating the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch on tabling the motion. Against a background of a much more hopeful, but still highly unpredictable, world situation, it is essential not only for our several advantages of belonging to the European Community but for the stability of the world that the EC quickly comes together more effectively. I welcome the debate and the terms in which it has been introduced.

11.53 am

Sir David Mitchell (Hampshire, North-West): Like other hon. Members, I congratulate the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) on his well-timed selection of this subject. I wish to cover three matters—political developments, the exchange rate mechanism, and communications within the European Community, with particular reference to the statements made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport yesterday on the high-speed link.

On political developments, when we had the referendum on our membership of the EEC, the case that I put to my constituents was that our standard of living depended on Britain having markets with which to trade. That is a clear factor and one with which few would argue.

In the past we had a privileged trading position in the Empire and Commonwealth. Our competitors were locked out and Empire preference gave us a huge advantage. We then moved to a disprivileged position in which the Empire and Commonwealth markets increasingly locked us out by various forms of protectionism in order to protect their local industries, local employment and other factors.

The European Community provided us with an opportunity for a fair and equal trading position in which we were neither disprivileged nor especially privileged. That was certainly a substantial advantage over our disprivileged position resulting from the loss of priority within our Empire markets.

I wholly support taking the necessary steps to ensure continuity of equality and fairness in our trading opportunities in the marketplace of the EEC. I accept the need for wider EEC control over matters that extend beyond national boundaries, such as pollution. I agree with what my hon. Friend the Member for Holland with Boston (Sir R. Body) said. He put his finger on the importance of that factor.

I do not accept that to secure the benefits of a wider free market for our people we need to submerge the United Kingdom in a United States of Europe. I do not accept the concept of a unitary state in Europe and I do not accept that the EEC should decide matters that can properly be decided within the internal institutions of EEC member states.

It is a matter which the House should find curious that a Frenchman, Jacques Delors, is leading the concept of a more unitary state in Europe with the Delors plan. For France is the frontrunner in any competition for the most nationalistic state in Europe which applies and uses the EEC for its national advantage at every opportunity.

Mr. Lawrence: It is a socialist state.

Sir David Mitchell: My hon. and learned Friend refers to the political persuasions of those who are in a majority in the European Parliament and the EEC.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) that we should recognise the changes that have taken place in Europe and not become locked into yesterday's thinking at a time when Hungary and other east European countries are knocking on the door. We should not move to a unitary state approach which will result in those countries being locked out and unable to become early, full and effective members of the EEC.

I make two pleas. One is in connection with the various proposals that will be debated by Ministers through the autumn on the next stage of the Delors approach. The question of what powers, decisions and responsibilities move from this country to be settled elsewhere should be debated fully and clearly on the Floor of the House. We should have a clear blueprint of exactly what is proposed rather than find it dribbling out later in bits and pieces as the House comes to realise that we have let ourselves in for rather more than we anticipated. If we allow ourselves to push ahead at a pace that is unacceptable to our people there will be a backlash against the concept of European co-operation and progress.

The ERM is seen by many as a panacea. The National Farmers Union and manufacturers continually ask us to join it. Importers want us to join it. They would then be saved the forward purchase of currencies to cover purchases abroad. We should recognise, however, that there is a downside to joining the ERM. It does not provide an easy, soft option. In fact, it requires us to run our economy in such a way as to keep our currency in line with its given slot among other European currencies. The practical reality is that we could find a clash between what is in the interests of our internal economy and our commitment to maintaining that currency link.

The Treasury and the Government are walking a tightrope in their management of the economy as they try to get inflation under control without plunging us into a recession. Suppose that such fine tuning did not work as hoped and we moved into a recession more quickly than expected and unemployment rose dramatically in the next 12 months. If we were members of the ERM we might, because of inflationary reasons, be forced to increase interest rates at the very time that the internal economy required us to reduce that rate.

So we must recognise that the ERM is not a panacea and there is a downside to it. I believe, however, that the benefits of membership of the ERM will, on balance, outweigh the downside, but before we join we must ensure that our inflation and our economic growth is in line with other European countries. If we achieve that, the balance will be in favour of our joining the ERM.

The Conservative Government can live with the ERM, as they believe in the monetary disciplines that it would enforce, but what price would be paid if we had a Labour Government? The Opposition plan to give more resources to every pressure group in the country and that means that our rate of inflation would increase and the value of our currency would fall. In line with that, interest rates would have to soar. The threat of such soaring interest rates will hang over and discipline any future Government who want to indulge in a spending spree.

Mr. Hill: I know that my hon. Friend is a man of great honesty in politics and all else. He would be the first to say

[Mr. Hill]

that there should have been some mechanisms to regulate some of the decisions taken by former Chancellors. For a while we ran out of control. My hon. Friend has already said that our inflation must be in line with that of other European countries before we join the ERM, but one of the problems is that we do not use the same index as other European countries to assess our inflation. Does my hon. Friend agree that a controlling mechanism on decisions reached and a similar index to measure inflation as that used by our European partners would also count towards the upside of joining the ERM?

Sir David Mitchell: I do not want to prolong the debate on that issue except to say that whatever form European co-operation may take, transport will be a key element in it.

I agree with Opposition Members who have said that we must not put Britain even more on the periphery of Europe than geography has already ensured. In that connection, it is important to consider the high-speed rail controversy which has arisen as a result of the statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport yesterday. We need a rail link through the tunnel that will compete successfully with ferries and air travel as an alternative means of getting to and from Europe. For those who use the channel tunnel trains three criteria must be met—convenience, comfort and time.

If one goes from Waterloo to Paris or Brussels by train one does not have to fight through the traffic to get to Heathrow, stand around at the airport waiting for the plane, one's luggage and all the rest of it. Nor does one end up at Charles de Gaulle airport miles outside the centre of Paris. The rail connection is more convenient, comfortable and causes less harassment than travelling by air or by ferry.

Is it important to shave 20 minutes off the journey time when one can reach Brussels in two and three quarter hours and Paris in three hours under the proposed timetable? The important thing is not whether the journey is 20 minutes shorter or longer, but how the proposed British Rail timetable compares with the alternatives in terms of convenience, comfort and time. In competitive terms where does that timetable place the tunnel in the market? In terms of comfort, convenience and being faster than the competition, the proposals for a terminal at Waterloo and bypass services through Olympia to the north are perfectly adequate, without a high-speed link, to compete successfully for the pure rail share of traffic that the tunnel is designed to carry.

An important question relates to capacity. At some stage more capacity will be needed than can be provided by the services through Waterloo and Olympia on to the north. British Rail is satisfied that that additional capacity will not be needed until the end of the century. Where is that capacity? I had the privilege of chairing a committee in Kent made up of members of the county council and the district councils. It was known at one stage as the Mitchell committee, but it was a Kent consultation committee that looked into the problem of capacity.

That committee found not that there would be insufficent capacity to cope with the requirements of the channel tunnel trains, but that there would be a problem of capacity for the Kent commuter services running at the same time as those trains. If one examines the slots that will be required for the trains running to and from London and the tunnel, one discovers that slots will become available when, for example, there is no boat train going to Dover. In the morning there is no problem because the peak of trains arriving from the continent occurs after the rush hour has ended in London. The boot pinches in the afternoon services, when channel tunnel trains due to leave London coincide with the commuter pressure of afternoon trains for Kent.

There will be three to five trains in the afternoon about which real problems will arise. But those problems could be offset in part by longer commuter trains, longer platforms and faster commuter trains, and I welcome what the Secretary of State said about the investment of £400 million in commuter services to Kent, for which he has already given investment approval.

I agree, reluctantly, with the Secretary of State that it would not be right to spend not £190 million but £1,900 million of taxpayers' money on providing a high-speed link to cope with that relatively small level of dislocation to our Kent commuter services resulting from the afternoon trains.

The economics of a new fast rail link are at present a bridge too far. Just as in 1974 a channel tunnel could not be built commercially and viably by the private sector whereas 10 years later it could, and is being built, and will prove to be successful, so in 1989-90 it is not possible to build a fast link to that tunnel that is economically viable.

I have little doubt that by the end of the century it will be, and for that reason it is vital for the Government regularly to re-evaluate the likely level of revenue to come from the provision of a high-speed link, and on that basis to consider when it might be commercially viable for such a project to go ahead.

The subject of freight was raised in questions to the Secretary of State yesterday. The most important aspect arising from the channel tunnel from the point of view of the north of Britain is the need to ensure that freight links and terminals are scattered across the country in such a way that all the major freight requirements going to the continent can be met by the tunnel freight services. What the Secretary of State said yesterday about a high-speed link had nothing to do with freight, which was never intended to go on the high-speed link.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to make those comments, for I wanted at the earliest time to make a contribution to the debate on the communications and transport aspect of our European economic future in the light of what was said yesterday by the Secretary of State.

12.13 pm

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): When, with great eloquence, my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) opened the debate, he could little have thought that the discussion would have included that speech—I do not dispute its importance—by the hon. Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell). That the hon. Gentleman was able to make that speech is to the credit of my hon. Friend, who framed his motion in such a way that we have opportunities to range wide and raise what are crucial issues affecting the economic and political development of the European Community.

It is clear from events in central and eastern Europe in the past year that many changes will continue to occur in the Community. Some of them are likely to be dramatic.

I am a member of the Council of Europe and vice-chairman of the British group of the IPU. Hon. Members will be ware of the role that the British group is playing in meeting representatives from countries in eastern Europe. Many politicians from emerging parties in those countries are anxious to visit Britain and other western nations. Indeed, this week we received representatives of all the major parties in the new East German parliament, and later I will comment on the views that they expressed to us.

As a Council of Europe member and an officer of the British group of the IPU, I have been privileged to visit many eastern European countries and to meet their leading politicians. It is clear that they are anxious to have a closer association with the EC.

Members of the Council of Europe who are present this morning will recall the major speech made by Mr. Gorbachev to the council in Strasbourg in which he spoke of one Europe of the future. That is coming. Within the next five to 10 years there will be close, ongoing relationships between the countries of east and west Europe. That is clear, as members of the Council of Europe will be aware, from our contacts with representatives of central and eastern European countries. Regular delegations from those countries attend discussions in Strasbourg, and various committees of the Council of Europe hold meetings in their countries.

Much has been said about the single market in 1992 and the changes that that will bring about. In considering those changes, we must take into account—although a vital issue, it does not receive the media coverage of other, more immediate, issues—the future role of the United States and its trading opportunities in Europe. Those who attend meetings in Europe are aware of the regularity with which delegations of American senators and congressmen and women who visit Europe and—not forgetting the business interests that they represent—seek closer opportunities to trade in Europe. Likewise, the Japanese are making similar efforts in east and west Europe.

That aside, the newly emerging democracies of eastern Europe are vital in the long term for the development of the European Community. It is sad to witness events in Romania. Those who have visited that country recently must be filled with sorrow at the brutality that has occurred there in the last 48 hours. The heroic people of that country having thrown off one tyranny must now be questioning whether they are witnessing the birth of another evil tyranny.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): None of us can view with comfort the events that are currently taking place in Romania, but perhaps my hon. Friend is taking it too far. After all, there was an election in Romania which was viewed by international observers and was adjudged, in terms of the mechanics of the election, to have been fair. Perhaps my hon. Friend should pause before he compares the current regime in Romania with the Ceausescu tyranny.

Mr. Cox: I take my hon. Friend's point. The British Inter-Parliamentary Union group sent two hon. Members to observe the elections in Romania, and I chaired the discussion of the report of those observers, which showed that there was not a great deal to complain about in in terms of the elections. However, there was a great deal to complain about in the run-up to them.

The point that I wish to make, as I believe would the people of this country of whatever political party, is that when there are elections, one hardly thinks that a few days later such brutality will take place on the streets of a country that says it believes in democracy. Who are those people and what support have they, and from whom, for the brutality in which they have been involved? We shall watch developments during the next two or three weeks. What I have seen on the television and read in the press fills me with concern.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that both the Romanian Liberal party and the Peasants party offices have been sacked and gutted by a group of people who were called into central Bucharest by President Iliescu?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I hope that the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) will remember that it would not be in order to go in detail into the internal affairs of east European countries. But as long as his answer is linked to the EEC it will be perfectly in order.

Mr. Cox: I take your point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As we are talking about a wider Europe and, in time, one Europe, it was appropriate to have made such comments, and I shall leave it at that.

We know that, sadly, countries in eastern and central Europe have little going for them economically at present. At a recent meeting I was told that there were only two countries in that part of Europe—Hungary and Czechoslovakia—that seemed to have a reasonably bright future and hopes of making fairly quick economic progress. The general feeling among the rest of them was that the road to change and improvement would be difficult.

Therefore, in this Chamber, and in the wider EC context, we must start to ask what the role of the Community or its member states will be in those changes. Earlier in this debate, reference was made, I think by the hon. Member for Battersea, to Austria. What will be the role of the general agreement on tariffs and trade? Austria, one of its leading members, has clearly stated that it is seeking membership of the European Economic Community. All the political parties in Austria support that and the general feeling is that it will happen around 1993.

However, what will be GATT's future after that? Does it have a long-term future? If not, what will be the involvement of those countries that are presently GATT members from Europe? They will look for a much closer association with, and possible membership of, the Community. Therefore, we are looking at a Community in 10 or certainly 20 years' time with many more members than the present 12. Today, we have the chance to start to discuss that.

I shall confine my remarks to the role of the countries of eastern Europe.

Mr. Cash: The hon. Member has referred to GATT several times. I have just the slightest suspicion that he perhaps meant the European Free Trade Association, but I am not certain. Will the hon. Gentleman enlighten me?

Mr. Cox: I was talking about those members that belong to GATT from within EFTA.

I and others see the trade, currency, finance and general industrial developments in central and eastern Europe.

[Mr. Cox]

Surely, at this early stage of development in those countries, we cannot believe that there can be industrial, economic development in one part of Europe that will in no way affect another part of Europe with which we are becoming more closely associated. We must give closer consideration to that.

We all realise that when economic change occurs, there are problems. We have suffered problems as economic changes have taken place. Many areas of this country have been depressed and still suffer severely from the industrial changes that took place. The changes that some eastern European countries face are starting to cause problems.

In Poland there have been high price rises and increased unemployment, with the social unrest that that will cause. The same sort of problems are starting to occur in the Soviet Union. When the Minister replies, will he say how this country, as one of the leading members of the European Economic Community, can work alongside those countries of central and eastern Europe that will have to face those changes? At the same time, I want to know how we are going to help them to overcome the changes without causing the sort of social unrest that I mentioned.

There has been some comment in this debate about future exchange rates between East and West Germany, and there is much concern about their possible effects. There is also much concern about a united Germany which includes eastern Germany. One goal of West German politicians in the months since the wall came down was to try to keep as many East German people as possible living and remaining in East Germany. We know of the social unrest and unemployment that could be caused. What will happen as a united German comes into being?

What will be the position of guest workers who, at present, work in West Germany, and have been there for many years? Under West German laws, their status is often open to much question. It is interesting that in this country this week, under the auspices of the British IPU, we have received a group from East Germany. One of their fears was that they were going to be swallowed up in that united Germany. They have concerns about some of the developments in their country. They expressed one fear that, despite the appalling conditions under which they have had to live, they would be used as a cheap labour force. They were concerned that West German industrialists would come into East Germany buying up plant that is no longer productive and turning it into means of production that will have a dramatic effect on East Germany. If it has a dramatic effect there, the repercussions will be felt in other parts of eastern and central Europe.

I know that other Members wish to speak so I shall make only two more brief points. I and other hon. Members have commented on the changes in central and eastern Europe. Those countries urgently need help in developing their education systems. I and other hon. Members who are present today know about the know-how fund, but education stretches much wider than that. It would be interesting to know—if the Minister cannot tell us today perhaps he will think about it and possibly write to me—the Government's thinking on developing educational opportunities in Britain for talented men and women from central and eastern European countries who could benefit from a knowledge of our education system which might help the development of their countries. In some countries people know little about trade, marketing and the pricing of goods. We in Britain have a great deal of knowledge about those skills which people taking responsibility in those countries need. The Government cannot stand on the sidelines and say that it is up to the respective business organisations to develop contacts and bring interested groups together. The Government must have an up-front on-going involvement in that. I shall be interested to hear the Minister's comments.

I support the changes that will inevitably come about. They will be difficult, and we need to have the will and the understanding that we as a developed country must help those countries that are not so far away—we can get anywhere in central and eastern Europe in a couple of hours, so we are not talking about vast travelling distances Britain and other countries the Community must commit ourselves to helping those countries to a future within a wider Europe.

Finally, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch on introducing the debate and on the wideness of his motion which allowed us to raise these issues today.

12.31 pm

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Peter Lilley): I join other hon. Members in congratulating the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) on securing today's debate and choosing the subject. It is a particular pleasure for me to respond to the hon. Gentleman because when I made my maiden speech he had the misfortune to speak immediately after me and, as is the custom in the House, he was kind enough to make gracious and flattering remarks, and I am always susceptible to flattery. This is the first opportunity that I have had to tell him that I have enjoyed every speech that he has made in the House that I have heard, and none more so than today, when he was characteristically lucid, robust, poetic and idiosyncratic.

The hon. Gentleman spoke movingly of his father. We all join in paying tribute to his father, who was lost in the war and to all those who sacrificed their lives in preserving the freedom of Britain to govern itself. Like the hon. Gentleman, we are determined that Europe should never be riven by war again.

However, I do not believe that Britain's retention of the right to govern itself through its own institutions constitutes a threat to peace in Europe. That is the implication of all those who say that we must abandon it for that reason. On the contrary, I believe that the peace of Europe is being built not by subordinating our institutions to others, but by freeing our people to have greater intercourse in trade, travel, living, exchanging and moving around our continent, building up a network of friendships and common interests that is surely the basis of freedom and prosperity throughout our continent.

Before I return to the hon. Gentleman's motion and his speech, let me mention some of the excellent speeches by my hon. Friends and by Opposition Members. My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) who has apologised to the House and to me for having to leave, spoke with measured wisdom that I am sure will carry him far. I was struck by his remark that we should not make

the pooling of sovereignty an end in itself. There is a danger that some people see that as an end rather than as occasionally a necessary means.

The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) was right to re-emphasise the role of the House in exercising scrutiny and ensuring accountability. In so doing he is being thoroughly European and running with the tide of current European thought. In some countries, such as France, Spain and Greece, the Parliaments are taking measures to re-establish their powers and to re-examine the way in which they exercise scrutiny over Community affairs. It is right for us to do likewise.

My hon. Friend the Member for Holland with Boston (Sir R. Body)—I do not normally think of him as associated with any country but this one—was right to distinguish between the pursuit of a unitary megastate and what is called federalism. I drop the word federalism when I remember to do so and talk more of Euro-nationalism as the ambition of some and Euro-co-operation as the ambition of the Government and, I think, of the House. My hon. Friend was also right to say that supranationalism or Euro-nationalism appeals to the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch because it provides an opportunity for the hon. Gentleman to breathe life back into socialism. As the hon. Gentleman said, once a socialist always a socialist.

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) said that some hon. Members and some of our people think of themselves as superior and criticise foreigners. There is no danger of the hon. Gentleman ever being accused of doing anything such as that. In his speech, as in all his speeches, when he drew a comparison between the British people and foreigners, the advantage went to the foreigners. When he drew a comparison between British institutions and those abroad, the British institutions came out worse and ought to be swept aside. When he compared the Government's policies with those of our partners he concluded that we were to abandon ours and adopt those of our partners. I imagine that that is the sort of thing that people in the Liberal party think.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West (Sir D. Mitchell) was right to point to the incompatibility of Labour's policies with membership of the exchange rate mechanism. A Government who are committed, as the Labour party is committed, to increasing public expenditure and to the higher taxes that would follow from that, to resorting to borrowing as Labour has promised to do and to a premature reduction in interest rates, would be unable to stick by the discipline of the exchange rate mechanism, whatever prior conditions were attached to membership. My hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, North-West made a valuable contribution, as he is well able to do, on communications. His judgment that the balance of advantage is not yet in favour of a fast link with the continent, although he said that we should keep it under review, carries great weight. No doubt my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will attach weight to his words, which I shall draw to his attention.

The hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) made a valuable contribution when he emphasised the importance of countries in central and eastern Europe and in the European Free Trade Association that are not yet part of the European Community. He asked about the help that the Government were giving to those countries. I was in Warsaw last week and it was volunteered to me that the help that we were giving through the know-how fund was better, more speedily delivered and better targeted than that of any other Government. I was told that they were still waiting after a year for help from the Community. I shall ask my colleagues in Government to look at the point about the use of the know-how fund for education.

The debate follows a major debate on the subject that we had in the autumn. In the same way, this debate emphasises that with few exceptions this is a consensus subject. Although the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch seems to be unaware of it, the Government and Opposition, although they disagree profoundly on many things, are united on many aspects of the approach to European monetary union. Both parties support stage 1 of the Delors proposals, which begins formally on 1 July. Both parties support entry into the exchange rate mechanism during stage 1, albeit on different conditions. Both parties reject stage 3 of Delors, with its proposals for an unaccountable single central bank and currency, and centralised control of economic policy. Both parties reject them for essentially the same reasons—that they rely on an unaccountable bureaucracy, that they reflect abstract blueprints rather than a practical approach that is congenial to the British approach to politics and that, on the central issues of economic and monetary policy, they would deprive this country of the ability to govern itself through this Parliament.

I was struck by the similarity of our approaches when I read through the latest policy document produced by the Labour party and the document that we produced on the evolutionary approach to European monetary union. I ask the House to guess which of the following phrases came from which document. The first is:

"we would oppose the proposals for an all-powerful, but unaccountable European Central Bank, as outlined in the Delors plan for Economic and Monetary Union."

The second states that the authors

"strongly criticised the proposal that the European Commission in Brussels should control the budgetary policies of member countries."

The third is:

"Instead of trying to impose blueprints on the economic and monetary development of Europe, we should build on the experience of the Single Market process and on the operation of the Exchange Rate Mechanism."

The fourth is:

"the EC is not a unitary state and we do not believe that further progress towards European unity will or should, lead to a European superstate."

Those quotations all come from the Labour party document, but none of my hon. Friends would have any difficulty with them.

None the less, there are differences between the two parties even within the topics covered by the motion. For example, on the European exchange rate mechanism, we differ as to conditions. Last year, in Madrid, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister agreed that Britain would join the ERM as part 1 of stage 1 of EMU. She also set out clearly the conditions that must be satisfied before we join. We have stood by those conditions and we have not wavered, and we shall join when they are met.

In "Looking to the Future", the Labour party document, we are told that a Labour Government would negotiate Britain's entry into the ERM at the earliest opportunity, on the basis of prudent and reasonable conditions, which Labour has previously outlined. The Labour party is rather coy about repeating those conditions and at a recent hearing of the Select Committee

[Mr. Peter Lilley]

on Treasury and Civil Service, the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch is reported as claiming that he was told by the shadow Chancellor that three of the four conditions laid down by the Labour party were either irrelevant or idiotic. Inasmuch as they seem to involve devaluation and reflation, they would undermine the basis of the ERM. I should be grateful if the hon. Gentleman elaborated on that conversation. Which of the conditions are idiotic and which are irrelevant? Has he followed up that matter?

Mr. Sedgemore: If the hon. Gentleman read my questioning of the Chancellor in that Select Committee, he would know that the main thrust of it was that most of the conditions put forward by the Government and the Opposition are artificial political hurdles, and that there are no real economic reasons why Britian should not have an early entry into the ERM. The Chancellor did not agree with that, but I am sure that I am right.

Mr. Lilley: I hope to hear more about this famous conversation, but the hon. Gentleman is too canny to be drawn. The central thesis of his motion is that Britain's entry into the ERM must be seen as a stepping stone towards creation of a single European currency. I know that some of my hon. Friends who are opposed to entry into the ERM—wrongly, in my view—are opposed because they see that inevitable progress towards a single currency, but I believe that both are mistaken.

Pegged exchange rates do not automatically lead to currency union. There have been other fixed rate systems —Bretton Woods, the gold standard and the sterling area to mention but three—and none led to a single currency. That is not the inevitable consequence. Nor does a fixed exchange rate involve the loss of sovereignty. The decision that it is desirable—both for the stability of exchange rates and as an anti-inflationary discipline and framework—to fix a country's exchange rate is a sovereign decision for each state to take or not to take, as it chooses.

However, such decisions cannot be taken wholly unilaterally. If one country wants to fix its exchange rate at 1 to 1 with its neighbour while that neighbour wants to fix the rate at 1·1 to 1, the two are incompatible. An agreement must be reached. The purpose of the EMS and the ERM is to provide a way to establish a compatible system of exchange rates and build a framework in which monetary and exchange policies can be operated. That is sensible, and should not cause my hon. Friends concern.

By contrast, the proposal to establish a single currency and a single central bank goes to the heart of sovereignty and self-government. Virtually every state has, and has always had, its own currency. There are clear reasons why states have found it essential to issue and control their own currencies. First, a currency is a symbol of the state's authority. Secondly, it is a source of revenue, because of the seigniorage that results from issuing a currency whose value exceeds the cost of production. After all, it costs far less than £5 to print a £5 note, and the right to print it is therefore valuable. Thirdly, it is necessary to have the ability to issue money in order to act as lender of last resort to the banking system—which requires Government regulation to maintain its stability, as the hon. Member for Newham, South pointed out. Fourthly, monetary policy has a profound effect—at least in the short term—on economic activity. For all those reasons, states have found the benefits of having their own currency to exceed any disadvantages that their citizens may face through not being able to do business in the same currency when they trade or travel abroad.

From time to time, currencies have been merged into a single currency when states have merged into a single state: we see that happening as the two German states merge into one state with a single currency. With the arguable excepion of Belgium and Luxembourg—and, possibly, west Africa, with the CFA—two or more states have never successfully shared a currency. In the foreseeable future, there is not the remotest possibility of all the European states merging into a single state under a single Government, and without a single Government it is almost inconceivable that they will be able or willing to manage a single currency. None the less, there is every reason why we should co-operate to manage our monetary policies in the most beneficial and mutually compatible way.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch asked me whether the Government's views had any counterparts on the continent. I am surprised at the extent to which my remarks were mirrored in a speech that Mr. Balladur sent me. He said:

"Let us be clear, a single currency . . . presupposes a level of political integration and abandonment of sovereignty on the part of the member states which is incompatible with the present situation of Europe, and, in my view, unacceptable to France . . . Both symbolically, and at a practical level, currency is an essential attribute of sovereignty. There is no example of sovereign countries which have given up their currencies. Let us leave this dream world! Who thinks for a moment that Germany is ready to abandon the deutschmark, or Britain the pound sterling? No one says so, but everybody knows. In these circumstances, it makes more sense to put aside these illusions, and instead think of solutions which have a chance of coming to something."

Mr. Cash: My hon. Friend has given us an interesting insight into his own thinking—and, therefore, the Government's thinking—on such matters. Can he tell us what is going on in the mind of the other member states on the question of defining terms such as economic, monetary and political union? He has just given us an insight from France; would it be possible for him to give us an idea of what is happening in the other countries?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend is as well informed as any hon. Member about what is happening in other countries. I hope that he will excuse me if I do not take up his invitation to digress from my speech and give a dissertation on what they are doing. I hope that Europe will reach a consensus on the practical way forward.

There are already good signs that it is possible to reach agreement on those issues. For example, the original Delors report on the economic arrangements within Europe stated that it would be necessary to have control over the budgetary policies of the member states. We pointed out that even close-knit federal states such as the United States and Canada exercise no central control over state budgets, so there can be no reason for leaving less power in the hands of the sovereign Parliaments of the European states.

I am happy to say that the argument has swung in our direction. The Commission has published a new paper that appears to accept our point of view. Britain's proposal —that market forces should be reinforced by members agreeing not to bail out profligate member states and to abstain from the monetary financing of deficits—is

becoming common ground. I hope that my hon. Friend welcomes the fact that we are joining constructively in the discussions and that we are having success in certain areas.

The recently published Labour party policy document goes so far as to claim that the result of that change of thinking in Europe is due to the arguments that it has advanced. That is a little bit of hyperbole, but in essence the Labour party is putting forward much the same case as we are.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch refers at the end of his motion to wider issues. Division re-emerges as soon as we leave the question of economic and monetary union and consider the position of the two parties in the House. The Labour party backs wholeheartedly the social charter. I understand why the Opposition may find that some of the policies outlined in the social charter are congenial to them as socialists. If so, they should seek a majority for those policies in the House and in the country.

Mr. Tony Banks: What the Minister says is true up to a point, but the social charter also seems to be attractive to capitalists in France, West Germany and other parts of the European Community. How does he square that with what he has just said?

Mr. Lilley: I did not say that the social charter does not appeal to other people; what I say is that it appeals to socialists. Therefore, the socialists in the House, who believe in the importance of this House, should seek a majority in the House and in the country for those policies. What I cannot understand is why they feel that those policies must be imposed by central diktat—possibly by means of a majority in the rest of the continent against a minority in this country. I do not see the point of that. The document argues implicitly for that point of view: that if the country were to pursue those policies unilaterally, they would make our industries uncompetitive, so we should follow them only on a Europe-wide basis and then all of us would be equally uncompetitive. That is an unattractive argument. Europe is not the world. If Europe makes its industries and economies uncompetitive, it will lose out against its competitors elsewhere in the world. If those policies do not stand up in their own right and are incompatible with competitive industry, we should not pursue them, either unilaterally or collectively.

Mr. Banks: That argument will not be lost on the industrialists of West Germany, France and Italy. They are as acutely aware of the need for competitiveness as the Minister and the British Government. Does he not accept, however, that the social charter is the obverse of the Single European Act and that the two must be taken together?

Mr. Lilley: No, I do not accept that argument. A number of countries believe that it would be attractive to apply those measures throughout Europe. They have already introduced them and found that they have made their industries less competitive than they would otherwise be; therefore they would like the industries of other countries to be burdened by them as well. Therefore, we did not sign the social charter, but we look constructively at any proposals for specific measures that are well argued and justified.

This has been a first-rate debate, and I refer again to the opening contribution made by the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch, which set a high standard and provided an opportunity to raise many important issues. I thank him for that, and I look forward to the contributions of other hon. Members as the debate proceeds.

12.54 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): I join other right hon. and hon. Members on congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) on his choice of an extremely important topic, and on the eloquence with which he made his case. Sadly, the same degree of clarity cannot be said to have emerged from the speech of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. On the question of where precisely the Government stand on Britain's potential membership of the exchange rate mechanism, we are as confused now as we were before the Minister's speech began.

The most recent definitive statement from the Government came in the speech made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce in the United Kingdom on 12 June, when he said:

> "I think no one has any doubt now that the Government is committed to joining the exchange rate mechanism; and we have set out the conditions under which that will be possible. A good deal of progress has been made on a number of these conditions, but they have not yet all been met."

That is the most definitive recent statement by a Minister on the Government's intentions concerning sterling's participation in the ERM. However, it provides no guidance as to when the Government intend to take that step and in what circumstances they are prepared to commence discussions with our European partners.

Today, the Minister reiterated the Madrid conditions, which are freedom of capital movement throughout the European Community, restrictions on free competition to be lifted—the completion of stage 1 of the Delors process—and that Britain's rate of inflation must fall to the European average.

Which of those conditions do the Government regard as having now been fulfilled? I shall address inflation in a moment. As to the others, there were two interesting exchanges during the consideration by the Treasury Select Committee of this year's Budget. When the Governor of the Bank of England appeared before that Committee on 28 March, he was asked by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith):

> "Would it be your advice to us and the Government that all the Government's conditions except that relating to inflation have now been largely satisfied?"

The Governor of the Bank of England replied unequivocally:

> "Yes, I think so."

He went on to identify one or two minor issues of free capital movement that remain to be resolved, but said that they were not important.

On 3 April, the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, who is tenacious in these matters, asked the Chancellor the same question:

> "Have the conditions, other than inflation,, for British membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism been met, apart from the details?"

The Chancellor's answer was in sharp contrast with the Governor's:

> "No, but they are moving towards being met."

Within six days, the Governor of the Bank of England said that the conditions, other than inflation has been met, but

[Mr. Chris Smith]

the Chancellor said that they had not. We are entitled to ask the Government which of those views represents the considered view of the Government.

Sir Richard Body: I thought that the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) asked whether the conditions had largely been met, which is different from "having been met". It was not inconsistent with what the Chancellor said.

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman ignores the question that the Chancellor was asked:

"Have the conditions, other than inflation for British membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism been met."

The Chancellor's answer—no—was a clear answer to that question.

Mr. Cash: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the Governor of the Bank of England signed the Delors report. It therefore perhaps would not be entirely surprising, given that the Opposition do not agree with stages two and three of the Delors report, for there to be a considerable difference in emphasis between the answers given by the Bank of England, the Chancellor and hon. Members.

Mr. Smith: As the Government have asserted clearly several times in the House the accountability of the Governor of the Bank of England to the Government, the hon. Gentleman's comment is somewhat surprising. Of course there may be differences of view between the Governor and Chancellor, but we are entitled to know exactly what is the Government's position. Every time I have asked the Government whether the conditions, apart from inflation, have been met, I have received no answer.

Mr. Maples: At some length, the hon. Gentleman has taken us through the Government's conditions for entering the exchange rate mechanism, which at least have stayed the same for about 18 months, whereas the Opposition's views are constantly changing. It would be helpful to know a little more about them. Last year, the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) laid down the condition that the exchange rate mechanism should lose its deflationary bias, which for our purposes is almost the sole reason for its existence. In an interview in *The Daily Telegraph* in January he is quoted as talking about a competitive exchange rate, but the deflationary bias has been dropped. Will the hon. Gentleman enlighten us about the importance of the delationary bias of the exchange rate mechanism, as his party sees it, and what did the right hon. and learned Gentleman mean by a competitive exchange rate?

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman is a little over-eager. I shall deal with those points in a moment, but I wish first to finish dealing with the Government.

Leaving aside the conditions other than inflation, let us consider inflation itself. We know from the answer that the Chancellor gave during Treasury questions recently that, as their measure of whether inflation has been reduced sufficiently to allow British entry, the Government are using what they like to call the underlying rate of inflation, rather than the retail prices index. We know that, because that was the answer that the Chancellor gave. But we have had no guidance from the Government on the meaning of the strange word "proximate", which has been used frequently by the Chancellor in relation to the gap between our level of inflation and the European average when the Government come to make up their mind. What precisely does "proximate" mean? It could mean anything from a very considerable gap between the two rates of inflation to an identical convergence. But when we have pressed the Government on the issue or asked them precisely what "proximate" means, they have refused to tell us. The picture that is emerging is one of continuing confusion and the Government have not told us exactly when and in what circumstances they envisage the Madrid conditions being met.

There are sound economic reasons for Britain to join the exchange rate mechanism—on that I entirely concur with my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch. A number of advantages flow from ERM membership. First the ERM will provide stability of planning for British industry, which will then be able to assume a stable exchange rate policy in relation to its overseas trade. It is significant that in January, when *Financial Weekly* conducted a survey of businesses in Britain, 97·2 per cent., of the companies polled in terms of market capitalisation, and 91·8 per cent., in terms of the number of companies, said that they believed that Britain would benefit by ERM membership. Many of those companies gave as their reason the benefits of a stable exchange rate. They found sterling's volatility against the deutschmark and the dollar to be one of the most telling problems facing British firms abroad. The stability brought to our exchange rate policy by ERM membership would be a significant benefit.

Secondly, we must realise that much of our supposed independence of action as a country has already gone. When, last October, the Bundesbank raised its interest rate, it took the British Chancellor and Prime Minister half a hour to decide that they had to do the same. We must realise that the economies of Europe are becoming increasingly interlinked and interconnected, whether we like it or not. It is surely important for us to be part of a forum—that is what the exchange rate mechanism is—which will make joint collective decisions about the future of Europe, rather than having to respond unilaterally to decisions that are made elsewhere.

Thirdly, exchange rate mechanism membership provides protection from excessive speculation against any individual currency in the mechanism.

Fourthly, exchange rate mechanism membership provides a counter-inflationary discipline within the domestic economy. Clearly it is not an easy ride. It does not have benefits without potential disadvantages, but the counter-inflationary discipline that it could bring would act on balance for the benefit of the British economy.

On all the points that I have raised, we urge the Government to commence discussions with our European partners to join the ERM immediately. We do not urge the Government to wait until some unspecified rate of inflation or fulfilment of the Madrid conditions is attained. We urge them to commence discussions now.

Of course, we want the Government to discuss with the members of the ERM the issues which the Opposition have consistently urged the Government to discuss. Here I can answer the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples). Those issues include the rate at which we should join—any Government would have to engage in a discussion about that—the swap arrangements between

the central banks to protect against speculation, the need for an enhanced regional policy to counter the imbalances which already exist within the European Community and the need for co-ordinated policies for growth across the European Community.

Mr. Lilley: Can the hon. Gentleman estimate how long it would take to negotiate a strengthening of the regional support system as in the document, and which he referred to, as a necessary precondition of entry to the ERM? How long would it take to negotiate? The document says:

"Entry to the ERM must also be accompanied by effective collaboration between the central banks of the EC countries."

It says that that would involve further development of the Basle-Nyborg agreement on swaps.

How long will it take to negotiate a system involving closer monetary and fiscal co-operation designed to maintain steady economic growth? Are we talking about this century or the next?

Mr. Smith: I am afraid that the Minister is grossly out of step with current thinking in Europe on the matter. I shall come to regional policy in a moment. The one Government in Europe who do not believe in strengthening regional policy across the EC is the British Government. Other countries and Governments in Europe are keen to see regional policy develop, including the Government and the political parties of West Germany. As East Germany comes in to join with West Germany, that argument will become even more powerful for the German Government and people.

Sir Richard Body: Is not there an obvious reason for this? Who will pay for the regional fund? There are only two paymasters in the Community—Britain and West Germany. It is easy for the Greeks, Italians and others to clamour for a regional fund because they will pull the money out. Who will put the money in?

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman ignores the fact that while Britain has done reasonably badly—I entirely accept that—out of the agricultural support mechanism of the EEC, we have done well out of other EC structural funds which give support to British regions. The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) is well aware of that. The point made by the hon. Member for Holland with Boston (Sir R. Body) does not hold good.

This debate is about not just Britain's membership of the ERM, important though that is, but the possibility of a wider process of monetary integration and ultimate monetary union. On two points alone we are on all fours with the Government. First, we do not accept the Delors proposal for central European determination of the fiscal policies and budgetary deficits or surpluses of individual member states. There is no necessity why such central control should exist even if the process of monetary integration proceeds apace. Secondly, we do not accept Jacques Delors' vision of a totally independent central bank determining, in an unelected fashion, the monetary policies of Europe. We do not believe in unelected bankers exercising an independent control over the major items of economic policy.

Mr. Cash: Does the hon. Gentleman appreciate that that contradicts exactly the point he was making earlier about the significance and importance that he attaches to the statement on the ERM by the Governor of the Bank of England before the Treasury Select Committee? The hon. Gentleman should take that into account, as that was the burden of my earlier intervention.

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman clearly does not appreciate that the structure of the Bank of England is more heavily controlled and more accountable than that of most of the central banks in Europe. Because of that, the words of the Governor of the Bank of England must be deemed to carry some governmental authority.

The Government seem to be somewhat confused and unclear about the potential process of monetary union. My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch was right to point out that, on 12 June, the Chancellor made no reference to the idea, supposedly all the rage just six months ago, of a system of competing currencies—the so-called evolutionary approach to monetary union. Is the competing currency idea still Government policy? On 12 June the Chancellor spoke about the possibility of the parallel use of the ecu alongside existing currencies—a different mechanism towards achieving monetary union. Is that new Government policy? We simply do not know, because neither the Government nor the Financial Secretary have told us. What is the Government's policy on competing currencies or the parallel use of the ecu? What will the Government argue when they go to the intergovernmental conference later this year?

If we are to move towards closer monetary integration in Europe three points must be emphasised about the shape that such union may take. First, it must retain the essential principle of democratic accountability for the making of monetary policy. Any system of central banks that might emerge must be democratically accountable.

Secondly, in such circumstances, the crucial question will concern the remit of any such central bank. If a central bank is told to concentrate—without any other factors being taken into consideration—only on the issue of price stability, one set of decisions will come from that central bank. But if it is told, as it should be told, to concentrate on the need for price stability but to do that within the context of the need for balanced sustainable growth across the overall European economy, a different set of decisions will emerge. The latter would be a more sensible remit to achieve.

Thirdly, any moves towards European monetary union must be seen in the context of improved regional policy, a subject to which I have referred. If there is to be monetary union—if individual nations are to find that the levers of exchange rate mechanism and interest rate decisions are removed from their armoury—there must be other and wider mechanisms to ensure that imbalances within the overall European economy can be addressed, and regional policy presents that opportunity.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): The House is listening with interest to my hon. Friend's elaboration of the conditions that he thinks are reasonable for further moves towards economic and monetary union. He has not commented on proposals for the permanent fixing or locking of exchange rates. That, after all, is the essential feature of stage 3 of the Delors report and is an important component of stage 2, when any changes in exchange rates are virtually outlawed, or are to be taken only in the most exceptional circumstances. Has my hon.

[Mr. Peter Shore]

Friend considered that, and may we be assured that in no way are we prepared to accept permanently fixed and locked exchange rates?

Mr. Smith: My right hon. Friend speaks with authority on matters relating to the European Community. I do not always agree 100 per cent. with what he says on these issues, but there is always a good amount worth considering in what he says, and the point he raises is extremely important in relation to any prospects for economic and monetary union. The whole idea of monetary union that some people are advocating would entail a common currency and a central monetary authority, and inevitably that would include a gridlocked exchange rate system.

As I have been explaining, our view is that if steps are to be taken in that direction, we must ensure that a number of extremely strong protective measures are taken, including the three that I outlined—democratic accountability, a remit that includes economic growth and a much stronger regional policy. Those must be part of any steps that may be taken in the direction that my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) suggested.

By contrast, the Government have not outlined their view on this issue with anything like the same clarity. There has been a lack of any truly constructive approach from the Government on the exchange rate mechanism membership and any developments towards monetary integration between the countries of Europe.

We should be discussing constructively and in detail with our European partners, helping to shape the nature of those discussions, and then making judgments about what part we should like to play in any such process. The Government are not doing that; they are sitting on the sidelines. There is a danger that a two-track Europe will be created that will leave us in the second, rather than the first, league of economic development, growth and prosperity in the European Community.

Mr. Spearing: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way because in answer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) he said—with his label as Front-Bench spokesman on his forehead—that we would not rule out fixed exchange rates given certain conditions. My hon. Friend nods his head. One such condition was regional policy. Nobody is against regional policy, but I am sure that he agrees that where regional distress is caused by competition—competition is one of the aims of the treaty of Rome—it is difficult to accept that relief of that distress should be given in hand-outs decided in Brussels. Is the regional policy to which my hon. Friend referred that sort of policy or the dispersal-of-industry policy engaged in by the post-war Labour Government?

Mr. Smith: Truly effective regional policy can be achieved only on a democratic and decentralised basis. My hon. Friend is right to identify that as an issue. The ways in which regional policy funding decisions are arrived at is an important issue for us to discuss, as is the size of the regional fund.

My hon. Friend has correctly identified our view that we would not for ever rule out in principle the possibility of a common currency, a common monetary policy and a gridlock of exchange rates in the European Community. But we want to know the exact nature of the animal before we accept it without question. That is why it is absolutely essential that the conditions that I outlined are met, the issues addressed and discussions held with our European partners before we make any unqualified commitment to European monetary integration.

Sir Russell Johnston: I wish to make a quick intervention while the hon. Gentleman is talking about regional policy. Is the Labour party committed to the principle of additionality?

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman will have to content himself with my answer that it depends on the circumstances. It entirely depends on the purposes of the principle of additionality in any particular respect. That is the best response that I can give the hon. Gentleman.

There is a danger at present because the Government are not committing themselves in a constructive spirit to the discussions now taking place, whether the Government like it or not, between our European partners about movements towards closer integration. Because the Government are taking such a stand-offish attitude, there is a real danger that the rest of Europe will go charging ahead without us in years to come. That danger is inherent in the Government's dithering approach to joining the exchange rate mechanism and to any wider discussion that may be taking place in Europe.

That danger will certainly be visited upon us if the Government continue to evince the confusion and doubt that currently persist in their policy on our entry into the exchange rate mechanism. They have got it wrong and they ought to think long and hard about the need to get it right.

1.30 pm

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): We have just listened to a long and rather engaging speech from the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith), containing metres, or perhaps even kilometres, of Front-Bench flannel. I sympathise with him in his difficulties, but a slightly more succinct presentation of his party's position might have stood him in better stead. He can be sure that in future weeks and months we shall be studying closely what he said and using it effectively against him and his party. On the EMU and the ERM the hon. Gentleman was making a valiant but hopeless attempt to square the circle.

Like other hon. Members, I congratulate the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) on his good fortune in being able to introduce the debate and on his elegant and amusing speech, which was full of thoughtful and almost revolutionary points and which will repay reading. I was amused by his references to Sir Alan Walters. The way in which Sir Alan Walters seems to crop up time and again probably means that any Ministers choosing to resign in future may well have to come to the House and say that they wish to spend more time with friends of the family. That is probably the way in which British politics is moving.

I was also interested to hear the hon. Gentleman concede that the age of socialism is over. That is a realistic statement on which I commend him. He also said that the age of Labour corporatism is over and is inappropriate to modern conditions. It is clear that, although his colleagues

on the Labour Front Bench may not have learnt a great deal about the changing conditions of the 1980s and 1990s, he at least has put his time to good use. I agreed with him when he said that the European Community is now the most appropriate framework for so much of our economic policy in Britain.

We have had a useful debate—and I have listened to it all—as it has given the House another opportunity to explore and examine much of Labour's policy on the European Community. As my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) said in an intervention, there is no doubt that the Labour party has come a long way towards common sense in the development of its European policy. However, it is clear from the drift of the debate and the speeches by Opposition Members that there is a terrific amount of inherent inconsistency in the position that they would take. It is not at all clear whether the hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch speaks for his party, but I suspect that I know the answer to my own rhetorical question.

For example, one wonders whether a future Labour Government—if there were to be one—would be prepared to follow the necessary supporting policies in the conduct of economic and monetary union of monetary discipline and a balanced budget in order to make a system based on fixed exchange rates really work as intended. I very much doubt whether a future Labour Government would be able to do that. Equally, I wonder whether a future Labour Government would accept the need for real operational and institutional independence for a central bank or a European system of central banks. It is clear not only from the quotations of my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury from the Labour party document, but from the speech of the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury that the Opposition are not enthusiastic about the idea of statutory accountability or independence of any kind for our central bank.

If the crunch came, and if we had a Labour Government formed by the modern new-look Labour party, a Labour Chancellor and Prime Minister would fall back upon the old protectionist socialist impulses of the Labour party. The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch rightly criticised the whole idea of socialism in one country. Those socialist impulses would be largely in response to the defensive pressures that would be put upon that party by its trade union supporters and others behind the party who would feel unable to cope in the new world of super-competition, which is undoubtedly the world into which we are moving in the 1990s.

I agree with the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch that Britain should join the exchange rate mechanism. As the Government have frequently made clear, we shall do so as soon as the Madrid conditions have been met. That bland familiar phrase will entail important political judgments about the appropriate timing. I stress the words "political judgments" because the matter is not capable of resolution with some fine econometric calculations. It is important to join in circumstances and conditions which can be defended in the markets and sustained in terms of market credibility.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch was also right to say that, once in the mechanism, Britain should stay in it. That means following all the appropriate supporting policies on monetary discipline and responsible tax financing of our public expenditure commitments. If Britain's public expenditure commitments were financed to any significant degree by public borrowing, it would undermine not only the integrity of the policy but, more important, in a world without exchange controls—and I understand that the Opposition have no intention of returning to exchange controls—the flight of capital which would ensue and which is all too easy to effect, would change a future Labour Government's policy whether they liked it or not.

I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, who is not here today, will be able to take the decision to go into the exchange rate mechanism towards the end of this year or perhaps early next year at a time of a relatively strong exchange rate in relation to the deutschmark. That is where I disagree with the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch. It should be done in wide bands initially, because the experience of Italy and Spain suggests that that is a good phased way to do it.

I hope that Britain's approach to the future development of the Community will be positive and will recognise that it is now an anachronism to try to practise either conservatism or socialism in one country. Those days are gone. We should recognise that our partners—and that means critically the French and the Germans—are now determined to press ahead on a fairly speedy time scale towards economic and monetary union. We should deal with that reality, and our policies should take full account of the facts.

I use the word "facts" deliberately, because in an important speech on Monday my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said that there would always be tension inside the Community between the Europe of phrases and the Europe of facts. He said that we, and he suspected most of our people, have a strong preference for the Europe of facts. I agree with that view. Of course it is one thing to say that we prefer the Europe of facts and another to act in the light of that preference and to be absolutely honest about it. Let us take an unblinkered look at some of these facts.

First, the most critical fact is that it is the private, not the public, sector that is leading the process of European integration, notably via the decisions of large multi-nationals, based here, in Holland or anywhere else, and the decisions of leading financial institutions. Many of these have their headquarters in Tokyo or New York, but are treating the single market and the opportunities that it gives much more positively than those based in European countries.

Secondly, our partners in the Community are determined to press ahead quickly towards economic and monetary union, if necessary leaving behind those member states that cannot or will not join in. This should be a warning to my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench. I hope that they will bear this in mind over the coming months, so that we do not repeat the errors of previous British Governments, notably in 1950 with the Schuman plan and 1956 with the Messina conference. It would be a case not of third time lucky but of third time fatal. It is vital that my right hon. and hon. Friends understand that.

The third reality, which occurs to all of us, is that the single market is being constructed even as we speak, day by day and week by week. It is essentially a process of ever-closer economic integration, driven by the private sector and now driven, ever more decisively and speedily, by the recent introduction of qualified majority voting under the Single European Act. Even Ministers have made

[Mr. Nigel Forman]

it clear that this has been of assistance to us in knocking down the unnecessary and indefensible barriers that still exist in some of the countries that preach most about free trade—for example, the Federal Republic of Germany—but practise a degree of protectionism.

I shall give an outline of the policy approach that we should take to these realities and facts. The first principle of our policy should be to take the necessary decisions to enable us to participate fully in every aspect of the future development of the Community. In the immediate future, this must mean deciding to join the ERM in time for us to have a real influence on the deliberations of the intergovernmental conference due to start in December.

Secondly, we should continue to throw our full weight behind all those in the Community—there are not yet enough of them—who wish to maintain an open trading Community in relation to the opening up of the combined market of 320 million people, especially in air travel, insurance and road transport, which are inexcusably still protected by some of our Community parners. This should apply also to the trade and investment flows between the Community and the rest of the world, from which this country has benefited disproportionately as compared with other Community member states, notably in attracting inward investment from Japan.

Thirdly, we should give our support to the development of a much more effective central banking and supervisory role for the Bank of England and later on for the emerging European system of central banks. The best way for us to contribute to this process would be to legislate, probably not in this Parliament but in the first Session of the new Parliament, to put the Bank of England on a new basis of statutory accountability to Parliament, just as in future there will be a Eurofed, which will have to be statutorily accountable to a more powerful and more competent European Parliament.

I do not have time to go in detail into the advantages of such a structure, but I shall perhaps be able to do so on another occasion. Briefly, they would be, first, much greater market credibility for the monetary policy both of such a national central bank and, ultimately, of a European system of central banks, and, secondly, more effective day-to-day management of monetary policy, thanks to such an institution being given a clear overriding statutory mission to counter inflation above everything else. That relates to the point made earlier by the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury.

Thirdly, and importantly, there must be some institutional compatibility between the arrangements that we put in place and those emerging in other European countries. It is significant that even Holland, France and Spain, all of which have had central banks that were, in varying degrees, close to their Ministries of Finance, are now moving quite deliberately towards a more independent role for their central banks because they have learnt from the experience of the Bundesbank and from the Federal Reserve in Washingon.

Fourthly, we should try to establish a more logical division of labour between national Parliaments—such as ours—and the emerging European Parliament, which must supervise and hold to account the activities of the Commission and the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Cash: May I take up my hon. Friend's point about the independence of the central bank? Does he agree that, according to articles 3 and 12 of the basic law, although the Bundesbank exercises a degree of significant independence in regard to currency stability, that independence is nevertheless subject to the overall political control of the Federal Government? That is vital to the argument, as it shows that the bank is not really independent, as it is often alleged to be.

Mr. Forman: I welcome my hon. Friend's intervention, which gives the opportunity to make some more general observations. It has been a characteristic of today's debate, and of debates in previous years, that both sides have put up straw men and then knocked them down. That is not helpful to a mature and quiet understanding of the truth.

My hon. Friend is right to say that there are clauses in the Grundgesetz in Germany which mean that ultimately the Federal Government, rather than Mr. Pöhl, exercise the authority. The key point is the degree of independence that any central bank has, and the market perception of that independence. That is why I stress market credibility as an agreement for the course that I favour.

Much has been said about the principle of subsidiarity, and that principle will help us to establish an effective division of labour between the institutions of government.

It should, however, apply equally to all levels of government. That is the shape of the future: in time the Community will go in that direction. Those things that can most appropriately be done at supranational level such as environmental and trade matters, should be dealt with by the Community institutions, acting in the traditional manner. Equally, taxation and bugetary policy should be kept at a national level, and should be decided and voted upon in this House and other national Parliaments. There is, of course, one notable exception—the VAT revenues for the European Community.

Increasingly, in the European Community of the future, the sub-national level of government—local government in all its forms—will come into its own much more, and rightly so. That is the basis on which the Germans have encountered such success in the Federal Republic, and views in the Community—including a great deal of political opinion in France—are moving in that direction. Britain is now the last bastion in the Community of the idea of the unitary state. One day, politicians on both sides of the House will realise the error of their ways in that respect.

There is a vital difference between the notions of competence, sovereignty and identity, although they are invariably merged, rather sloppily. They have vital but distinctive parts to play. Competence in governmental matters should be allocated to the level at which it can be most effectively exercised. I have given examples: trade policy at Community level, taxation policy at national level and perhaps education policy at local level.

Sovereignty, on the other hand, is a legal and constitutional idea which is both theoretical and practical. We should be unsentimental and clear-eyed when thinking about it.

The United Kingdom Parliament has a well-established claim to what we choose to call parliamentary sovereignty, but I ask the House to ponder what that means in practice in the 1990s. Essentially, it is the right to be informed, although we are not always informed first. Invariably the gentlemen in the Press Gallery get to know things before

we do. It is also the right to criticise and the right to influence the Government of the day and seek to hold them to account. That is an aspect of power, but it is not brutal power or the real core of power. Increasingly in the modern world the real core of power is passing from this House to——

Sir Richard Body: My hon. Friend describes sovereignty in exactly the same way as our continental friends, but the English-speaking world looks upon sovereignty in a rather different way. If my hon. Friend were to read "Dicey", he would realise that that famous book homes in on two essential principles that are at the core of sovereignty: the making of laws, and the levying of taxation. Neither applies to what my hon. Friend has said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I remind hon. Members that interventions are made at the expense of the time of other hon. Members who are waiting to contribute to the debate.

Mr. Forman: I do not dispute the two points that my hon. Friend has just made. I, too, have read "Dicey", albeit when I was much younger. My hon. Friend is absolutely right when he says that those are two essential attributes of the traditional view of parliamentary sovereignty. However, "Dicey" was writing in the latter part of the 19th century and reflected parliamentary circumstances that were more applicable to the period between 1832 and 1867 than to the 1990s.

If we consider again the extent of the powers of national Parliaments, we must remember that the right to dismiss Governments lies not with us, except in the most exceptional circumstances of a hung Parliament, but with the electorate. The right to create the decisive facts of life lies increasingly not with national Governments but with other political actors, with transnational pressure groups and, critically, with the private sector, such as the large financial institutions. I suggest that today Nomura has more power than many a nation state. We have to wake up to that reality, otherwise we shall find that events pass us by.

Identity is a feeling in the hearts of people throughout the world. It is a balance of feeling that is capable of change, according to political and psychological circumstances. If I were a Scot, like the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston), I have no doubt that I should be greatly tempted to feel Scottish first in my sense of national identity, European second, and, maybe, British third. That may be uncongenial to many hon. Members, but that is the way things are moving and that is the way a sense of identity is formed. If one visits Bavaria, Brittany or Catalonia, one finds exactly the same kind of feeling in the air.

That is the direction in which the European Community is moving. That does not alarm me. Some hon. Members may be terrified by the prospect, but I do not feel threatened by it. I suggest that other hon. Members should not feel threatened by developments of that kind. The ultimate human objective of European unity—institutions exist only to serve human purposes—is, as Sir Winston Churchill once said, that we as European citizens should be able to move freely throughout our community of proud European nations and, wherever we go in that community, should be able to say that"

"here we truly feel at home."

1.53 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham North-West): I wholly agree with much of what was said by the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman). He caught the imaginative mood of my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). I join other hon. Members in congratulating my hon. Friend on tabling his motion and providing us with an opportunity for a wide-ranging and interesting debate. That is not a mere genuflection in the direction of parliamentary politeness. I, too, am beginning to adopt a somewhat different attitude towards the European Community. That is not to say that the view that I held in the past was wrong, but it was formed in the circumstances that existed at that time.

As all right hon. and hon. Members have acknowledged, and although it may be a humdrum observation, the world has changed dramatically very recently. Any politician must re-examine the position and decide whether current attitudes and policies are fitting for today's changed circumstances. That is a sign not of weakness but of strength.

The only residual dread that I have in making such remarks is that they will eventually reach the ears of Bolsover. I might at an early stage seek the security of the greater bulk of my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch when my very good hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) gets round to reading *Hansard* next week.

I am under no illusions about the original aims and objectives of the European Community, which was essentially devised as a political entity based on western capitalism confronting the east, both politically and economically. For many, that remains the EEC's central tenet. However, the events that are changing the map of eastern Europe are altering also the role of the EEC, and with them must go changes in the attitudes of people such as myself.

As to negative attitudes towards those changes, the Prime Minister has done wonders in heightening the attraction of the EEC, although I suspect that that was not her original intention. It is also true that progressive capitalists in Europe now recognise the need for market regulation. I exchanged a few words on that issue with the Financial Secretary during his speech. As we see more regulation within the market, we hear verbal opposition from the Prime Minister—but the deregulation pursued by the Government, and the attacks made on the rights of workers in the workplace, have enhanced the appeal of the social charter. That charter remains a fairly mundane document. It contains a lot of wishful thinking and does not go half way far enough, but given the backward steps made in workplace rights in this country since 1979, the charter is looking remarkably progressive. Everything must be judged in the context of its own time.

The attitudes held in this country stem largely from the petty nationalism of the Prime Minister, who in my opinion—which is shared by many people in this country—is out of sympathy with sentiment both here and abroad. She almost makes any supranational institution seem very attractive. As has been said by right hon. and hon. Members in this debate and on other occasions, there is a grave danger that we shall be politically isolated and on the margin of events, and left standing on the sidelines

[Mr. Tony Banks]

whingeing and observing—incapable of making any major changes ourselves but having to go along with them in the end. And go along with them we must.

When one is confronted by the inevitable, it is far better to go along with it willingly than wait to be dragged along unwillingly when any opportunity of helping to shape the future has been lost, as is happening in this country now. It would be foolish to be reactive, and, simply because the Prime Minister is taking a narrow and blinkered view, to take the opposition position in an unthinking and unfeeling way. That would be stupid and short-sighted.

We are watching the map not only of eastern Europe but eventually of all Europe being redrawn peacefully for the first time in living memory, not in the aftermath of victory or defeat but in a way that must encourage us all. The enabler of those historic events is President Gorbachev. We are watching the Warsaw pact and COMECON crumbling, but that does not give us the opportunity to say, as some Conservative Members do, "Ha, ha we have won the cold war and capitalism is winning," which is not happening. We are witnessing major historic events, which will cause realignment throughout east and west Europe.

That will give us a chance to break out from the narrow base of the EC in western Europe. We are no longer confronting the east. The vision of Europe stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals, the common European home of which Mr. Gorbachev spoke in a speech I heard at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, has stopped being a wild dream and has started to become a realistic objective.

The excitment of what is going on is hard to grasp. Events have moved so fast, almost by the day, that everybody has been caught short. None of those great think tanks, expensive civil servants or university chairs predicted any of this. We are all starting equal again and everybody's judgment is as good as everybody else's. No hon. Member can predict what will happen with the certainty that politicians like to bring to their speeches.

German unification will undoubtedly add impetus to political and monetary union in Europe, and it will be very much encouraged by President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl. The United Kingdom cannot simply stand aside and watch that happen. We do not have the power to stop those developments and we have little ability to delay them. Political and monetary union is inevitable. We cannot ignore such inevitability.

We are not exerting our political potential in Europe or the wider world. The Prime Minister should have far more credibility on the world stage, given that she is the longest-serving political leader in the west. She is not doing so because she cannot match the events that are taking place. She cannot grasp the idea of the common European home that President Gorbachev has been discussing. She sits in Downing street, with gates covering the entrance to Downing street and to her mind. She is not responding to those enormous events with the same boldness as Gorbachev, Mitterrand or Kohl.

Mr. Lilley: The Prime Minister first voiced the sentiments that the hon. Gentleman so much admires from the mouth of President Gorbachev in her Bruges speech and did more to bring about the changes that he now welcomes in eastern Europe than any other western leader.

Mr. Banks: I realise that the Financial Secretary is a loyal Minister, but he has demonstrated that his contact with reality simply does not match his loylaty. He will say, almost like the Prime Minister herself, that she discovered Mikhail Gorbachev and that he is her creation. That is absolute nonsense. Of course the Prime Minister is prepared to say "These are exciting events." Everyone says that; one would have to be dead not to recognise that these are exciting events, but we should ask the Prime Minister what she intends to do, particularly on defence. Gorbachev is running risks that the Prime Minister cannot even contemplate. She is saying, "There are dangers here; he could fail." We all know that. But because he might fail, it is argued that we must remain tooled up to the chin. If the Prime Minister had her way on defence expenditure, she would not even melt down a bullet. I do not need lectures from the Financial Secretary about the Prime Minister's role because it has been a minor role indeed. Frankly, she does not have the wit, the imagination or the depth to match the events that are unfolding in eastern Europe.

Mr. Lilley: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Banks: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman again.

Mr. Lilley: My speech was one of the shortest in the debate.

The Prime Minister certainly does not indulge in the personal abuse that the hon. Gentleman makes his speciality.

I was merely reiterating the views pressed on me from all sides when I was in eastern Europe. The eastern Europeans paid great tribute to the role of the Prime Minister in inspiring them, in standing up to the Communist regimes when they were in place and in offering the model on which many of them base their economic policies.

Mr. Banks: I have noticed that the Prime Minister is considerably more popular in Moscow than she is in London, and I am quite surprised that she did not stay there. [HON. MEMBERS: "What about Gorbachev?"] Yes. It is interesting to note that those two are far more popular abroad than they are in their own countries. I am surprised that they did not discuss a job swap when they last met; they might both have enjoyed it.

Clearly, the Financial Secretary does not share my opinion that the Prime Minister is not a major player. Of course she has to be taken into account because she is the leader of one of the major European powers but, in my view, she does not perform in the way that her position as a politician who has led a country for 11 years warrants or justifies. That is why she cannot match those events. The Financial Secretary may call it common abuse; I call it objective observation. It is all a matter of one's position and opinion.

I was about to say that I understand that there are great dangers in what is happening in the east at the moment. Realignment is causing an upsurge in very dangerous nationalism. There are two responses to nationalism. One can say, "Go your own way; let us have a Balkanisation of eastern Europe; let us fracture along old historic lines." That is the most dangerous option available and any rational or responsible politician must reject it. The other way of dealing with the upsurge in nationalism is to press

ahead for a speedy and wider European unity based on the willingness of all the peoples involved. Such unity can dilute nationalism.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch referred to the future of the nation states and I have heard him say some interesting things about that subject in the past. I happen to be one of those who believe that the days of the European nation state are as numbered as the days of the European city state once were. Historically, sovereignty moves towards the larger unit. The United Kingdom evolved from tribes, through kingdoms, towards a unitary state, and that process will continue across Europe as a whole. We shall be contemplating a federal Europe—a United States of Europe. I believe that that is inevitable and, like the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, I am not frightened by the prospect. Already, economic and political power are haemorrhaging away from Britain and from this Parliament. That is why we need to find other ways of restoring power to the people of Britain and of Europe. We are talking not about a wider, larger bureaucracy but about a wider, accountable democracy. We are talking about finding institutions that can match the great events that surround us.

My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) said that one of the conditions of European monetary union must be democratic accountability. That is absolutely true. Democratic accountability is rather lacking in the EEC today. As we move towards more integration in Europe, we need to strengthen and, in certain cases, to create, democratic institutions—especially over international capitalism. In some ways, I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) has departed to the Tea Room at this point because he will not like what I am about to say: I think that we should give far greater powers to the European Parliament and its Members. That does not frighten me either. The day is not far off when, rather than Members of the European Parliament seeking seats in this House, the process will be the other way round. Many hon. Members of this House will realise that power has inevitably left this place. It will reside in the Parliament in Europe and that will be the place to be, because if a politician wants to be at the centre of power he must always seek it out. We all recognise that this House is no longer the centre of power. That is why many hon. Members on both sides of the House will undoubtedly seek a seat in the European Parliament in future.

I look forward to a socialist United States of Europe. I realise that it will be a long and arduous journey to such a state of heavenly peace. But even the longest journey starts with a single step. Along with my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch and many more in the Labour party, I am more than ready to take that step now.

2.10 pm

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): I congratulate the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) on his good luck in the ballot and his wisdom in choosing this subject for debate. I also congratulate the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on his resignation speech. We all look forward to his standing for the European Parliament. Some of us might even be willing to canvass for him to get him out of our hair.

Mr. Tony Banks: You do not have much hair.

Mr. Marshall: I am not sure whether that remark was directed to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or to me, but it was unkind in whatever direction it was made.

It is clear that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch is a member of the new model Labour party. Unlike his hon. Friends the Members for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), he is not an unreconstructed Bennite. He is willing to unsay most of the things that the Labour party has said historically. However, I was surprised to read in his motion about the positive approach of the Labour party towards Europe.

You will remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the late Mr. Hugh Gaitskell said that he preferred a thousand years of history to the opportunities within the European Community. He was succeeded by Lord Wilson whose meanderings on Europe made the vicar of Bray appear a model of consistency. More recently, in 1983 the Labour party said that it would take Britain out of the European Community. Throughout the time that I was a Member of the European Parliament, the Labour group there was dominated by anti-marketeers. One of the most frequent speakers in the European Parliament was the hon. Member for Bradford, South, who never once said a kind word about the European Community.

Mr. Latham: He has not done so since he came back.

Mr. Marshall: Indeed, he repeats the record. All I can say about the record is that it sounded better through simultaneous interpretation than it sounds in the House.

There is no doubt that the Labour party is willing to score points when it feels that to be anti-European is worth a point or two in the opinion polls. The veneer of Europeanism is skin deep. The Labour party would quite happily revert to its previous posture if it thought that that would benefit it one iota. The Labour party merely acts as an unprincipled barometer of British public opinion. Labour Members currently stand forward in the House as supporters of the EEC, not out of conviction but because they believe that there is a modest vote or two to be won from doing so.

We heard a most interesting speech from the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith). When he was asked a straight question by his hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), he would not say yes and he would not say no. He would not tell the House what the policy of the Labour party was. His speech was riddled with economic illiteracy. He told us, for example, that if we joined the ERM we would get rid of currency speculation. That is just not true. I suggest to the hon. Gentleman that he looks at the experience with the franc between 1981 and 1983. As he knows, the franc was devalued five times during that period. That happened because the then socialist Government were unwilling to follow sensible economic policies.

If the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury was part of the Treasury team and he carried out a programme of spending an extra £19 billion—or is it £50 billion?—that would guarantee that, within the ERM, sterling would be the victim of massive speculation. A fixed rate exchange rate system encourages speculation as it presents a one-way bet—one knows that one cannot lose, but one also knows that one can win an awful lot if one gets it right. The hon. Gentleman looks surprised, but he

[Mr. Marshall]

does not realise that if we joined the ERM and followed the policies to which he is committed there would be immediate massive speculation against the pound. The hon. Gentleman would be forced either to raise interest rates far above their present or to devalue the pound. I suspect that the hon. Gentleman is intelligent enough to know that, but not honest enough to tell the country.

Mr. Chris Smith: The hon. Gentleman is speaking a great deal of economic nonsense. He said that a stable set of exchange rates encourages speculation, which was the point about which I was registering surprise. Quite the reverse is true.

Mr. Marshall: The hon. Gentleman has confirmed that what I said is correct. If one has a so-called fixed rate the risk in speculation is almost negligible, whereas the opportunities for profit out of such speculation may be substantial.

The hon. Gentleman should consider what happened in 1967 prior to the devaluation undertaken by Lord Callaghan. There was a great deal of speculation against sterling because the speculators knew that the risks they ran were almost negligible but that substantial profits could be gained. The same would happen under the ERM. If we joined that mechanism and followed the policies advocated by the hon. Gentleman, one could guarantee that the speculators would make a bomb against the pound.

We are being asked to join the ERM as though it were an easy option. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) has led us to believe that it would lead to lower inflation, lower interest rates and faster economic growth. That would happen only if we pursued the correct economic policies. If we did that we would secure those objectives without joining the ERM. To present the ERM as a panacea is a dangerous philosophy. Too often, we have thought that we could adopt a panacea and forget about the need to pursue correct economic policies. We all remember the days when indicative economic planning was the great panacea, but all it produced was disaster. We remember when we were told that the prices and incomes policy would solve all our problems, but it merely magnified them.

If we were to join the ERM and follow the spending policies of the Labour party we would suffer a devaluation in a short time. President Mitterrand had to devalue the franc five times within two years and I believe that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East would be equally successful. Historically, we have seen the danger of subordinating monetary policy to exchange rate policy. If we joined the ERM the difficulites resulting from the 1988 policies would be magnified many times over.

We are told that if we joined the ERM somehow or other our growth rate would accelerate, but let us consider the growth rate of Britain in the 1980s. During that time, it was greater than that of Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands and the other member states. Surely that demonstrates how false it is to say that if we join the ERM that will guarantee us faster economic growth. Why, if that is the case, did we manage to grow more quickly than West Germany or France, which were within the ERM, when we were outside it?

Mr. Sedgemore: Under a Labour Government.

Mr. Marshall: The hon. Gentleman makes the shrewd observation that we had faster economic growth in the 1980s than socialist France and West Germany because of the Government. I congratulate him on that far-sighted intervention. He has left the Bennite group to join the new model Labour party. Soon he will leave that to join the Conservatives. We look forward to his imminent conversion.

We are told by some who support our joining the ERM that somehow it would automatically lead to lower interest rates. Those who hold that philosophy should examine the experience of Spain. Since joining the ERM, there has been in that country, according to one commentator:

"a generally rising trend in short-term interest rates."

In other words, far from leading to lower interest rates, Spain's membership of the ERM has led to higher rates. So I warn those populist optimists who say, "If we join the ERM all our economic problems will disappear," to examine the records of other countries that have been within the mechanism and have found that without the right economic policies, there are high rates of inflation, high rates of interest, speculation against one's currency and devaluation.

To suggest that joining the ERM would be a guarantee of currency stability is naive in the extreme. In the foreign exchange markets one cannot buck the market for long. One may do so for a limited period but not for long, and it is misleading for the Labour party to suggest that joining the ERM would somehow enable us to afford Labour's expensive policies.

One must also examine the competitive position of British industry relative to industry in other countries. Were we to join the ERM now, with the current exchange rate situation, extreme pressure would be placed on some of our exporting industries. Relative costs between German and British industry in the last two years are not necessarily fully reflected in the exchange rate today between the deutschmark and the pound. To join now, with current exchange rates, could represent the same mistake as was made in 1926, when we rejoined the gold standard at the wrong rate of exchange.

Mr. Sedgemore: That was under Churchill.

Mr. Marshall: Even the great Churchill made the odd mistake. Were we to make the same mistake, unemployment would go up and our exporting industries would suffer.

Many people outside the United Kingdom who ask us to join do so not because of the alleged economic advantages of joining the ERM but because it is an act of political symbolism. But we have no need to indulge in such an act to show our commitment to the European Community. The use by the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch of the phrase "shrivelled and isolationist" in his motion is offensive and inaccurate. Since 1979, the British Government have taken the lead in the European Community in many of the changes that have taken place.

In 1979 the Prime Minister started the campaign to secure an element of fairness in the European budget. Did she have any support from the Labour party? She received criticism and was told that she was looking at the affairs of Europe as if she were a housewife, not a Prime Minister. But as a result of her approach to the European

Community the budget is fair and this country has received substantial refunds from the European Community.

One of the earliest speeches I made in the European Parliament related to the common agricultural policy. Someone came up to me at the end and said, "You must not say things like that. This is one of our common policies and you must not be critical of it." I replied that I criticised it because I thought that it was indefensible.

The cut in milk output occurred not because of the altruistic benevolence of the French or Germans, or because of the foresight of the Irish, but because of the determination of the British Government and Prime Minister. There has been a cut in the excessive production of cereals. No one can say that the cut occurred because the cereal farmers of the continent lobbied their farm Ministers and told them to cut the surpluses because they found them repugnant. The only reason those surpluses are being cut and we have enjoyed a sensible reform of the common agricultural policy is because of the leadership of this country and successive British Agriculture Ministers and the Prime Minister's determination. That is not being "shrivelled and isolationist".

The reform of the common agricultural policy was essential for the future of Europe. We heard from the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury about the need for a greater regional policy. Until we reformed the common agricultural policy, there was no scope for greater regional or social policy. or greater expenditure on any of those desirable objectives. The common agricultural policy was simply eating up so much of the budget that no other policies could be usefully expanded. That great change is the result of the Prime Minister's determination. That was not a "shrivelled and isolationist" approach, but the approach of a Government and Prime Minister committed to the future development of the European Community.

The most exciting development in the European Community at present is the 1992 programme. Which Government and which Prime Minister made it an essential policy objective to ensure that the treaty of Rome became a reality? Were the German Government determined to ensure that German brewers faced competition? Did the German Government say that they must allow competition with the German insurance industry? Of course not. Once again, constant pressure from the British Government ensured that the 1992 programme became a reality. The Prime Minister's wisdom and foresight ensured that that was a major policy issue and that Lord Cockfield was the Commissioner in charge of starting that programme.

Our pressure for the liberalisation of the transport industry made a reality of the European idea that individuals should travel throughout Europe at more reasonable fares. All the pressure to make the transport industry of Europe more realistic, liberal and European has come from the British Government rather than the Governments of France or Italy. The desire to make the European air industry more competitive has come from British Airways rather than the overmanned and overpaid staff of Alitalia and Air France. Some of our colleagues in the European Community are terribly strong on rhetoric, but we in the United Kingdom have recognised the truth of Sir Walter Scott's phrase that

"Fine words butter no parsnips."

We have adopted the old stock exchange adage, "Dictum meum pactum", which I shall define for those who received a comprehensive education, as meaning my word is my bond. When the British Government make a commitment within the European Community, they enter into that commitment with the intention of keeping it. Some of our European partners use very fine rhetoric, but when they are asked to keep a particular commitment they are not so European. We saw over the BSE issue how European the Germans and the Italians were. They were not concerned for a moment about the health of their fellow citizens; they were concerned only with sheer, naked, nationalistic protectionism. They were merely concerned to protect their own farmers.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Orders of the Day

SEXUAL OFFENCES BILL

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question —[11 May]—That the Bill be now read the Third time.

Hon. Members Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Debate to be resumed what day?

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): Never.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No day named.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Was it the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone), the founder of the GLC women's committee, who objected—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL (ROAD TRANSPORT) BILL

Order for consideration, as amended, read.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Consideration what day?

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): Now, Sir, on the instructions of the hon. Member in charge of the Bill.

Hon. Members: Object.
To be considered on Friday 22 June.

SAFEGUARDS FOR RESIDENTS IN REGISTERED HOMES BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.
Second Reading deferred till Friday 6 July.

ADOPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object
Second Reading deferred till Friday 6 July.

DOGS BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.
Second Reading deferred till Friday 6 July.

PRIVATE SECURITY (REGISTRATION) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object
Second Reading deferred till Friday 6 July.

RAOUL WALLENBERG (MEMORIAL) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.
Second Reading deferred till Friday 22 June.

HARE COURSING (ABOLITION) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Second Reading what day? No day named.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. May I point out for the official record that it was the hon. Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) who objected to the Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill?

CHLOROFLUOROCARBONS (CONTROL) BILL [*Lords*]

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.
Second Reading deferred till Friday 22 June.

Sixth Form Education (Wickford)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

2.32 pm

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): I have a very sorry tale to tell about the fate of two good secondary schools —one in Wickford in my constituency and one in Basildon. I am pleased to see that my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) is here to support me. It is a tale that exposes some fundamental flaws in the new education legislation as well as a great deal of what is wrong with local government nowadays. It is a nightmarish web of red tape and duplicity, in which the wishes of parents, democratically expressed, were completely ignored by Essex county council.

The story is rooted in the poor academic standards of the secondary schools in Basildon and Essex council's decision to open a tertiary college there to try to improve the standards of tertiary education. In order to justify the expenditure of about £12 million, the council had to look around for more students from further afield to justify opening that college. It lit upon two schools in my constituency—Bromford school and Beauchamps school. Those two schools had flourishing sixth forms, one with almost 100 pupils, and between them they offered more than 30 subjects. They were told that they were likely to be drafted into the new tertiary college. The parents were furious, a petition was raised and 2,500 parents wrote or signed the petition begging the authority and the Government not to close the sixth forms. They could have saved themselves the bother because Essex county council went ahead with the college, even though many of the parents did not want the college to open or at least they did not want their sixth forms to be sacrificed to its creation.

The Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, my hon. Friend the Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth), who is extremely perspicacious, agreed with us that those schools had an excellent case for keeping their sixth forms. He wrote to us saying that he was minded to allow the sixth forms to remain. For whatever reason, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science overruled that inclination and decided that the tertiary college should go ahead and that the sixth forms should be closed. My hon. Friend the Member for Basildon and I were bemused by that decision and have never been given a satisfactory explanation.

Many disgruntled parents in my constituency are asking why a Conservative Government, a Conservative Member of Parliament and Conservative-controlled Essex county council cannot deliver what the Government promised them—parental choice about the education of their children. They are infuriated by the decision and have looked at alternatives to see what they can do. They contemplated opting out of the control of Essex county council because the council is clearly not listening to what they want. They considered going for grant-maintained status, and that reveals the first flaw in the Education Act. A school that goes for grant-maintained status has to remain the same for five years after being allowed to opt out of the system. That seems patently absurd because even if my schools adopted that course, they would not be able to retain their sixth forms and that is the whole point of the exercise.

The teacher body in my two schools is not greatly in favour of grant-maintained status. It would do nothing to assist the parents in going for that status even though the teachers regret losing the sixth forms—my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon has a happier story to tell and will have an opportunity to tell it. That revealed another problem, because if parents want to adopt a certain course to which teachers and the head teacher and possibly the governing body are opposed, the parents will have all that authority resisting them. That is exactly what happened in my constituency.

It is difficult for parents with no resources to organise letters and to communicate with perhaps 700 or 800 homes, to ask whether 20 per cent. of the parents will agree to ask for a ballot on grant-maintained status. It is the parents versus authority. The experience of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon has taught me that the local education authority, the unions and Essex county council will write to those parents and urge them not to take that course of action. The parents are completely bewildered and do not know whether what they are proposing is right or wrong. One or two keen parents have the difficult task of organising the ballot.

The second matter to which I should like to draw the attention of the House and which arises from our sorry experience is that there is no point in giving parents democratic rights without the means to exercise them. The Government should seriously consider putting money into an organisation. One such organisation exists—Choice in Education, which was previously called the Grant-Maintained Schools Trust. Such organisations help parents who want to go down the path of grant-maintained status. I approve of that path and think it an excellent idea.

The Prime Minister often talks about grant-maintained status as "independent state schools", but what price independence if one is not free to adopt the type of school that one wants, which means keeping the sixth form, or making other decisions about the future of the school? Therefore, the second thing that I want from the Minister is his assurance that he will consider putting resources behind organisations that help parents, because that help is essential when their will is opposed by the head and the teaching body of a school.

The third factor that has emerged from this unhappy experience is that one of the heads said to me, "We quite like the idea of grant-maintained status, but, quite honestly, it is a lot of work for us. What is in it for us? What are the incentives for us to assist the parents in such circumstances?" My hon. Friend the Minister should seriously consider bringing out literature, or even introducing new incentives, which make it clear to the people who are running the school that there are terrific advantages to grant-maintained status. Even though in this case the schools cannot in the short term retain their sixth forms, such help would mean that there is still the hope that, if they go along that path, at a later stage parents will have the schools that they want. It is no good giving people democratic rights if they are not also given the wherewithal to exercise those rights.

Sadly, the wheels of bureaucracy having ground on and consent for the tertiary college having been given, it will be built but the students in Wickford will not be at it. For historical reasons, Wickford hates Basildon. Its residents are always petitioning for separate district council status. Between Wickford and Basildon there is a barrier that is,

[Mrs. Teresa Gorman]

for those in Wickford, as high as the Himalayas. A major road, the A127, which has dual carriageway on both sides, which is about to be widened into a three-lane motorway, and which has enormous amounts of traffic flowing from Southend to London all day and every day, divides the two. There are no trains or buses to link the two sides. If young people are to go to the tertiary school in Basildon, transport must be laid on for them. However, they will not make the journey and that college will be an expensive white elephant costing £12 million, but having only a tiny handful of children from the Basildon area. The pupils in my area will go down towards Southend and use the tertiary college there. They may go west and east to colleges at Chelmsford, Rayleigh and Brentwood. They may go to other schools with sixth forms in Billericay itself.

Already, the rot has set in for those two previously good schools. Parents are not choosing to send their children to those schools because there will be no sixth form by the time their children reach that stage, so they are opting for neighbouring schools. Parents whose children are coming up to sixth form age do not want their children to go into a sixth form that will be in decline as older children leave, so they are looking for new schools. The destruction of two good schools with viable sixth forms and an excellent range of subjects is occurring because of a bureaucratic decision of Essex county council that has not been overruled by the Secretary of State.

That is not what the Conservative Administration is about. We won three elections by pledging to people that we would give them freedom from bureaucracy, from having their wishes ignored and from being dictated to by local councils and education departments. Essex council's action overrides those policies; it would be better placed in the 1970s, when the Labour party was in power and such treatment of individuals' wishes was taken for granted. Conservative Members do not think like that.

I cannot understand the attitude of Essex county council; having said that, however, I ask the Government to re-examine the legislation that has allowed those unhappy circumstances to come about, and to give some hope, if not to my students in Wickford, at least to other schools that might decide to opt for grant-maintained status.

Mr. David Amess (Basildon) *rose——*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Has the hon. Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) the leave of the Minister and the hon. Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) to speak? I see that he has.

2.46 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) on securing the Adjournment debate. I also congratulate her on the tenacity that she demonstrated so clearly in putting the case of children attending the school in Wickford in her constituency, and that of their parents.

I agree with the general thrust of the arguments that my hon. Friend deployed so skilfully. I would take issue only with what she said, on behalf of the people of Wickford, about my constituency. It will not come as a surprise to the House when I say that I love Basildon: I live there, and our children are educated at the excellent local primary school, St. Anne Line. We are currently running a campaign called "I love Basildon". It is a fine town, and we are proud of our achievements there.

None the less, I understand the feelings of my hon. Friend's constituents about how they are treated by the local authority. In the seven years that I have been the hon. Member for Basildon I have been privileged to see educational standards in my constituency rise; I am sure that my hon. Friend will join me in paying a warm tribute to teachers and parents, and to the general commitment of local people to the standards of education that we have enjoyed. However, the reorganisation of sixth forms in my area—and that of my hon. Friend—has not run smoothly.

I am blessed to have in my constituency some excellent secondary schools: Barnstable, Fryerns, Nicholas Laindon and the Catholic school of St. Anselm, which is funded partly by the local education authority. I pay tribute to them all. I come from an era when people preferred schools to retain their sixth forms, but I appreciate that, because of the increase in numbers and for reasons of choice concerning the syllabus, there is a demand for a sixth form college to be included in Basildon college of further education. However, when the reorganisation of sixth forms was discussed, we were—as my hon. Friend said—disappointed and confused by the eventual decision.

The governors at Chalvedon school decided to seek grant-maintained status. Grant-maintained schools are excellent for many reasons. I am in favour of choice, and I believe that we should listen to what parents want from education. We knew that the Labour party would be against grant-maintained schools; indeed its representatives delivered leaflets to that effect through the doors of local houses. However, it was a shock to my hon. Friend and me when Essex county council—prior to the first ballot—delivered a letter to every parent with children at Chalvedon school. It said:

> "The LEA does not want its schools to opt out—we believe there are good reasons for staying within the support and structure of a large LEA like Essex."

There should be no duplicity. Conservative-controlled Essex county council—it has been Conservative-controlled only since last May—says clearly that it is against grant-maintained status. I am as shocked as my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay by that statement. Only 36 per cent. of the parents voted in the first ballot, which narrowly went against grant-maintained status. I am proud, however, to be able to say that the second ballot went the other way: 56 per cent. of parents voted in that ballot and the majority, albeit small, was in favour of Chalvedon school being considered for grant-maintained status. I look forward to hearing the Minister's response.

2.50 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Alan Howarth): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) on her persistence in pursuing a cause in which she believes so strongly. She has already written to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science about the issue on a number of occasions and has pursued her campaign with characteristic energy and bravura.

I congratulate also my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) on the eloquence and determination with which he, too, has sought to uphold his constituents'

interests. He has represented with great determination the interests and concerns of both Chalvedon school and Barstable school. I pay full tribute to him for the work that he has done on behalf of his constituents. I was pleased to see that he offered an olive branch to my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay. Let us hope that today marks an improvement in the relations between the communities of Wickford and Basildon, with their two Members of Parliament fighting shoulder to shoulder.

I, too, am a very strong believer in parental choice in education. That is what the Education Reform Act 1988 is all about. The Act extends parental choice by providing for more open enrolment, which increases the ability of parents to send their children to schools of their choice; city technology colleges—new beacons of excellence; and grant-maintained schools which enable parents to take their school out of the control of a local education authority and run it entirely themselves.

I note in passing that Chalvedon school has decided to exercise the option to apply for grant-maintained status. I welcome the fact that parents with children at Chalvedon school have chosen to exercise their democratic right to vote in a ballot on the future of the school. It would have been open to Beauchamps school to exercise that right at any stage before or after the final decision was made on Essex's proposals. It chose not to do so.

Good education requires however, not just that we provide parents with a range of options. We must do all that we can to ensure that the options on offer are the best possible options.

The exercise of those choices is made within a framework of local accountability and control. We have a 100-year tradition of local education authorities, democratically elected. It is they who are responsible—and accountable to their electorate—for the organisation of schools. It is not for my right hon. Friend to direct authorities in those matters. Local education authorities, as befits locally accountable, democratically elected bodies, make proposals to my right hon. Friend, on which he decides.

Thus, it is not for me, as a Minister, to say what pattern of education should be provided in Basildon and Wickford. It was rightly up to Essex local education authority—with a Conservative majority—to make proposals. It has been concerned for some time about the relatively low post-16 staying on rate in the Basildon and Wickford area. In recent years, the largest sixth forms in the area have contained no more than about 80 pupils on average, and many have tended to drop out without taking A-level examinations. By way of example, only 25 pupils sat A-levels last year at Beauchamps school in Wickford. Inevitably, small sixth forms limit choices for pupils. That militates against wider educational choices for pupils and parents alike.

We are all rightly concerned to encourage more pupils to remain in education after the age of 16. If we are to compete with our EC neighbours after 1992, and if we are to make the most of the technological opportunities that will be open to us in the years ahead, clearly we will need a well-educated work force. I do not believe there is any disagreement about that. In the Basildon and Wickford area there is an added incentive for pupils to stay on. Not far away, on a direct line into London, is the London Docklands development area, and the opportunities there for youngsters from Basildon and Wickford will be particularly attractive if they have shown, by their achievements at school or college, that they are likely to be able to cope with the new challenges that are emerging there.

Essex therefore considered alternative forms of sixth-form provision, with a view not only to persuading more pupils to stay on, but to providing parents and pupils with a considerably wider range of options, including the less academic and more vocationally oriented courses. It was also particularly concerned, as it always ought to be, to make the best use of the available resources, whether in the form of school buildings or teachers.

Essex looked at what had happened in other areas, such as Harlow, engaged in all the required processes of consultation, and eventually proposed that the school sixth forms in the Basildon and Wickford area should be replaced by a new tertiary college, to be located in the existing college of further education in Basildon. In doing so, it decided to leave untouched the thriving sixth forms in the neighbouring Billericay secondary schools.

Clearly, though the schools in Basildon and Wickford had done their best to provide a good sixth-form education for their pupils—I am thinking in particular of Barstable, Chalvedon and Beauchamps—they had only limited success in persuading pupils to stay on in sufficient numbers. The small size in the resulting sixth forms necessarily limits the range of options that can be provided, in a way that puts children at a disadvantage in facing the demands of a modern technological society.

My hon. Friends argued that it would have been possible to retain sixth forms at Beauchamps and Chalvedon schools, and still establish a tertiary college. I confess that my right hon. Friend and I were attracted to the same idea when we first considered the proposals, but after we had consulted the Essex LEA further, as we were required to do under the terms of the Education Act 1980, and looked more closely at the additional data that it provided, we were persuaded that retention of the sixth forms at two of the schools involved would not have been desirable

Fragmenting sixth-form provision in an area in which the total number of sixth formers is currently not much more than 400 would clearly not have made best use of the resources available. Teachers at the schools and the college would frequently have had to deal with very small groups of pupils, and the total number of options available would inevitably have been limited—as would the facilities for any new, less academic courses.

We were impressed by the increased staying-on rate that followed the establishment of a tertiary college in Harlow and of a sixth form college in Colchester in the same county. And we had to bear in mind that a major reason for establishing a tertiary college in the first place was to create a focal point to attract pupils who have traditionally seen themselves as adults at 16—happy, perhaps, to attend college but not to stay on with the kids at school. At a total estimated capital cost of £491,000 —much less than half the price of a small primary school —the tertiary college proposal also represented particularly good value for money.

Finally, and very important, we were assured by Essex that places would still be available for pupils who wished to complete their school education at schools in Billericay, Brentwood and Southend—all of which are within manageable reach of Basildon and Wickford. My right hon. Friend and I would not have approved a scheme unless we were satisfied on that point.

[Mr. Alan Howarth]

Whenever major changes in educational provision are proposed, it is natural that some will be in favour and others against. It is also natural, and indeed desirable—it is a strength of our democratic system of government—that those who are opposed to a line of action should seek to oppose it by whatever lawful means are available to them.

Mrs. Gorman: Will my hon. Friend give way on that point?

Mr. Howarth: If my hon. Friend will excuse me, I have little time and should like to get through what I have to say.

The opponents of Essex's proposals in Basildon and Wickford have been splendidly served by my hon. Friends the Members for Billericay and for Basildon. I gladly pay tribute to their tenacity and hard work on behalf of their constituents, but I must remind them of the limits of the powers that my right hon. Friend and I have in these matters. As I said earlier, it is not for us to substitute our judgment for that of the democratically elected local education authority. It is outside my right hon. Friend's legal powers—I ask my hon. Friends to understand this—to make substantial changes to proposals submitted by an authority. The options open to us, therefore, were either entirely to reject Essex's proposals, proposals that had the support of many of those affected and had been approved by an education committee in which members of our party were the majority, or to approve them as they stood.

I hope that my hon. Friends and the constituents whom they represent will, now that the decision has been made, and in the true spirit of democracy, do their best to ensure that the new tertiary college is given every chance to succeed. With the right parental encouragement, I have no doubt that the 16 to 18-year-olds of Wickford and Basildon will take full advantage of the many new opportunities that the college will offer.

My hon. Friend the Member for Billericay criticised Essex county council for seeking to influence parents not to exercise their right of choice to hold a ballot on the future of Wickford school. It is for local education authorities to ensure that they do not infringe the terms of the code of recommended practice on local authority publicity. We have repeatedly said that local education authorities should not attempt to obstruct the opportunity provided in statute for parents to ballot on whether they want their school to seek grant-maintained status, and I deplore any attempt by LEAs to dissuade or frustrate parents from exercising their democratic right to vote in such a ballot and so exercise a full measure of control over its affairs.

My hon. Friend also said that we should give more support for parents and schools that want to become grant maintained. We provide booklets which are widely available. The one entitled "Grant-Maintained Status: Questions Parents Ask" is proving popular and has already been reprinted. We have published a factual booklet for governors entitled "How to become a Grant-Maintained School", which is in its second edition. Copies of those booklets have been sent to all schools in England elibible to apply for grant-maintained status and further copies are available on demand so that more people will become aware of the magnificent opportunity that grant-maintained status provides for schools to control their education policy and finances.

The motion having been made after half-past Two o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at two minutes past Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 18 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

Local Management of Schools

1. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of education spending has been held back from local management of schools by each local education authority in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Speaker: I call Sir Wyn Roberts.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Sir Wyn Roberts): I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your felicitious greeting and I thank the House for its generous approbation.

The average figure is around 33 per cent. I will circulate the figures for each local education authority in the *Official Report*, and I will place a copy in the Library of the House.

Mr. Jones: I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister, the most Welsh of all Welsh hon. Members, on a richly deserved honour that is warmly welcomed throughout Wales.

I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that 33 per cent. is too high. What steps will he take to urge all councils to follow the example of my local council in trying to ensure that as much money as possible makes its way to schools? What assurance can parents obtain that their own local schools will have a fair crack of the whip, bearing in mind that major repairs and capital works are still excluded from LMS schemes?

Sir Wyn Roberts: My hon. Friend is quite right. Of course, about 10 per cent. is allowed to be held centrally under LMS schemes as submitted to us, but that leaves a considerable amount at the discretion of local authorities. On average, authorities have held back about 22·5 per cent., but that masks a wide variation from 17 to 27·5 per cent. Certainly, as LMS schemes proceed, I should expect to see a rapid reduction in the proportion of resources retained centrally. I am sure that governors, headmasters and so on will be looking forward to seeing LMS statements produced by local authorities which show just where the money is going.

Mr. Livsey: Does the Minister accept that in rural Wales, particularly in Powys, formula funding is beginning to cause extreme hardship to village schools and that some may close as a result? Will he review the situation so that more resources are made available for the funding of village schools under LMS schemes?

Sir Wyn Roberts: The totality of resources available for education has not been reduced at all under LMS schemes. Through LMS schemes, we have tried to ensure that as much of the money as possible is spent directly at the chalk face. With regard to small schools, about which the hon. Gentleman is concerned, a factor called the small schools protection factor could have been built in, and I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman's local authority would take such a factor into its scheme.

Following is the information:

	Percentage of general schools budget retained by LEA
Clwyd	35·84
Dyfed	38·57
Gwent	32·04
Gwynedd	34·84
Mid Glamorgan	32·71
Powys	32·58
South Glamorgan	24·81
West Glamorgan	31·77

The details of this information have been extracted from each authority's LMS scheme submission and are not strictly comparable because the information has been supplied using different price bases. Precise figures will be included in the LEAs' first LMS budget statements, which are currently awaited.

Brymbo Steel

2. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to maintain steel making at Brymbo steel.

13. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to secure the maintenance of steel making at Brymbo steel.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. David Hunt): At my request, the Welsh Development Agency has been exploring with United Engineering Steels all the possible options for the future of Brymbo steelworks.

Dr. Marek: I am grateful to the Secretary of State for getting Welsh Development International to market Brymbo steel world wide. He must know that potential bidders may be put off because they may think that United Engineering Steels will want to close the plant rather than allow it to compete. Will he take this opportunity to say that no potential bidder, person or business should fail to show an interest or be prepared to make a bid, no matter what steel business they are in? There must be a possibility, whatever happens, that United Engineering Steels will be prepared to sell Brymbo as a going concern.

Mr. Hunt: I should make it clear that I have asked the Welsh Development Agency to explore all possible options —and I stress the phrase "all possible options". I know of no circumstances in which United Engineering Steels has

said that it would not be prepared to consider a positive and constructive solution for the future of the Brymbo steelworks.

Mr. Martyn Jones: The Secretary of State must be aware that only last week Brymbo steelworks achieved a record tonnage from its melting shop and that the work force are extremely hardworking and concerned about profitability and competition, as they have been for many years. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will take that into account when considering negotiations with UES and that he will also bear in mind that the steelworks is not being closed because it is not competitive or profitable. This is a completely different situation. Will the right hon. Gentleman take that into account?

Mr. Hunt: I readily endorse the hon. Gentleman's remarks about the work force and merely add that the record that was broken last week had been set just the week before. This morning I had the opportunity of inviting in representatives of the work force, who confirmed what the hon. Gentleman has said. I know the Brymbo community and I know that it is a strong and important community in north Wales. I am certainly prepared to do everything possible to help it.

Sir Anthony Meyer: First, may I offer my right hon. Friend the warmest welcome to his new responsibilities? Is he aware that in a very short period he has already established a reputation as one who will fight hard for the interests of Wales—in conflict, if need be, with market forces which might otherwise allow so fine a work force to be disposed of?

Mr. Hunt: I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not go too far down the route that he has opened up for me, save to say that although the ultimate decision about the future of the works must rest with the company, I am determined that the Welsh Development Agency should explore all possible options. Only this morning I received a progress report from its chairman, Dr. Gwyn Jones, who has taken such a personal interest in the project.

Mr. Raffan: I join fellow hon. Members representing the county of Clwyd giving the strongest in support to the Brymbo work force, whose reputation stretches way beyond the constituency of the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek). I am grateful for my right hon. Friend's assurance that all options will be explored and I know that he will take on board the cross-party belief in Brymbo throughout the county. Does my right hon. Friend accept that we are all behind him in every effort that he can make to keep the steelworks open?

Mr. Hunt: If I needed any pressure, I confirm that it has come from all parties. The greatest pressure, however, must be attributed to the community which, as has already been said in these short responses, has established one production record after another and has a reputation for quality. That is why it is receiving such support from all hon. Members.

Mr. Barry Jones: First, I sincerely congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on his appointment to the Cabinet. It is a great achievement and he now heads a fascinating Department of State. I wish him well in all that he seeks to do for the people of Wales. Nevertheless, does he agree with the Bishop of St. Asaph that the company at Brymbo should collaborate in every way in finding a new buyer for a going concern? Does he further agree that it is wrong for an anonymous board of directors far away from loyal, productive Brymbo to have taken a decision which has plunged Brymbo and all its community into uncertainty and dismay?

Finally, is not it a grave comment on our industrial prospects that the superb and excellent steelworks at Brymbo is being hawked around the embassies of the world for a buyer when it is still highly productive and highly profitable? Given the right hon. Gentleman's detachment from the Cabinet's non-interventionist, market-forces stance, and his assurance that he will help, we now call on him for a supreme effort to help the Brymbo steelworks.

Mr. Hunt: First, I thank the hon. Member for Ayln and Deeside (Mr. Jones), as I thank my hon. Friends the Members for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) and for Delyn (Mr. Raffan), for their warm welcome to me at the Dispatch Box. I regard becoming Secretary of State for Wales as the greatest honour that can be achieved in the House, bar one—*[Interruption.]* I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for reminding me that that one is your own.

I met the Bishop of St. Asaph in north Wales last week, when he made the point just made by the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside. I accepted the validity of it then, as I do now. We shall not make much progress by castigating the company. I met representatives of the company two days after the initial announcement, when they readily responded to my request to make their books and financial information available to the Welsh Development Agency. I know of no circumstances in which the company has said that it would be at all unreasonable about the eventual solution.

Employment Training

3. **Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to maintain employment training in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Employment training in the future will be delivered by the employer-led training and enterprise councils. I am confident that they will provide a first-class service tailored to local needs.

Mr. Coleman: On behalf of my Opposition colleagues, I offer congratulations to the hon. Gentleman on his honour. He must know that, above the party battle, he enjoys much affection from all hon. Members.

In view of the proposed closures of the Blaenant colliery and the Brymbo steelworks, will there be special training programmes to meet the requirements of those who cannot be accommodated within their existing industries? Are there likely to be special training facilities available in Neath and Brymbo to deal with the problems that will arise in relation to young people for whom the industrial disasters in Wales will create difficult employment problems?

Sir Wyn Roberts: I am well aware that the closure of Blaenant colliery led to 580 redundancies. I am glad to say that, as we have designated that district as an area of large-scale redundancy, this means that there will be immediate entry to the employment training programme for those involved. The programmes's capacity to cope with the numbers involved will depend on the number of

applicants from among the coalminers, but we are monitoring the position carefully through the Training Agency. It is a little premature to talk of such designation in relation to Brymbo.

Mr. Ray Powell: Is the Minister of State aware that the new programme has reduced the number of places in Mid Glamorgan by 538? Is he also aware that when the community programme was thrown out there were 300 redundancies on Community Action Training Ogwr alone of which I am chairman in Mid Glamorgan? Is he also aware that the underfunding will mean that a number of training agencies will close their books, thus pushing trainers and trainees back on to the dole queue? Is it not time for some stability in the training programme so that trainers can plan their programmes?

Sir Wyn Roberts: I am aware of the hon. Gentleman's connection with the community training organisation at Ogwr. I am happy that at least all the employment training providers in Mid Glamorgan have re-contracted. I know that CATO did not get all the 250 places that it asked for. It received 217 places, however, which partly reflects the fall in the occupancy rate from 292 to 220 by 9 May this year.

Mr. Barry Jones: Bearing in mind 1992 and the opening of the channel tunnel, and the ferocious competition to which Wales and Britain will be subjected in the years immediately ahead, does the Minister agree that we need more investment in training? I emphasise the localities of Blaenant, Swansea, Kidwelly, Hirwaun and Brymbo and the problems associated with the loss of 2,000 jobs. We do not want any complacency. Why has the Minister of State accepted a £2·5 million, 7·5 per cent. cut in employment training?

Sir Wyn Roberts: The hon. Gentleman must not seek to outdo me in stressing the importance of training. I fully agree with what he has said—we have always placed it in the forefront and given it the very highest priority. This year there is a total budget of £144,324,000 for spending through the Training Agency in Wales. That is a little less than last year, but the agency underspent last year. The employment situation has improved and employment prospects are good, despite the small increase in unemployment last month.

Training is all-important, and we have been highly successful in setting up training and enterprise councils throughout Wales. All are in the development stage and we trust that they will all be up and running before the end of the year.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are making rather slow progress. I ask for brief questions, and then perhaps we shall have briefer answers.

Beef

4. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had concerning the beef industry within Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I have received a number of representations on a variety of issues concerning the beef industry, including BSE.

Mr. Davies: In his new capacity as agriculture Minister for Wales, has the right hon. Gentleman given consideration to the financial impact of BSE and the new European settlement on Welsh farmers? Does he agree that it is particularly unfortunate that they should be hit, since, by and large, they were not responsible for the outbreak of the disease? They certainly were not consulted on the negotiations in Brussels, and they have completely rejected the negotiated settlement.

Will the right hon. Gentleman answer two specific questions—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. One question please; then we can get on.

Mr. Davies: In the event of a sustained and substantial fall in prices of cull cows, will the Secretary of State consider introducing some compensatory mechanism? In as much as there is a direct link between the specialist suckler herds and the dairy herds which are infected by BSE, how will he ensure that exports of the former are not affected by the ban on dairy cattle exports?

Mr. Hunt: I welcome the opportunity to make it absolutely clear, not just to the people of Wales but to the people of the United Kingdom, that there is no risk to public health from eating British beef. I had hoped that the hon. Gentleman would also make that absolutely clear.

Intervention procedures are flexible and will meet the situation as and when it arises, as they have already done under the intervention arrangements.

Investment (West Wales)

5. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the opportunities for inward investment to west Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I understand that Dyfed and West Glamorgan have already secured 29 projects involving £106 million worth of inward investment. I have no reason to believe that west Wales will not continue to build on the very satisfactory level that has been achieved.

Mr. Bennett: I welcome my right hon. Friend to his new post. We were delighted to see him in Pembrokeshire last month when he opened the Pembrokeshire college. He will be aware from discussions on that occasion how important it is to bring inward investment to west Wales, where unemployment rates are higher than in the rest of Wales. Does he agree that the Welsh Office could do more by encouraging trade with Portugal, Spain and Ireland, which would certainly help that part of the country?

Mr. Hunt: I welcome the opportunity given to me by my hon. Friend of securing discussions with his local authority on the need to promote that part of Wales more actively. I should like to hear more specific proposals about the counties that he mentioned. Dyfed and West Glamorgan have certainly done extremely well in substantially increasing the amount of inward investment compared with last year.

Mr. Denzil Davies: Does the Secretary of State agree that while inward investment is important, protecting existing investment is probably more important? Will he assure the House that the Welsh Office and the Welsh Development Agency will commit their resources fully to trying to preserve, and to find a buyer for, the optical

factory in Kidwelly which employed 200 people and which has been closed? That factory produced 40 per cent. of the United Kingdom's lenses. Will the right hon. Gentleman and his Department do everything that they can to find a buyer for the factory?

Mr Hunt: The right hon. Gentleman has already been in touch with me and my office about the specific case that he mentions and I will readily respond to the various suggestions that he has made. I have asked for a full report on the latest position. In reply to the right hon. Gentleman's first point, I should make it clear that just as the creation of new jobs is important, so is the safeguarding of existing jobs.

Gwent Wetlands

6. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he will be taking to prevent flooding on the Gwent wetlands.

Sir Wyn Roberts: This is the responsibility of the National Rivers Authority and I understand that the matter is being given due consideration.

Mr. Flynn: Does the Minister realise that on the same day as the terrible floods at Towyn there was serious flooding in my constituency at Peterstone and St. Bride's where the sea overtopped the sea wall, and at Caerleon and Newport? In view of the certainty of global warming raising sea levels, and because the area has many fine homes and new high technology enterprises, will he guarantee that in the future the area will be fully protected by new flood defences?

Sir Wyn Roberts: I am well aware of the public concern and I think that the hon. Gentleman knows that the National Rivers Authority is carrying out emergency repairs in the area. The Department has already indicated that grant aid will be available. The Department also recently met the authority to discuss further proposed improvement to the existing defences of the Gwent wetlands. As I am sure that the hon. Gentleman knows, in the light of the development that has taken place in that area the National Rivers Authority has recommended that the relevant local planning authorities should jointly promote a study of the adequacy of existing defences.

South Glamorgan Health Authority

7. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the chairman of the South Glamorgan health authority to discuss health provision in the area.

Mr. David Hunt: I look forward to meeting the chairman of South Glamorgan health authority on 10 July.

Mr. Morgan: I add my congratulations to the Minister of State on the signal honour that he has received from the Prime Minister, which is normally reserved for Ministers retiring to the Back Benches. Perhaps there is a moral there somewhere of the "didn't she know" or "how could she tell" variety as Dorothy Parker said of President Coolidge.

When the Secretary of State meets the chairman of South Glamorgan health authority, will he say what advice he is giving to health authorities in preparation for April 1991 in relation to hospitals where a large proportion of current patient flow comes from outside their own county health authority area so that authorities know how on earth they are to budget for the 50 per cent. of patients from outside the county? The current instructions and guidelines on closure proposals are exactly the same as they were before, but the conditions have completely changed.

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman's health authority is adequately resourced for the present situation. The amount on revenue is up by 7·2 per cent. and the amount on capital is up by 122 per cent. In future, these will form part of the discussions in the usual way.

I regret that the hon. Gentleman introduced a sour note in his welcome to my hon. Friend the Minister of State. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to have a good working relationship with the Secretary of State, he should review his last letter—about which I read in the *Western Mail* before I received it.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: There was an excellent initiative launched in South Glamorgan this morning about the use of donor cards to promote more organ and blood donors. May I urge my right hon. Friend and all Welsh Members to meet representatives of the Kidney Research Unit for Wales Foundation and the blood transfusion service outside the House later to promote their excellent endeavours further?

Mr. Hunt: I have a letter from my hon. Friend, who I understand is the vice-president of the Kidney Research Unit for Wales Foundation. I am happy that the Welsh Office has been able to support the foundation. I shall be joining hon. Members from both sides of the House on College green after Question Time to promote this worthy cause.

Mr. Michael: I welcome the Secretary of State to his new office and I welcome also his latter remark. Will he ask his officials to brief him properly on the finances of South Glamorgan health authority? He will find that there is a shortfall of either £4 million or £7·2 million, depending on which view one takes, in the financial resources of the authority.

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in addition to that and the tremendous planning problems that the authority faces, the staggered start to Project 2000 is proving devastating to the morale, training and recruitment of nurses in South Glamorgan? As people have worked so hard to meet the deadline of 1991, which was promised by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor, is not it essential that it be restored? Would not he get his incumbency of the Welsh Office off to a good start by restoring the start date for South Glamorgan, Mid Glamorgan and Gwent?

Mr. Hunt: I have the correct figures. As I understand it, South Glamorgan's revenue provision is £188·2 million, which is up £12·7 million. I calculate that to be a 7·2 per cent. increase. It is—*[Interruption.]* I was told that my figures were incorrect, but I believe that they are correct. The capital provision is £7·9 million, which is up 122 per cent. I ask the hon. Gentleman to do his homework. There is a later question on Project 2000. It will be implemented in accordance with the amount of revenue provision that is available, the financial circumstances and the ability to introduce it properly and effectively.

If we are to have a good working relationship, I do not want to find falling into my hands letters from the

National Union of Public Employees instructing the hon. Gentleman to send certain letters. I shall make the letter available to him so that he can show that he is not a puppet on a NUPE string.

Ozone

8. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will establish an effective monitoring system for ground-level ozone in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: As my right hon. Friend told the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) on 24 May, the ozone monitoring network operated by Warren Spring laboratory includes a site in Wales.

Mr. Griffiths: Given the dangers that high ozone levels at ground level can cause, should not the Welsh Office have a monitoring system right across Wales? Elderly people, pregnant women, children under two years of age and people suffering from bronchitis, emphysema and asthma —I am an asthma sufferer—are all at risk. Will the Minister commit himself to ensuring Government and European Community legislation designed to keep down ozone levels, which are highly dangerous to people and to the planet generally?

Sir Wyn Roberts: The hon. Gentleman is wrong. The levels in May 1990 showed a peak of 120 parts per billion at a number of sites, including Aston Hill in Wales, but there is no cause for concern. I assure the hon. Gentleman that levels of 300 parts per billion are not uncommon in Austria and Switzerland. We have a monitoring network of 17 sites in the United Kingdom and we always keep it under review.

Dr. Thomas: A gaf i ychwanegu fy llongyfarchion i'r gweinidog ar ei ddyrchafiad?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is that a parliamentary expression?

Dr. Thomas: It is an extremely felicitous expression of congratulations to the new knight on the Government Front Bench.

The issue of the ozone layer and ozone gases at ground level is important. It is a further example of a greenhouse gas. Will the Minister assure the House that there is an effective monitoring programme throughout Wales? Here we have an opportunity to make a contribution to the international environment.

Sir Wyn Roberts: I have already referred to the 17 monitoring sites in the United Kingdom which is considered an adequate number. They include a site at Aston Hill in Wales. The hon. Gentleman may know that the Welsh Office is currently funding the Institute for Terrestrial Ecology at Bangor in respect of research into the effects of ozone and other pollutants on the health of plant species in Wales.

Community Charge

9. **Mr. Rowlands:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the additional number of local government employees employed to process the community charge in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I have made no such estimate, but I greatly welcome the announcement that the Audit Commission is to undertake a study into the management of charging authorities. I will carefully review the results as they apply to Welsh authorities.

Mr. Rowlands: Ministers are remarkably ignorant about many aspects of the impact of the poll tax. I hope that the review will, among other things, identify the need to relieve the burden on thousands of home owners in terraced houses in our communities, who receive no benefit and do not live in areas where the authorities are overcharging on poll tax, but who nevertheless face bills twice as big as the old rates.

Mr. Hunt: We should look at the ways of improving the community charge, and we are doing that. As to the administration of the community charge, Welsh local authorities have done better than the original provision allowed. I believe that £25 million was allowed against collection costs, but only £19 million has been spent, which is a very good result. As to the future, of course we shall find ways of improving the community charge. Labour is still in utter confusion about its alternative.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is a bit of a cheek for Labour Members to criticise the community charge when it has a different policy every day of the week? One moment they suggest a roof tax, which would be disastrous, and this week they suggest a return to the old unfair rating system. Should not the Opposition keep silent until they decide what they want?

Mr. Hunt: I assure my hon. Friend that whatever may be my responsibilities, I would not begin to countenance a return to the unjust domestic rating system, which I understand Labour Members are considering reintroducing. It was an iniquitous system, but it has gone now—and good riddance to it.

10. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he intends to meet representatives of local authorities in Wales; and whether he will discuss the community charge.

Mr. David Hunt: I met representatives of the Assembly of Welsh Counties and the Council of Welsh Districts in the forum of the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance last week, when the community charge was among the issues raised.

Mr. Murphy: Does not the Secretary of State accept that whatever the Audit Commission does or does not do, the high cost of collecting the poll tax in Wales has now risen to £7 per head? That is a direct result of the lack of resources devoted by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor to local councils in Wales to help cope with the burden of the poll tax. Will the Secretary of State give an assurance that in the current negotiations with local authorities, he will give them enough money to enable them to sort out their problems?

Mr. Hunt: I understand that the hon. Gentleman is known as an expert on such issues. He may be a self-appointed expert, but let that not take anything away from him. The hon. Gentleman could not have been listening when I replied to the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands). A collection cost of £7 per head is considerably below that allowed for in the settlement. An allowance of £25·6 million was made for the cost of collection. As it happens——

Mr. Murphy: Not enough.

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman says that it was not enough. As it happens, local authorities underspent that provision.

Mr. Murphy: No.

Mr. Hunt: Oh yes they have. [Hon Members: "Oh no they haven't."] If the hon. Gentleman will consult his colleagues, he will find that Welsh local authorities spent £19·8 million. He might not think that that is an underspend, but he must be the only right hon. or hon. Member who does not.

Community Councils

11. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh community councils have decided to vote themselves out of existence; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The electors of two communities, Vaynor in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhoose in the Vale of Glamorgan, have voted in favour of dissolving their community councils. Vaynor community council was formally dissolved on 31 May. The Vale of Glamorgan borough council is making arrangements for the formal dissolution of Rhoose community council.

Mr. Carlile: May I add my congratulations to those already given to the hon. Gentleman for his well-deserved knighthood? Does the Minister agree that it is disgraceful that democratically elected councils should vote themselves out of existence? Will he remove the anomaly that enables them to do so, and take steps to ensure that community councils in Wales carry greater democratic responsibilities rather than less?

Sir Wyn Roberts: There is nothing more democratic than the system which provides for community councils in Wales, because the very setting up of such councils is entirely a matter for the electors. Similarly, so is their dissolution. One cannot be more democratic than that. Giving them additional powers—because the powers that they now have run concurrently with those of district councils—was last discussed in 1985, and the local authorities, particularly at district level, were very much against it.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Hilda Murrell

26. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will meet the Director of Public Prosecutions to discuss the case of the late Hilda Murrell.

The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I have no immediate plans to do so. The Director of Public Prosecutions has received a report from the West Mercia police which he has considered with care. He has suggested further lines of inquiry. I do not doubt that he will consult me if he considers it necessary.

Mr. Dalyell: In view of the concerned letter that the Attorney-General has received from Commander Robert Green, Hilda Murrell's nephew, will the Attorney-General clarify the position in relation to David Mackenzie, and what exactly is going to happen next? He says that he is going to talk to the Director of Public Prosecutions, but with what effect?

The Attorney-General: It is not appropriate for me to comment on, and certainly not to name names in connection with, an investigation that is as yet incomplete. As I said, the Director has suggested further lines of inquiry to the police. The hon. Gentleman can be entirely confident that the Director will give the fullest weight to all concerns that properly arise out of the matter.

Mr. Conway: My right hon. and learned Friend will know that the late Miss Murrell was my constituent and I welcome the news that the lines of inquiry are still being pursued. But I am sure that he will agree, and the House will wish to know, that so far not a shred of evidence other than ill-informed rumour has come to light to suggest that the security services were in any way involved in Miss Murrell's demise. Is not it very much to be regretted that her name should continue to be dragged along without any proof coming forward to the authorities from those who continue to use her name for party-political purposes?

The Attorney-General: It is always tempting to get into detail when an investigation is incomplete. All that it is proper for me to say is that the Director is taking the matter seriously. I cannot properly comment on any particular detail of the report, or on whether names are involved. I am sorry not to be able to say more to my hon. Friend, but I must not.

Departmental Select Committee

27. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Attorney-General whether his Department has any plans to submit evidence to the Procedure Committee regarding the establishment of a departmental Select Committee to scrutinise the activities of the Law Officers.

The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): No, Sir. The Law Officers' Department is not one of those which the House thought it right to specify in Standing Order No. 130 and the Select Committee on Procedure has not invited comment on any proposal that it should be so specified.

Mr. Allen: During the past few years the Law Officers have been involved in the fiasco over Peter Wright, the running down of the legal aid service, the mismanagement of the Crown prosecution service, the failure to establish a proper supreme court of appeal and many other issues. Surely the Law Officers, of all Departments, should be the last to place themselves above proper parliamentary scrutiny? Will the Solicitor-General now add his weight to the establishment of a proper departmental Select Committee to study his Department and that of the other Law Officers?

The Solicitor-General: One cannot help but feel that the hon. Gentleman has allowed some bias rather than information to inform his question.

The Law Officers control or superinted administrative functions. There is already an opportunity for scrutiny by Select Commitees as we saw with the examination of the Crown prosecution service by the Home Affairs Select Committee which, incidentally, gave the CPS many laudatory plaudits. The bulk of the Department's work is

either to give confidential legal advice or to take or superintend the taking of prosecution decisions. Those are plainly independent functions in which Select Committees would not find it appropriate to involve themselves.

Mr. Lawrence: My right hon. and learned Friend is too polite to say it himself, but as the majority of the work of the Law Officers' Department is to advise on the law, would not the provision of such additional scrutiny only give an opportunity to barrack-room lawyers to demonstrate and exercise their ill-informed prejudices at additional public expense?

The Solicitor-General: My hon. and learned Friend is entirely right that any such meddling would be inappropriate to what is an independent or a confidential function. There is an opportunity for scrutiny of other general aspects, and that has already taken place.

Paul Elvin

28. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Attorney-General what representations he has received concerning calls for a prosecution against British Rail arising from the death of Paul Elvin.

The Attorney-General: I have received representations from the hon. Gentleman and from his constituent, Mrs. Elvin. I replied to the hon. Member last week.

Mr. Hughes: I am grateful to the Attorney-General for his reply. In the light of the decision of Mr. Justice Turner in the P and O case that it has a case to answer on corporate manslaughter, will there be a review of the liability of public and corporate bodies such as British Rail? I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman appreciates the great concern felt at the many deaths and accidents on British Rail sites, all of which happen without criminal prosecution against British Rail. Should not that liability be reviewed so that the regular deaths which occur, which many believe to be the fault of British Rail, can be laid at the door of those who have responsibility for such sites?

The Attorney-General: The judicial decision to which the hon. Gentleman refers did not come as a surprise to me. With many other people, I have long believed that a corporation is capable of committing the offence of manslaughter. With great respect, however, that is not the point here. The Health and Safety Executive looked closely into the tragic death of Mrs. Elvin's son and concluded, supported by the opinion of counsel, that there is insufficient evidence to warrant a prosecution for manslaughter.

I have looked closely at the papers and, recognising the natural strength of feeling of the hon. Gentleman's constituent, I shall ask the DPP to examine the papers himself. That is, of course, without the slightest intimation that I disagree with the view of the Health and Safety Executive, which I personally believe to be correct. However, in the circumstances of this tragic case, that would be the proper course to follow and I shall do so.

Maguire Case

29. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last discussed the Maguire case with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Attorney-General: I discussed the Maguire case with the Director of Public Prosecutions last week when he advised me of the views that he had formed about the safety of the convictions.

Mr. Sedgemore: Does the Attorney-General agree that the Maguire case is but one of a number of cases concerning the Irish issue where the British legal system has proved less than adequate?

The Attorney-General: It would be very unwise of me, having, with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary invited Sir John May to conduct this inquiry, to make any comments now upon the matters which may form the subject of this report.

On the current trend of running down the English legal system, and the judges in particular, let me say that our legal system is rightly admired. When the judges are heavily and personally criticised and undermined it does great harm to our liberties and the freedom in which we live. The hon. Gentleman has not done that today, but his hon. Friends—unfortunately there is no shortage of them—who have spoken are inclined to undermine the reputation of the judges in a way that I consider to be completely unfounded and damaging.

I dare say that my remarks are slightly out of order, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to get it off my chest.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that it is a tribute to the British system that occasionally we can admit that mistakes were made? We look forward to a similar confession from the Republic in respect of another Maguire case.

The Attorney-General: I shall pass on the latter part of the question.

In this country, we have a procedure through which the Home Secretary may refer a case to the Court of Appeal if he believes that there are grounds for thinking that the conviction is unsafe or unsatisfactory. The Court of Appeal will then examine the matter as though it were a fresh appeal. That seems to me to be an extremely wise and sensible procedure bearing in mind the fact that all institutions are mortal and occasionally fallible.

In his statement through counsel a few days ago, the Director of Public Prosecutions said that if the Home Secretary thought it right to refer the Maguire case to the Court of Appeal, the Director would not consider it right to seek to uphold the safety of the conviction, the ground that he expressed through counsel on Thursday.

Mr. Fraser: Are not there two lessons to be learnt from the recent cases? First, when the police or prosecution, in their enthusiasm to obtain a conviction, depart from the usual good practice, convictions that might otherwise have stood on appeal—I am not referring to a specific case—may be upset as being unsafe or unsatisfactory. Secondly—although I am not casting aspersions on the judges—no matter how good the adversarial system may be for trials, in recent difficult cases it has been found wanting in regard to appeals. Will the Law Officers' Department give evidence to the May inquiry about a different way to examine these matters, as recommended by some of my hon. Friends and by the Select Committee on Home Affairs?

The Attorney-General: I should be quite wrong to comment on anything that may form the subject of Sir

John May's inquiry. I certainly shall not take up the suggestion made by the hon. Gentleman in the first part of his question; all those matters are for Sir John May. As to the merits and demerits of the adversarial system, it falls within Sir John May's remit. If he seeks evidence on it, my Department and others will be happy to provide it.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

35. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was discussed when the Minister for Overseas Development last met the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): I met the new High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Stoltenberg, in Geneva on 5 June. We had a most useful and wide-ranging discussion, focusing particularly on Mr. Stoltenberg's plans for reorganising UNHCR and improving its operational effectiveness. I also announced new British contributions totalling £5 million, which will help UNHCR over its current financial difficulties.

Mr. Boswell: While thanking my right hon. Friend for that reply, may I ask whether she believes that Mr. Stoltenberg can take a firm administrative grip on the affairs of his new command, and ensure that adequate resources are made available for the ghastly and growing worldwide problem of refugees?

Mr. Chalker: Yes, I do. Mr. Stoltenberg has been in post for only four months, but in that time he has already begun a serious reorganisation of the Geneva headquarters. His aim is not only to improve overall efficiency, but to cut unnecessary expenditure. We strongly support him in his efforts, and will continue to do so. He will have a high chance of success if other donors follow our lead.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Has the Minister raised with Mr. Stoltenberg conditions in the Whitehead camp in Hong Kong where 22,000 people, 3,000 of whom are children under 10 years of age, are living on an 8-acre site in utterly deplorable conditions? Just what is happening? What assurances can the Minister give the people in those camps about their future? What initiatives are the British Government taking to ensure early screening of those people? Has the Minister visited the camps?

Mr. Chalker: I have not visited the camps, but my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office has done so. Not only is my Department supporting UNHCR in all its work, particularly because we remain committed to the UNHCR comprehensive plan of action, but the diplomatic wing of the Foreign Office is putting money into improving conditions for the people who are waiting to be screened and is seeking to speed up the screening process.

Mr. Leigh: Although one has the greatest sympathy for the refugees in the camps in Hong Kong—I have visited them——

Mr. Skinner: The hon. Gentleman has been on a freebie as well, has he?

Mr. Leigh: Yes, I have been to Hong Kong.

Mr. Skinner: I am beginning to think that I am the only person who has not been.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us get on. I have not been either.

Mr. Leigh: If the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) had a passport, he might know something about the world on which he continually comments.

Although one has great sympathy for these people, is not it a tribute to Government policy that the number of boat people coming over on the monsoon has declined considerably? To what can one possibly attribute that decline except the forthright policy of the Government in returning those people?

Mrs. Chalker: The number of Vietnamese boat people arriving in Hong Kong is markedly lower than it was this time last year, but there are still nearly 55,000 people in the camps in Hong Kong, which is the point that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) was making. I believe that we have got through to many elements in the Vietnamese Government that it would be much wiser to look after the people in Vietnam—that is what we are doing through our aid programme through the non-governmental organisations—rather than many of them taking to the seas and perishing at sea as happened in the past.

Aid Target

37. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of gross national product is currently spent on overseas aid; and if he has any plans to raise this to meet the United Nations target for such spending.

Mrs. Chalker: As I informed my hon. Friend the member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) on 15 June, the United Kingdom's ODA/GNP ratio in 1989 is provisionally estimated at 0·31 per cent.

The Government continue to accept in principle the UN target of 0·7 per cent. of GNP to be allocated to official development assistance. Our prime concern is to ensure that our aid programme is planned to continue to increase in real terms, and is used to maximum effect. Levels of aid spending will continue to depend on economic circumstances and on other claims on public resources.

Mr. Jones: Will the Minister explain why we are giving such a miserly amount of overseas aid when the French, the Swedes and the Danes can all give more than the United Nations recommendation of 0·7 per cent? Is it that our economy is in such a mess that we cannot afford it, or do we just not care?

Mrs. Chalker: We care very much. It is interesting to note that of the 18 western donors only five achieved the target in 1988, and of those only France had a larger aid programme than the United Kingdom. There are two other important UN targets: the 1 per cent. of GNP for total flows and the 0·15 per cent. of GNP for the least developed countries. We meet those targets. The most important point is that between 1985 and 1988 British direct investment in the developing countries was more than half the combined EC total and the United Kingdom exceeded the 1 per cent. target six times in the 1980s.

Sir John Stanley: Does my right hon. Friend agree that although official aid is only one element of our overseas aid programme, it is extremely important and meets life-supporting and life-saving needs that cannot be met by commercial sources? Will she continue to do her utmost to ensure that that percentage is increased?

Mrs. Chalker: Indeed. I intend to ensure that our aid programme continues to grow. It was 0·31 per cent. in 1986, but since then the GNP has grown by 11 per cent. in real terms. It is better than it was, but I intend to make it better still.

Mrs. Clwyd: Will the Minister admit that if the Government had maintained Labour's 1979 level of overseas aid the third world would be better off by £8 billion? Does she recognise that just one fifth of that sum would prevent 7·5 million children from dying each year from diarrhoea and other preventable infectious diseases? The Minister, who once had a reputation as a Conservative wet, must be thoroughly ashamed to have presided over a cut in overseas aid of 24 per cent. since 1979.

Mrs. Chalker: As I took on this job last July, I hardly think that the hon. Lady's latter comment is relevant. The funds being spent on children, particularly to prevent infectious and tropical diseases, are increasing and we intend them to increase further. It would do the developing world no good if we continued the economic policies that prevailed in 1979 because the third world would simply not benefit. If we have had to curtail our aid while we put our house in order it has been to spend better on sound economics, as we intend to do in the future.

Mr. Soames: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it would be better to get away from this extraordinary United Nations figure and to concentrate on doing what we do well—delivering a high quality of aid? That is what matters.

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend is right. The development assistance committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said that the quality of the United Kingdom's aid programme is better than others. We deliver, pound for pound, more help through our aid and we intend to continue doing so. The quality of aid is paramount and we intend to ensure that it continues to be targeted on the poorest. In 1988, 70 per cent. of our aid was given to the poorest 50 countries.

Cambodia

38. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he intends to send another British delegation to review the current situation in Cambodia.

Mrs. Chalker: I have no immediate plans to send another delegation to Phnom Penh. However, we are implementing our commitment to provide support to British NGOs and multilateral agencies active in Cambodia, and a further visit may be desirable for monitoring and other purposes later this year.

Mr. Barnes: Have not things changed since last year, and is not substantial aid required by the Hun Sen Government to tackle the Khmer Rouge and to deal with the serious economic consequences of war? Should not the Government change their policy, recognise the Cambodian Government and offer bilateral aid? Is this another issue of which, as a former wet, the Minister is ashamed?

Mrs. Chalker: We are well aware that there have been changes since last year which is why I announced new aid in January. I shall make an announcement soon about the details of that new help to Cambodia. We have no relations with the Hun Sen regime, so there will be no Government-to-Government aid. The Government are working, with our friends and partners, for a comprehensive political settlement and for free elections. I strongly support the current diplomatic activity, including the work of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The recent meeting in Tokyo increased understanding and we shall continue to work for a political solution.

Welsh Questions

3.32 pm

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. During Welsh questions, in answer to my welcome and gentle questioning, the Secretary of State responded arrogantly and unpleasantly. That clearly is his choice and is not a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, but, more serious, his calculated gesture was inaccurate and misleading. He threw across the Dispatch Box a letter from a National Union of Public Employees official and challenged me to show that, in my capacity as spokesman on health service matters in Wales, I am not a puppet of health service employees. The letter asked me to write to all members of Pembrokeshire health authority —not the subject of the question—warning of the dangers inherent in that health authority becoming a trust. I well understand the deep worry among health service employees in Pembrokeshire about this decision, which will remove power and decision making from their area. I did not follow that request, although I supplied the authority's general manager with copies of answers from——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Gentleman has adequately made his point.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This is an important point of order, because the letter contains an instruction from a union official to a Member of this House:

"Individual letters to be sent by yourself, or Robin Cook, to each Member—before 6 June Area Health Authority meeting, if possible: setting up of trust.

There is a need to stress the importance of NHS and a commitment if possible under the next Labour Government to the retention of Pembrokeshire Health Authority."

That letter shows quite clearly that the Opposition, for all their talk, are puppets of the unions and that what is important to them is the interests of the producers and not of clients, customers or patients.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a bit of a slanging match that is continuing from Question Time. It is not a matter of order for me.

Mr. Michael *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: A very brief comment, please.

Mr. Michael: The salient point is that I did not respond to that understandable request by writing to the members of the health authority. Therefore, inadvertently, Conservative Members have proved that we put consumers and employees first. I call upon the Secretary of State to show that he has the courtesy to withdraw a completely unwarranted slur.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): May I make a comment?

Mr. Speaker: I think not today. The hon. Member is always very helpful, but we must get on with the defence debate.

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I shall put together the Questions on the two statutory instruments on the Order Paper.

Ordered,

That the draft Insurance Companies (Amendment) Regulations 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the Companies (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 1990 (S.I., 1990, No. 1197) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Defence Estimates

[FIRST DAY'S DEBATE]

[The Defence Committee has reported on the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990 in its Eighth Report, House of Commons Paper 388 of Session 1989-90. The Fourth Report of the Committee on Reliability and Maintainability of Defence Equipment, House of Commons Paper 40, and its Seventh Report on Rapier Field Standard, C, House of Commons Paper 273, are also relevant.]

3.36 pm

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Tom King): I beg to move,

That this House approves the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990 contained in Cm. 1022.

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. King: Perhaps I can start with a measure of agreement across the House. The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) complained last year about the late publication of the White Paper which resulted in the House not being able to hold this debate until exactly four months later, on 18 October. He said that it was high time that the defence estimates were published at the beginning of April. I hope our achievement of 2 April is agreeable to him. I am sure that the achievement of this debate within a reasonable time is for the convenience of the House. At a time of rather fast-moving events, it is desirable that there should not be too big a gap. I appreciate that this has resulted in some pretty energetic work by the Select Committee. I know that the House will be grateful to the Chairman and members of the Select Committee for ensuring that their report is available for this debate.

We have two days for this important debate. I am opening the debate. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement will wind up today's debate. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces will open tomorrow's debate, and the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement will conclude it.

As I have mentioned my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, perhaps I could say one word which will result in great despair for those who live on conspiracy theories, and may ruin half the speech to be made by my hon. Friend. I hope that I shall be excused for putting one or two facts on the record. It is quite clear to both of us that somebody is engaged in trying to drive wedges between us. I can say with the full authority of my hon. Friend that we feel singularly unwedged about it. Let me mention a few facts. No matter how many times people are corrected, the media reports still long to cling to the conspiracy theory—which one does not mind about if it helps to sell newspapers—but if there is a secret back room plan it is important to deal with it and put it on record.

To deal with an old story, before Christmas my hon. Friend put before me a paper concerning certain matters relating to defence procurement. I arranged for the Prime Minister to see a copy of it. Since then, my hon. Friend's interesting work and that of others has been carried forward in the work that we have been doing on Options for Change. Of course, that has involved my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, together with my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement and other Ministers, defence staff, under the leadership of the Chief of the Defence Staff, and the Office of Management and Budget.

I should like to put on record our appreciation of the way in which that work has been carried through—very difficult and important work at this time. I make it clear also that the chiefs of staff have been involved and are aware of the detail of the work, as is right that they should be. I am sorry if I have spoilt circulation for one or two journalists in this matter, but it may be helpful to put the record straight.

I now refer to the quite remarkable developments that have occurred since we last met for this debate.

Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-super-Mare): I apologise for interrupting my right hon. Friend before he begins the main part of his speech. As he may have some announcements to make, and looking to the future of the changed situation, does he recognise that the Ministry's work, to which he has referred, should not be dealt with just in an administrative manner? In due course, if there are to be major changes, my right hon. Friend may wish to present a special White Paper for debate by the House.

Mr. King: I take note of what my hon. Friend says. I shall raise further matters later.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. King: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will excuse me if I do not give way because I have quite a lot to say. It is a two-day debate and I hope that hon. Members will excuse me if I do not give way too often, in the interests of giving other hon. Members a chance to contribute to the debate.

We last debated defence estimates eight months ago. It is interesting that, on the very day on which we debated the defence estimates—18 October—Mr. Honecker resigned. President Ceausescu was still in power and still had a further two months in office. The Berlin wall was unbreached. Of course, there were imminent signs of change in Europe. There have been substantial advances towards German unification, and free elections in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. We are less clear of the situation in Romania, but undoubtedly there are substantial changes indeed. The Soviet Union has agreed that its forces will be out of Hungary and Czechoslovakia by the middle of next year.

As well as the developments in eastern Europe, there have been profound developments in the Soviet Union itself. At this time last year, we were aware of the strains of nationalism in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Perhaps the full implications of events in Lithuania and developments in the other Baltic states were not so apparent, nor were they in the Ukraine and certainly not, as has perhaps been the most dramatic event of the lot, in the republic of Russia itself and the emergence of Mr. Yeltsin as the new President of Russia. Dramatic developments have taken place, and the west has been seeking to respond to the need to carry forward much of the work that is already under way.

The House knows that we readily embarked on negotiations on conventional arms reductions in Europe and the talks in Vienna. We had high hopes that we would perhaps have had an agreement by now. When I was in Moscow in May I began to wonder whether there would

[Mr. King]

be agreement at all this year. After the summit between President Bush and President Gorbachev, there is a real prospect that that matter is now back on the rails. Obviously, we are all anxious to see an early agreement. Strategic arms reductions talks are continuing towards, we hope, a successful conclusion, although with difficulties, as are negotiations on the reduction of chemical weapons. All that is intended to lead to a summit in the conference on security and co-operation in Europe.

When preparing for the debate, I had the opportunity of reading Marshal Yazov's response to what is clearly the Soviet Parliament's Select Committee on Defence, which contained various proposals about the changes that might take place in the Soviet Union. Perhaps that is the ultimate confirmation of the recent changes in the world.

As I have said, this is a time of remarkable changes which obviously present major problems, challenges and concerns for our armed forces. All hon. Members realise the uncertainties that they face. In my discussions with other Defence Ministers, especially with Marshal Yazov, but also with the French, German and Italian Ministers and with all our colleagues in NATO, I am always conscious of the difference between a conscript army, the members of which challenge why they should have been enlisted, and our position, with our volunteer armed forces, the members of which have made their careers a commitment to this country's armed forces. They are concerned to know what the future may hold for them. I should like to make absolutely clear my full understanding and concern for them, which is shared by my colleagues.

In the past year, our armed forces have not only been concerned about their future in a changing world but have been facing problems and challenges because of the security threat, especially in Germany. Given the latest news on the tape, this is an appropriate time for us to express again our appreciation not only of the resolution of our own armed service men, and of the efforts of our police and security services, but also our appreciation of the efforts of the police of our colleagues in NATO, Europe and the United States. Since we last met, arrests have been made in all those countries, all of which make their contributions with ever-closer co-operation. As can be shown clearly by the events of last weekend, when terrorists dodge backwards and forwards across borders, there is obviously an important need for close co-operation, and I express my appreciation for receiving it.

Since our last debate, the armed services have continued their dedicated work in Northern Ireland. In my comments, I am including not only the work of our own armed forces, the resident battalion, the roulement battalion, but also the brave men of the Ulster Defence Regiment who have tough and dangerous work and who live and work in an exposed situation.

I thank also our forces in the Falklands, Cyprus, Hong Kong and Belize and refer to the continuing watch of the Armilla in the Gulf. I thank all those in so many places in which my colleagues and I have had the chance to meet our armed forces during the past year. The resolution and good humour of our armed forces was at no time clearer than when they answered 133,000 calls during the ambulance dispute. They were not carrying out their normal role, but at a time when people were trying to find opportunities for criticism, when asked to help in an emergency and in an unexpected and unsought task, the Army responded willingly and readily and discharged its responsibilities most capably.

The tribute that we pay so readily to our armed forces is mirrored by the admiration and respect in which they are held throughout the world. No small part of Britain's image in the world or of the relations that we are able to hold with so many countries can be traced to the number of countries which ask us to help them to train their Army and armed services. At present, we have training missions in no fewer than 33 countries. I shall visit the latest addition in the near future. President Nujoma has asked for assistance in training the Namibian armed services. That is a tribute to our armed services. We have 5,000 military students here from 110 countries. Students from two thirds of the countries of the world have been among the 50,000 military students who have been to this country in the past 10 years. I put that fact on record as evidence of the contribution made by our armed forces. The most sincere tribute that we could receive is international respect for their quality.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the Secretary of State comment on the report that a high-level military and diplomatic delegation is visiting NATO from Japan and explain what that is about? Are we establishing military relations with the Japanese?

Mr. King: I cannot comment on that because I was not aware of it. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, with his ability to identify such interesting items. I thank him for drawing the matter to my attention, and shall take note of it.

Not the least of the problems that our armed forces have faced in recent months is a particular and immediate one, that of this year's Ministry of Defence budget. The Select Committee challenged me about this when I gave evidence on the defence estimates. I told the Committee about the problem that we faced due to the impact of inflation. I said in May that inflation was costing us a further £350 million in the current year. The forecast of our expenditure that I have now received suggests that the problem is likely to be worse than that. Therefore, we have introduced a temporary bar on most new commitments while we examine what savings should be made in this year's expenditure. I know that the House is aware of that.

I have set in train some short-term changes at the margin of the defence programme to reduce expenditure. They have largely been decided and announcements will be made as appropriate, including some procurement changes that will be announced by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement this evening. Those measures should allow the general restraint on new commitments to be eased by the end of the month. But each new commitment will be closely scrutinised to ensure that we stay within our cash allocation for the current year. That modification in the arrangements will help to protect the essential and proper day-to-day activities of the services. In considering which short-term measures to adopt to reduce expenditure, we have, where appropriate, sought to have regard for the emerging picture from the "Options for Change" work, about which I shall soon speak.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): The Secretary of State mentioned that short-term changes had already been

decided. Will he tell us about them today, or will the Minister of State for Defence Procurement let us know about them tomorrow, if that is when he is to speak?

Mr. King: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman listened to what I said. I said that they will be announced as appropriate. If they are appropriate for announcement in Parliament, that will be done. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement will speak this evening and comment on some procurement items. We shall be anxious to explain each of the measures in the appropriate way. I hope that that takes account of the comment in the Select Committee's report that it was essential that any changes in defence expenditure should reflect a planned and orderly process of matching commitments and resources. I hope that it will be seen that that is precisely what we have tried to do.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that none of the short-term changes will involve delaying payments to suppliers? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Rogers: The Secretary of State does not know.

Mr. King: That was a nice intervention, as always made in a constructive way, from not the most alert hon. Member. I am merely checking the facts because I am concerned about that and we have a problem with the computer—*[Interruption.]* All suppliers have been notified about that and Sir Peter Levene has been discussing the matter with them for a long time. There are special arrangements for small firms. The Ministry of Defence Procurement Executive is changing its computer —that is why I am answering very precisely the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg). There will be a period when no payments are made. That period is being kept as short as possible and all the companies involved have been notified about it. In my desperate attempt at accuracy, I thought that I should put that on the record. Subject only to that unfortunate but unavoidable point, the answer to my hon. Friend's question is yes.

I turn now to the background against which this debate is taking place. I have already referred to the tremendous changes occurring in central and eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. It is generally understood that the Warsaw pact has, for all intents and purposes, ceased to exist. In military terms, that means that after the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the implementation of the reductions in conventional arms envisaged at Vienna, it will be difficult to imagine any conventional attack of any strategic size by the Soviet Union across NATO territory.

Nevertheless, those who, like me, have access to intelligence reports continue to be highly conscious of the large and continuing investment in arms and equipment in the Soviet Union. It is a staggering thought that even now, in the fifth year of Mr. Gorbachev's time in office, the figures show that one new nuclear submarine is being launched every six weeks. Two aircraft, six tanks and one missile are produced every day. Marshal Yazov has said that the emphasis is now on quality rather than quantity; that is certainly borne out by this year's parade in Red square, which revealed one new main battle tank and one new heavily armoured infantry combat vehicle of very high quality. The Soviet navy received a record tonnage of new surface ships in 1989. These ships are larger and more powerful than their predecessors and have longer range, more accurate missiles. The aircraft carrier Tbilisi is on trials in the Black sea at the moment; the Riga is being fitted out; and the Ulanosk is under construction. The Flanker and Fulcrum high performance fighters which are now being developed for aircraft carrier use will considerably enhance the air defence capabilities of the fleet.

It is against this background that certain changes are taking place: for instance, the removal from Hungary of a squadron of about 40 Flogger aircraft, which have now turned up in the Kola peninsula and been reclassified from the Soviet air force to the Soviet naval air force. I mention these aspects because Marshal Yazov responded to what I shall call a select committee:

> "The fulfilment of the package of measures to improve the quality parameters of armed forces' effectiveness, mobility and economy will continue. The reorganisation of branches of the armed forces and the technical re-equipment of troops and fleet force will be completed."

All that means a continuing enhancement of the real military capability of the Soviet Union.

The numbers themselves seem to show a reduction. This year about 46 ships and submarines have been scrapped, but all but one of them was more than 30 years old, so in terms of capability and up-to-date weaponry the Soviet Union maintains a significant range of armaments.

We trust and believe that the intention to use such weaponry is, under the present leadership, as slight as could be hoped. However, we should never forget, when considering our defence arrangements, that the situation can change as long as armaments remain.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): In the estimates that the right hon. Gentleman presented this year, after the important changes to which he has alluded, he has come up with a bigger defence budget than the one that we discussed last year. Does he think that the Russians would be entitled to interpret that as a continuation of the threat to them? For how much longer are the military on both sides to be allowed to control budgets on such a scale when the money is needed in the Soviet Union and here for more pressing social needs?

Mr. King: I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman has not done his homework and has not listened to what I said earlier. This year the armed services are facing the biggest cut in real terms that they have faced for a long time. I have explained that we had to have a moratorium and are now having to move into a period of tight constraint. That is because there is great pressure on defence expenditure, and there will be a significant reduction of more than 3 per cent. in real terms this year. The right hon. Gentleman will find that that compares favourably with other NATO countries with which on previous occasions he sought to compare us.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the world remains an unsafe place, especially when some countries in the middle east have access to chemical and biological weapons and in some cases nuclear weapons and also have the delivery systems for them?

Mr. King: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for making that point. When one looks at the wider world, one sees that the biggest problem at present, which no doubt worries the Soviet Union as well as the western powers, is

[Mr. King]

the degree of proliferation and the variety of missile and warhead capabilities. There is no doubt that we need to consider those aspects when looking at out defence plans.

Before I speak about the approach that we should take under the "Options for Change" exercise, it is worth reflecting on the mixed advice that is received by the House. I understand that the Opposition may attack Conservative Members of the Ministry of Defence for being divided. As the Opposition have two contrary amendments on the Order Paper, it takes a certain conceit to seek to raise the issue of division on this side of the House. It will be interesting to see whether the hon. Member for Clackmannan draws attention to the divide in the Opposition.

In each of the last two defence debates alternative amendments were tabled by the Opposition. One was from the Opposition's Front- Bench spokesmen and the other was from the Labour majority. That majority is ignored in the House. I intervened in last year's debate during the speech by the hon. Member for Clackmannan to ask whether 4 million votes at the party conference would be totally ignored. Judging by the way that he avoided the question, it is clear that they were.

Because they are divided, the Opposition do not make any worthwhile contribution. That seems to confuse the newspapers. I made an unkind criticism recently of one or two media reports. A wonderful letter appeared in the press from a lady called Meg Beresford, the general secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. I do not know who was responsible for the version that appeared, whether it was "The Grauniad" in full flood or whether the lady got herself into a bit of a muddle. The letter was about TASM—tactical air-to-surface missile—the sub-strategic nuclear weapon, and it stated:

"CND is concerned that a Labour Government can reach the Soviet Union from Britain and would throw an almighty spanner in the works of current arms negotiations.

I do not think that we have discussed the range of a Labour Government, but that is an extremely revealing misprint.

The armed services deserve a consistent approach, clear leadership and honesty. In their recent policy document the Opposition said that they would look for reductions in Britain's defence spending far beyond anything envisaged at last year's Labour party conference in Brighton. The hon. Member for Clackmannan seems to have forgotten the way in which Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen and the Leader of the Opposition tried to mobilise the conference to vote against that motion. They were defeated by a majority of 2:1. Our having been told in last year's debate that that would not be Labour party policy, it now appears in the Labour party's policy document. We know what it means. If the hon. Gentleman does not know, the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) will tell him. It means coming down to the average. It means taking £5 billion—some would say £9 billion—from our defence expenditure. Is that Labour party policy? It has appeared in the policy document. Are we to take it that that is Labour party policy? It will not do for the hon. Gentleman to say, as he stated in a speech to the SPD —the West German Social Democratic party—on 11 June, that

"the opportunities for disarmament have never been greater and Britain must take as much advantage of them as possible."

It should be remembered that that does not apply to any individual pledge where trade unions and jobs may be involved. That disarmament pledge does not apply to the European fighter aircraft; nor does it aply to ECR90. If it does, I shall be grateful if the hon. Gentleman will intervene to tell us whether the pledge, which is based on the greatest opportunity for disarmament, will mean unemployment in Edinburgh for the Ferranti employees who are working on ECR90. What is the position to be? We are seeing a dishonest approach. The Labour party is trying to ride every horse at the same time if there are votes to be gained by so doing.

There is a more responsible approach to these matters. We are facing enormous changes, and these must be recognised in our defence policy. I have been struck by what happened at the end of the first world war. The then War Cabinet adopted the 10-year rule. It decided that in framing revised estimates it should be assumed that the British Empire would not be engaged in any great war during the next 10 years and that no expeditionary force would be required for that purpose. The House knows the history of the 10-year-rule. It was extended and it lasted from 1919 to 1932. The House knows also of some of the legacies and implications that flowed from it. Wise men make mistakes and fools repeat them. That is a wise understanding. Wise men can make mistakes, and it is the fools who repeat those mistakes.

In 1934, Winston Churchill said:

"Wars come very suddenly. I have lived through a period when one looked forward, as we do now, with anxiety and uncertainty to what would happen in the future. Suddenly something did happen—tremendous, swift, overpowering, irresistible."

I trust that we shall never see such a comparison again. I say that on the very day of the 50th anniversary of "L'appel", the call by General de Gaulle, when France —surprised, caught unawares and defeated—started her fight back. I think that the wisdom of not making long assumptions for the future could not be more clearly underwritten.

Mr. Benn: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. King: No. I have given way once to the right hon. Gentleman.

It was a leading member of the right hon. Gentleman's party—I think that he will recognise these words of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey)—who said:

"Once we cut defence expenditure to the extent where our security is imperilled we have no houses, we have no hospitals, we have no schools. We have a heap of cinders."

Sir Michael Marshall (Arundel): My right hon. Friend is right in drawing attention to the need to look ahead for a decade. Does he accept that in understanding the problems better we must recognise the long time scale involved in obtaining the so-called peace dividend? Things that are coming to fruition now represent decades of research and development and industrial development. With the best will in the world, we cannot switch off the tap as quickly as some would urge.

Mr. King: It is with pleasure that I congratulate my hon. Friend on his knighthood, and I agree very much with his first wise remark in his new status; I know that

there will be many more. I would not wish to follow my hon. Friend, but Marshal Yazov himself said that the positive changes have not yet become irreversible and that the military danger persists. That remark came in a speech that he made in Red square, and we hear it much echoed. Defence is not something that can be turned on and off like a tap. We know how grateful we have been on occasions in our history for having trained and properly armed forces available at times when we have suddenly needed them. It is part of our current consideration to ensure that, if situations and circumstances change, we can make an appropriate response.

By the end of this year we could, if all goes well, have in place some of the most far-reaching changes in Europe's defence and security that we have witnessed since NATO itself was established. We could have a united Germany in NATO, an agreement to reduce conventional forces in Europe and the prospect of negotiations on further reductions, substantial Soviet withdrawal from eastern Europe in train, and a CSCE summit. Those are our hopes, if they are not yet realities.

That situation requires us to rethink what should be NATO's strategy in those circumstances—preserving what is vital for secure defence while adapting to the changed threat and the new situation. That is precisely what we have been doing in the nuclear planning group in Canada, the defence planning committee in Brussels and the North Atlantic Council, and what we shall be doing at the next NATO summit in London in two weeks.

Against that background, we shall also need to consider the forces that we in the United Kingdom will need over the next decade. It is a time to think ahead and to prepare for the future—though we cannot of course take our decisions in isolation. They will depend in good part on the wider arms control negotiations in which NATO will be involved.

Even if all our present hopes are fulfilled, the essential core of our defence needs will remain. We will still need to maintain our independent nuclear deterrent, because we know so well that conventional weapons alone cannot deter war. On the strategic level, that means not only Polaris and then Trident, but the associated frigates, submarines and minesweepers that ensure their safe deployment. As part of NATO's policy of keeping an appropriate mix of conventional and nuclear weapons, we shall maintain also sub-strategic nuclear capability.

We shall also need to maintain the forces and equipment necessary for the direct defence of the United Kingdom. That means air defence aircraft; surface-to-air missiles and the necessary warning and control systems; naval forces, especially to combat the threat of hostile mine laying, and maritime patrol aircraft; and sufficient forces for military home defence. Separate from that, we keep in mind the force levels required to sustain our contribution in Northern Ireland.

We shall need adequate forces to meet our commitments in the wider world outside Europe. I have in mind not only our existing commitments in the Falklands, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Belize, Hong Kong and Brunei, but the need to respond appropriately where circumstances demand. That may be with some or all our NATO allies and alone, if necessary, in defence of direct British interests. In some places that requires a specific garrison, and in others it can be met by a strategic reserve capable of rapid deployment, whether inside or outside NATO. We do not, necessarily need separate forces under those separate headings. For example, some of the sea and air mobile elements of the forces in the United Kingdom designated for the reinforcement of British Forces in Germany can have roles outside Europe as well. That is obviously true of other capabilities, such as frigates and aircraft.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The right hon. Gentleman is talking about flexibility, equipment and frigates. I know that he recognises the importance of the helicopter in the levels of defence forces which might be arrived at after negotiations. I am well aware that the Minister of State for Defence Procurement is to make a statement, but the right hon. Gentleman will know of the anxieties in my constituency and within the armed forces that that flexibility and manoeuvre should be supplied by EH101 aircraft. Therefore, will he reaffirm the words that he used on 7 June on BBC television when he said of the EH101:

> "I have made it clear that I see that as an important component in our defence arrangements; I want it to go forward."?

Will he reaffirm that in advance of a more specific statement which is perhaps to be made later by the Minister?

Mr. King: The right hon. Gentleman's constituency is not the only one in which that matter is of some interest, although of course, as Secretary of State, I have no constituency and I hope that that is clear and that no one will accuse me of an improper remark. I confirm what I said as recently as 7 June. My hon. Friend the Minister is likely to say something on that matter.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Is it the Government's intention to maintain the surface fleet at the same number of vessels as last year?

Mr. King: I do not have any comments to make on specific items. I am seeking to put before the House the approach that we are adopting, and we shall take the House as much into our confidence as we can. I appreciate that right hon. and hon. Members, especially those interested in defence matters, have listened carefully to what I have said, and will have understood the significance of some of my remarks.

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford) *rose*——

Mr. King: Will my hon. Friend excuse me if I do not give way as I do not want to take up too much time?

The obvious area where we hope there will be scope for some changes and redeployment is in Europe. The Prime Minister has made it clear that we may seek to reduce our forces stationed in Germany, in the context of successful arms control negotiations and agreed changes in NATO's strategy. Obviously that is one of the main areas that we are considering, covering not only our four divisions in British Army of the Rhine, but also RAF Germany. That is not just a question of scale. If our stationed forces are smaller, then they will need mobility and flexibility and a balanced capability. But they would not need so much fixed infrastructure—bases and depots—on the present scale. As part of that, we are also studying the implications of the changes in eastern Europe for our reinforcement capability for NATO's northern region, where we have extensive commitments, from Denmark up to northern Norway. We are looking at what response may be appropriate to the reductions in the size but also to the

[Mr. King]

modernisation of the Soviet navy to which I have already referred, bearing in mind the crucial importance of transatlantic reinforcement and the importance of our seaborne supply routes.

However, while NATO may rely relatively more on reinforcement by sea as well as air, the volume of reinforcements may be reduced, with smaller forces on both sides in Europe and there may be greater opportunity to exploit longer warning time. All those factors have to be considered when considering options for future Royal Navy and RAF maritime forces.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): *rose——*

Mr. King: I should feel guilty if I did not first give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed), who tried to intervene earlier.

Mr. Speed: A few minutes ago, my right hon. Friend was talking about out-of-area commitments and working with our NATO partners. Does he consider that NATO will have a role out of area or does he consider that the Western European Union, which worked so well in the Gulf two and a half years ago, has an important role out of area?

Mr. King: No. My hon. Friend correctly referred to the Western European Union and its role in the background to the Armilla patrol. Western and world interests were affected by the war between Iran and Iraq, and it was necessary to protect the free world's supply of oil and its shipping lanes. That does not presage an out-of-area concerted role by NATO.

In all this we must not forget that, even after recent unilateral reductions, the Soviet Union continues to deploy very substantial and very powerful forces which are continually being modernised and kept up to date.

In looking at the options for change we are seeking a proper balance between the front line and support, not forgetting the basic infrastructure for our armed services such as housing and base facilities.

Mr. Marlow: By implication, my right hon. Friend has said that we shall be faster and more flexible and that our forces could be used in different parts of the world. That implies that the balance of aircraft and helicopters will be far greater and the balance of armour lower. In those circumstances, and as heavy-lift and troop-lift helicopters will be a more integral part of the Army, has he considered the possibility of moving them from the Air Force to the Army?

Mr. King: I read the Army debate and I noticed that my hon. Friend made exactly that point to my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces. I have no further comment to make. At the moment we are not considering that proposal.

We must achieve a proper balance between the front line and support and we must also get the right balance, so far not achieved, between manpower and equipment expenditure so that we have well-motivated people with the kit to match the task. We must recognise that, with the demographic pressure that we face, it will be increasingly difficult to recruit and retain the present numbers of regular personnel. It is far better, if necessary, to have reduced numbers of properly manned front-line units, which reflect the changed commitments and risks of war, than to try to do too much. The transition to those new structures and maintaining them properly will inevitably involve costs, which will be a charge on the savings that we can make initially.

Much work is going on now to ensure that any changes will not disrupt the essential future of our defences. In carrying that forward we are guided by two other critical considerations. The first is our duty to ensure that as soon as possible we inform those most affected in the armed services, throughout the Ministry of Defence and the defence industries about any proposals. Secondly, it is critical to remember that at all times our duty to our allies in NATO is to ensure that we keep in close concert with them.

We shall want to ensure that Britain has the forces it needs for the defence of Europe and for its interests elsewhere in the world, including the training facilities that we are able to offer so widely. We shall want to ensure, too, that those forces have the equipment and the spares and supplies necessary to train effectively. We must be able to provide secure defence against any threat in the future while taking account of the extremely important and significant security changes in Europe we have seen in the past year.

Neither I nor my colleagues in the Government are insensitive to the challenges and difficulties we face in making this transition. At the beginning I referred to the incredible changes that have taken place and the challenge that they pose to us. Some things change, some things endure. The proper and adequate defence of our country, whatever the circumstances may be, is one that must endure.

4.23 pm

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'condemns the Government for its failure to take proper account of, and make constructive responses to, the new conditions created by the welcome emergence of the new democracies in Eastern and Central Europe and the prospective unification of Germany; calls upon the Government to play a positive rôle in the reassessment of the future of NATO strategies including flexible response, and to participate effectively and constructively in the processes of negotiated reduction of nuclear and conventional weapons; deplores the failure of the Government to undertake effective assessment of and preparation for the impact of the potential change in defence needs on defence-related industries and on Her Majesty's Forces, and the possible savings and alternative uses of money currently allocated to the defence budget; and calls upon the Government to participate actively in the development of a new and durable system of security from the Atlantic to the Urals.'

In some respects the Secretary of State has stolen my opening remarks in so far as, in the past, we have complained about the lateness of this debate. It is true that no time in the past eight months would have been the right time to hold this debate. The date on which last year's debate was held marked the end of an era, but little did any of us appreciate the significance of the brief report on the news agency tapes that Honecker was to retire.

Certainly, only the most neanderthal Marxist can mourn the passing of state capitalism in eastern and central Europe. We can only marvel in joy and anticipation at the flair and imagination with which so many of the eastern and central European Governments are addressing the new challenges. For people with little

experience of government, apart from the years they spent as unwilling guests of their predecessors' prisons, they have brought forth an almost endless stream of new ideas and proposals—for the demobilisation of foreign troops in their countries, the demilitarisation of their territories and the establishment of a new security order in Europe. Their motives are clear. The political oppression of the past 40 years has been supported and buttressed by the intrusive presence of armies of occupation, and by the crushing of any widespread form of popular opposition by troops in Poland, East Germany and Hungary in the 1950s, and a decade later in Czechoslovakia. For the past 40 or so years, those armies have been the mainstay of the repressive regimes.

It is to the credit of the incoming Governments that the transition has been carried through with a patience and understanding of Soviet concerns that we cannot but admire, whereas the response from NATO has been at times slow, confused and mixed. From the Federal Republic has come a series of measures and often radical initiatives. Foreign Minister Genscher has continued the dialogue of ostpolitik, finding ways in which to help his neighbours; with Government encouragement, German businesses have blazed a trail through eastern Europe. The Dutch and Belgian Governments have not only supported that policy, but drawn rapid conclusions from the new military situation in central and eastern Europe. The British silence has been almost deafening.

The Foreign Secretary tried to make a bid for freedom when he addressed the Conservative Political Centre in Wroxton on 20 January. He spoke of

"turning talks into tractors . . . The enormous prize of a CEF agreement would be a 50 per cent. cut in tanks and artillery and the withdrawal of 300,000 Soviet troops stationed in eastern Europe . . . it was remarkable that under the CEF agreement all armed forces covered would be demobilised."

Unfortunately, there was to be no bright new dawn. By the next morning the rubbishing process had started, and an article in *The Independent* said:

"the PM will resist pressure for cuts."

But, of course, there was no rift between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. The position was further confused by a denial in the same newspaper by the Secretary of State for Defence, who said that not only was there no defence review, but

"Ministers were adamant that the perception of a reduced threat from the East would not be sufficient to support cuts in spending".

However, in this rapidly changing Europe, within two weeks the same Secretary of State said, when answering defence questions:

"we shall continue to examine options for change".—*[Official Report,* 6 February 1990; Vol. 166, c. 748.]

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): What cuts in which defence programmes would a Labour Government make?

Mr. O'Neill: If the hon. Gentleman waits, he will have an answer to his question. If he does not like what I am saying, he should try to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker. We know that he takes a brief interest in these matters, asks a question and then leaves the Chamber. I shall give him an answer in my own time, and in my own way.

There have been further references to the options for change. The Minister of State for the Armed Forces, indeed, went so far as to refer to the "Options for Change" review. By degrees, we are hearing an admission that a defence review is in hand. However, we have read of the slightly less cautious approach of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. Whether he is supposed to favour massive cuts will emerge during the debate. Certainly, the figure 32 will doubtless feature—whether it refers to infantry battalions or frigates. It is no magic figure—I see that the Chairman of the Defence Select Committee, the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), nods in agreement. Only two years ago to the day, one of those alleged to be participating in the "Options for Change" exercise—Mr. Mottram, of the Ministry of Defence—admitted that the number of frigates available was 32. That figure may have been plucked out of the air, but it has some substance.

If the country could be defended by 32 ships two years ago, one can imagine that the Ministry of Defence and the Admiralty would be sufficiently relaxed about the matter. By way of compensation, the Minister of State for Defence Procurement attempted to reassure the Royal Aeronautical Society last week when he advocated the conversion not of swords into ploughshares but of an airbus into a bomber. In a world where conversion normally has a different meaning, only a British Tory Government and the present Minister of State for Defence Procurement could be so out of step.

The argument about confusion reigning in the MOD would be laughable were in not for the impact that it appears to have had on morale at different levels. According to yesterday's *Observer,* defence chiefs are being called ostriches by their junior officers, and the Prime Minister, in spite of her enthusiasm for a strong defence, now quite clearly refuses to believe that the defence budget need cost us about £21 billion a year.

While the Secretary of State is paralysed by indecision, caught like a rabbit in the headlights of an oncoming car, there appears to be total confusion in the Ministry. Yesterday's *Observer* said that the defence chiefs wanted a meeting with the Prime Minister. Such peaceful picketing usually occurs under Labour Governments; it certainly shows that the present Government are in no position to lecture anyone in the House about the nature of the housekeeping of the defence budget. We have already heard this afternoon from the Secretary of State the admission that finances are in such a shambles or, alternatively, the Government's handling of the economy is in such a shambles that they are incapable of entering into new defence requirements and capabilities over the next six weeks or so.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman just two questions. First, does he believe everything he reads in the *Observer,* and, secondly, at some point will he explain Labour's defence policy?

Mr. O'Neill: At present we are debating the defence estimates and the Government's White Paper. I believe a fair amount of what I read in the *Observer,* though I have some doubts about Mr. Watkins' judgment at times, and those who read that paper will know what I mean.

The way in which the Government are trying to cover up for their financial incompetence and maladministration of the defence budget requires far greater explanation than has been given today. We are not concerned only with the handling of the money available to the Ministry of Defence. We recognise that the Secretary of State is still relatively new to his office—he has held it only for some 10

[Mr. O'Neill]

months, so not all the financial problems are of his making. The Government's approach to the broader strategic considerations and the fact that the Government, and particularly the Prime Minister, had such difficulty in responding to the prospect of German reunification are far more worrying. We know that she moved from her gut anti-German position to putting her faith in the four-plus-two talks—her emphasis not mine. In the early days of discussions about what would happen about the reunification of Germany, the Prime Minister immediately sought to take the initiative away from the German peoples and to return it to what she regarded as the victorious allies. Certainly, she did not realise that the GDR and the FRG were not going to wait for the approval of the Grantham Germanophile before they set about uniting their two states. That meant that the full strategic implications of the changes in eastern Europe were lost to her for quite some time. Certainly no one was allowed to consider any prospect of change in the doctrines of flexible response and forward defence.

It took the Prime Minister until 7 June this year to concede publicly in a speech to the North Atlantic Council that circumstances had changed, but even then it was a grudging admission. She quoted the defence planning committee, which said:

"The implementation of a CFE Treaty will virtually eliminate the possibility of a surprise attack."

She noted that it referred only to a surprise attack. She could even envisage disarmament becoming rearmament: "that plough shares could become swords."

When a Government such as the Federal Republic's are so preoccupied with the problems of reunification, cannot we expect the other major European contributor to NATO to come up with something original? We have yet to see the Prime Minister giving any form of leadership to the debate or any new thinking being offered.

The Prime Minister admits that there may be troop cuts, but says that we shall continue to keep nuclear weapons up to date and based forward. Those weapons will be neither nuclear artillery nor a follow-on to Lance, on both of which she has been vetoed by the American president. Does that mean that we are talking of new, modern and up-to-date nuclear weapons, successors to the WE177? Will they be on British planes? Have the Germans agreed to their forward deployment? Has any other country been sounded out or agreed to accept them? Will we buy American? Or will we co-operate with the French, in which case how shall we be able to guarantee that there will be no strings attached, as France is not a member of the nuclear planning group or the military committee of NATO? If we do not co-operate with the French, will we pay for the project ourselves and, if so, where will the £3 billion come from?

No other European member of NATO is prepared to accept those weapons. The Federal Republic has expressed its opposition, the low countries are against them and the Italians have shown their reluctance about having more bases in their country. How can we have flexible response without flexibility?

Flexible response grew from NATO's concern about the alleged Soviet conventional superiority, western reluctance, both political and economic, to match its superiority in men and materials and the availability of relatively inexpensive, smaller yield and shorter-range nuclear weapons, which it claimed, if used sparingly, could deter the Warsaw pact from invading western Europe.

I have never been convinced of the practicability of the concept of limited nuclear war. I certainly have doubts about the role of tactical nuclear weapons in deterring war. Despite the Government's assertion, there is no clear consensus among historians about whether tactical nuclear weapons played any role in persuading the Soviets not to invade.

The only sub-strategic weapons that will be open to the alliance will be airborne ones. With in-flight refuelling, they will be capable of penetrating so far into the Soviet Union, and with such impact, that the strategy involved in their threatened use is fraught with difficulty.

Some of the Secretary of State's difficulties about letters written to *The Guardian* may be attributable to the fact that the writer has no connection with the Labour party but is one of the defence thinkers of the Liberal Democrats. As far as I can see, they are welcome to her.

The simple argument that the Americans advanced in the past for the presence of short-range nuclear weapons in Europe is that if there are no nukes there will be no troops. The United States must be reminded that if its ambitions are to be fulfilled, and if the cuts that the Senate and the House of Representatives want are to be made, the argument of "no nukes, no troops" has less resonance when we are dealing with such smaller numbers.

The changes are not only of significance for nuclear war fighting; the forward defence will have to be changed, which, as the Secretary of State said, will have consequences for the role of the tank and infantry.

Mr. Speed: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that the Soviet Navy has several nuclear-powered submarines in service and being built, which cannot effectively be destroyed by conventional high explosive. Would he, therefore, maintain our nuclear depth bombs, which are carried by Royal Navy aircraft and maritime patrol aircraft, or would he get rid of them?

Mr. O'Neill: I was here when that question was last asked, and my predecessor was somewhat set adrift by it. We were then able to establish that increasingly the use of nuclear depth charges by the Navy was going out of fashion. They were no longer regarded as a justifiable weapon.

They also destroy vast tracts of the sea, which makes it very difficult, in any kind of maritime engagement, to continue communications and business. They are as much a problem for those who use them as for those who are attacked by them. There is little strategic use for them, and I cannot say that any of the navies of the alliance would use them in times of conflict.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): To return to the hon. Gentleman's point of "no nukes, no troops", if there were to be a Labour Government, and an American president said that America would maintain the nuclear umbrella over Europe only if there were bases for American nuclear weapons in Europe, would Britain provide bases for such weapons?

Mr. O'Neill: The response to that question would have to depend on the circumstances. *[Interruption.]* The right hon. Gentleman asked a legitimate question and I have no objection to answering it. As and when NATO has the

opportunity to consider such a request it will do so. A Labour Government would not believe that such weapons would be helpful, and would argue against them within the alliance. Apart from this Government, no country in Europe is prepared to consider a location for them on the continent of Europe. It is not a question which is likely to arise.

The Secretary of State outlined his thinking on the question of tanks and helicopters. No intimation has been given of the consequences for tanks and, consequently, of the enhanced importance of helicopters. If the number of tanks were to be reduced by agreement, with the possibility of the British forces having as many as every other country, that would have serious consequences for Challenger 2, though not necessarily in terms of the project. If, however, fewer units are produced, the cost is likely to rise.

There is still some time before the Challenger 2 development programme has to be assessed. I hope that before then the Secretary of State will give serious thought to the consequences of purchasing reduced numbers. I hope that he will also reconsider the position that he has adopted on providing assistance to single product companies that find themselves without the market that they had anticipated. The employment consequences for Vickers, in Leeds, Newcastle and other places in the north, will be very serious. The Government may disagree with the Opposition about diversification, but this is likely to be the first real taste of the implications of the defence cuts. I urge the Minister to consider this argument. It is not the same as the one deployed in the recent past.

Mr. Sayeed: Does that mean that the Challenger 2 tank replacement would not be part of the 25 to 40 per cent. defence reduction in a Labour Government's spending?

Mr. O'Neill: The hon. Gentleman puts figures on cuts that have yet to take place. As far as I know, he, CND and some of the more exotic fringes of the Labour movement have been the only ones to try to impose figures of that nature.

I am certainly at one with the Secretary of State. I am not going to put price tags on cuts that may or may not be available to the—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order.

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): Will my hon. Friend comment at this point not only on "exotic" figures but on the study by Cambridge Econometrics which shows that over the next decade a 50 per cent. cut in defence spending would lead to a reduction in unemployment of 520,000 and to an increase in our gross domestic product of £10 billion?

Mr. O'Neill: I have read that report. It contains a fairly major qualification: that if there are appropriate programmes of diversification and regional assistance, then the suggested consequence and results could happen. The report is very heavily qualified on that point. Another significant aspect of it is that, by and large, the assumptions on which the Government see opportunities for defence cuts tend to come from opportunists who are driven by negotiation and arms control rather than by the individual actions of a United Kingdom Government ignoring the other requirements that could be imposed by the decisions of our allies and ourselves.

The paper is of some substance and contains useful information, but a lot more work needs to be done on it than my hon. Friend hinted at in his question.

Mr. Sayeed: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. O'Neill: I have answered the question and I shall not give way. The hon. Gentleman can check with *Hansard* that I have given way considerably more to Members on both sides of the House than did the Secretary of State.

The Minister will be anxious to tell us what his intentions are regarding tanks. He seems to be prepared to tell everyone else. We look forward to hearing them.

As for the number of battalions, we will have to wait and see whether there is a precedent for 32 battalions, as there is a precedent for 32 frigates. It is clear that the new mobile force structures will have to be established as international units. The helicopter will be an integral part of that process. If there are to be reductions and reorganisation—perhaps the Minister of State for the Armed Forces would like to comment on this tomorrow—I cannot see the regimental structure being relevant in its present form to the strategic needs of the Army. I recognise that that will be significant to recruitment, but if it is not done we might have more chiefs than Indians—more officers than men.

Previous Secretaries of State have said that we can have any kind of internal reorganisation, as long as it does not affect cap badges, but the nature of the cuts that will be introduced before the general election will have an impact on cap badges and the regimental structure. That will require Opposition Members to think very hard.

I read in *The Sunday Telegraph* yesterday about this and the Argylls campaign. It was one of the most popular petitions ever organised in Scotland. It was so popular that people signed it two, three, four or five times. It was a cause celebre at the time. The size of the armed forces that we may well be arriving at by negotiation and arms control will lead to considerably fewer opportunities for the kind of regimental structure that we had in the past. Perhaps the Minister will comment on that possibility because it is important. If he chooses to rule it out, we shall be interested to see what structure he will introduce when the opportunity arises. The House should be made aware of this matter at this early stage, as it will have quite dramatic effects on recruitment.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): So that hon. Members can be sure that we have understood the hon. Gentleman correctly—we shall certainly have to look at changes if there are to be reductions in the medium or long term—did I hear him say that he believes that, as a result of the changes, we must do away with the regimental system?

Mr. O'Neill: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for asking me that question. I shall clarify the point. I was saying that there may be a substantial reduction in the number of regiments. There may be a further combination, and that will not be an easy process for any Government. Frankly, I am surprised that the Secretary of State did not allude to that matter. Anxieties about cap badges are major considerations and should be raised in a debate of this nature. Although we are looking at this year's figures, we must look towards the future in our tacit discussion—if that is not a contradiction in terms—of the options for change.

Mr. Sayeed: I do not understand what the hon. Gentleman is saying. What is the answer?

Mr. O'Neill: I am not responsible for the lack of intelligence among Conservative Members.

It has been made clear that RAF Germany will have a diminishing role in the new set-up and that there will be reductions in the RAF. As the provision of air cover is reduced, there will be a case for bringing a number of aircraft home to the United Kingdom and putting them into storage. We shall have to examine pilot recruitment. I should imagine that new and lower targets will be set. Certainly, if there are such developments, it will be incumbent on us to consider expanding the RAF Reserve. United States experience in that matter has been useful. It was able to recruit several airline pilots, many of whom had been in the armed services. Airline pilots could be encouraged to join the Reserve. With the use of simulators and so on, they should be able to maintain their service skills.

The significance of rapid mobility to bring troops from the United Kingdom should be met in some respects at least by the use of civilian aircraft. Savings would be involved. The use of civilian aircraft is analogous to ships being taken out from trade to be employed within the maritime strategy. For the Navy that is a more difficult matter. Although it offers possibilities, naval arms control is a considerable way down the road. The United States believes that the maritime contribution is central to its concepts of power projection. That means that we are a long way from serious cuts.

We should be examining the future programme for type 23 frigate orders and stating more clearly than we have already what the successor to that craft will be. The Government, along with others, have already withdrawn from the Euro-frigate programme. There is wide agreement that it does not really matter how hulls are shaped—I understand that that is the rationale behind the withdrawal from the Euro-frigate—and that it is the hardware placed in the hulls that is important. We are probably now able to look at less complicated systems for a less demanding range of duties than we have had in the past. Perhaps we could have several less complicated and therefore, I hope, less expensive craft built in the latter part of this century.

All such cuts should flow from the CFE negotiations and related talks. The Vienna talks on conventional forces are nearing conclusion, but there are complications involving aircraft definitions. Surely it would be preferable to get an agreement on matters excluding aircraft and thus enable Gorbachev to return to the Soviet Union with a positive achievement from the talks as soon as possible.

I was one of those in the previous debate who welcomed the inclusion of aircraft by President Bush. He insisted that they be included in last year's summit. That has proved to be a difficult matter to get round, and it would be preferable, therefore, for us to recognise the difficulties that are involved in getting agreement, and set the matter aside and accept that the best need not necessarily be the enemy of the good in every case. That would enable us to start work on further reductions in conventional arms and to expand the range of the talks not only to 50 per cent. cuts but to the elimination of all ground-based short-range nuclear weapons in Europe. We recognise that those weapons are now regarded as surplus to requirements, but it is important that they are removed by negotiation and by the appropriate systems of inspection and verification that are implicit in arms control negotiations. As Gorbachev said, agreements without inspection and verification are largely worthless or at least dangerous. It is crucial that we recognise that, if we wish to get rid of such weapons, there is scope for negotiation and for appropriate schemes of inspection and verification.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): I am listening very carefully to the hon. Gentleman's thoughtful speech. I hope that people will go out and buy "Looking to the Future", the Labour party's new proposals. The Labour party has specifically said that its defence policies have been entirely vindicated, yet the hon. Gentleman seems to be saying that unilateral nuclear disarmament is now out and that there should be negotiations. If his party's policies have been vindicated, will he say something about the deep cuts in defence spending that have been presaged by the Labour conference, if not by the Labour Front Bench?

Mr. O'Neill: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has started reading the new Labour party document. I should like to hear from him when he has finished it.

There are prospects for sizeable advances on short-range nuclear forces in a relatively short period when the CFE talks reach their second stage. Certainly, the progress that has already been made in Geneva is to be welcomed. Perhaps the Government would be willing to meet the Soviet request and participate in the next stage. Perhaps the Government will not be in power at that time because it will probably take some months at least for the United States Senate to ratify the treaty. It would be a tremendous shame if the Government's refusal to consider participating in the next phase of the strategic arms reductions talks process were a major obstacle to the completion of the present talks.

The possibilities that I have raised so far have two attractions. First, they provide a reduction in tension and contribute to further stability and, secondly, they afford us the opportunity to reduce defence spending. As the Minister of State for Defence Procurement said on the BBC "Today" programme on 31 May:

> "The most successful economies are those that spend the least proportion of their GNP on defence".

The reason for such low levels are historic and geographic, but the attractions that defence cuts offer for other forms of consumption are self-evident.

In the past, we in the Labour party may have exaggerated the attractiveness of such cuts, but it is clear that, as the perceived threat diminishes in the public mind, willingness to fund what becomes considered to be excessive defence expenditure also diminishes. There are two problems in getting involved in the numbers game, and one is the fact that the negotiations are not yet complete—though we can anticipate their general direction in financial and strategic terms—and the other is the MOD's excessive secrecy regarding defence costs.

A major drawback of the competitive tendering process has been the increase of commercial confidentiality, so that the unsuccessful companies do not get essential information. Indeed, in the "Today" programme to which I have referred, the Minister of State for Defence Procurement said that the "Options for Change" review

> "could not be conducted in public, the materials are highly classified . . . very, very secret".

That is certainly the case in the United Kingdom, but it appears that in the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States and the low countries, defence committees are given tremendous access to information. I believe that the Chairman of our Select Committee on Defence includes France in that list. I realise that this is something that he feels strongly about because, although he may have access to the information, it rarely appears in his report in any form other than a collection of asterisks. The Government's undue secrecy in such matters prevents us from producing the clear and detailed statements that the public would require not only from an Opposition, but, more importantly, from a Government.

Therefore, I hope that once the summit in London is concluded, we shall begin to get the information that we require so that we can establish the options for change and how much they will cost. The Secretary of State spoke at some length about "Options for Change", but did not tell us when the process would be completed; when the document would be published; whether it will be in the form of a Green Paper or a White Paper; whether it will be published before or during the recess; whether the result will be announced at the Tory party conference or whether we shall have a debate this Session. Those are all legitimate points and I hope that at least one of the Ministers—perhaps the architect or author of "Options for Change", who is to reply to the debate—will be able to tell us at least when the rest of the story will get out of the bag, if he cannot tell us the contents.

We do not believe that cuts are the sole source of stability. Indeed, the deployment of the forces and their composition are just as important. The doctrines that have been adopted by NATO and the relationship between the alliance and the Warsaw pact are of crucial significance. This is why the conference in Paris of all the 35 nations in the CSCE process is so important. We must recognise, however, that CSCE is, at present, a very limited concept. It has no administrative structure. I understand that it does not even have a telephone number.

We must get agreement from NATO, the Warsaw pact and the neutral nations on the establishment of a task force to explore the requirements for overseeing the inspection and verification of the CFE cuts; for exploring the confidence and security building measures between neutral, alliance and pact and former pact states covering the Baltic and Black seas, as well as exploring the possibilities of resolving disputes such as the Hungarian-Romanian border dispute.

That task force should be supported by top-level staff and given tight headlines to work to. It should have some responsibility for co-ordinating the diversification of the defence industries and the destruction of a number of the materials that are now the subject of disarmament discussions.

I note that in the Army debate the Minister of State for the Armed Forces said that Britain had already made a contribution in terms of the peaceful uses of plastic explosives, such as the blowing up of tanks. Indeed, perhaps the single and most pressing need is to help the Soviet Union to get on with the business of dismantling its tank corps. The Soviet Union also needs assistance in providing housing for the armed service personnel who are being demobilised at the moment.

There are a number of areas in which all the European countries, both the neutral countries and those of the western alliance, could help the countries of the east. Following the talks in Paris, the CSCE in its new form could be of tremendous assistance. Although it is probably premature to talk of a "new defence architecture"—and we are certainly not going to talk of an architecture that is built in reinforced concrete—for the moment at least, we should talk in terms of some form of scaffolding that can traverse the two sides of Europe. We need to be able to adjust such a structure and to assist in that process.

It is likely that NATO, with a diminished military role, will have an advantage. As an organisation, it continues to enjoy the support of its member states and to have a coherence. But it needs to recognise that, while the threat has diminished in terms of intent, the capability remains. The threat has all but disappeared since the Soviet Union is no longer prepared to wage a war it cannot afford and will not win.

But we have to guard against triumphalism. The Soviets and the neutral states, along with the new democracies, are all entitled to their say in the establishment of the new European order. The eagerness of some to seek out new threats outside Europe and to pursue them at any cost must not be allowed to develop.

Of course, as a trading nation, we have interests, but we must guard against the post-imperial fantasists, who would have us donning our pith helmets and charging out east again.

The tasks of the new European order are there for all to see—the establishment of common security; the building up of trust between the peoples of Europe; and the protection of civil and economic liberties. In the period after the second world war, Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin helped lay the foundation of those aims in western Europe. I fear that it will take a change of Government before Britain will make a similar contribution to the next phase which will embrace our whole continent.

The defence White Paper is ample evidence of this Government's failure to appreciate the scale of the new challenge and, in particular, the prospects for a Germany united and free. For the Government's adherence to the old strategic thinking; for their grudging participation in the great armaments negotiations, and their secretive and half-hearted talk of defence cuts; and, most of all, for their inability to contribute in the way that we could to the creation of a new European order, I call on my hon. Friends to support our amendment.

5.6 pm

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): It was a great pity that the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) spoilt his interesting remarks with some rather stupid rhetoric at the end of his speech. I do not know who caused him to do that; I hope that it was not him, because we feel that he is much more sensible than that. If, as he said, it takes a change of Government to get a decent defence policy, I must advise him that that certainly could not be achieved by a change to a Labour Government.

I am glad that the hon. Gentleman made it clear that he is not proposing the abolition of the regimental system. Although we may need to make some adjustments to it in the future, it is wrong to suggest that we would ever want to organise our military forces in any way other than the system which has not only served us well, but which is the envy of every army in the world. All armies wish that they

[Mr. Michael Mates]

had a regimental system like ours. For all that that system may have one or two faults and inflexibilities, it is the finest thing that we have and we had better stick to it.

I add my thanks to those that have already been given to the Secretary of State and the Leader of the House for arranging this debate at such a timely moment and for the fact that the White Paper has been published. We have not returned to what happened not only last year but the previous year—before my right hon. Friend the Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King) became Secretary of State for Defence—when the defence debate was held in the autumn when all the steam had gone out of it and when the White Paper was stale news. It would be to everybody's benefit if we could make constant efforts to hold the debate at this time every year. I say that with a certain amount of masochism because the timing presents my Committee with a hell of a problem in agreeing the report, taking evidence and printing it in time for the debate. As always, I am extremely grateful to my colleagues who serve on the Select Committee on Defence for all their hard work.

Since the last defence White Paper debate in October, the Committee has visited Northern Ireland, in November, and the Falkland Islands, in December. Our report on the White Paper contains a number of references to the results of the visits. I should like to thank all those who welconed us on those visits and to pay our tribute to the service personnel—and especially to the families in Northern Ireland—who live and work in less than ideal conditions. Some infantry accommodation in the Falkland Islands is appalling. They are living in what are, in effect, little more than containers. I hope that progress on the new accommodation, particularly at Onion range, is progressing.

Paradoxically—it is always the same—the further we got from headquarters and from everybody else, the more uncomfortable the site and the more isolated it was, the happier the troops were. I have come to understand that phenomenon over the years, but it is remarkable and bears repeating. Those in the new, comfortable and sophisticated accommodation want to get home, while the others are perfectly happy because they feel that they are doing a proper job.

Mr. Sayeed: Does my hon. Friend agree that one thing that the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) said which was correct was that the services are worried? Does he agree, as I found, that they are worried about the possibility of a Labour Government who would, according to the party's policy document, impose cuts of at least 25 per cent., and probably substantially more? The services require reassurance from the Government that they will not be sent to fight without adequate weapons and the ability to defend us all.

Mr. Mates: I am sure that my hon. Friend can expand on those remarks when he makes his own speech. I entirely agree that we should not allow our troops to get into that position.

Mr. Rogers: While he is talking about service accommodation, will the Chairman of the Select Committee comment on the fact that, in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) in April, the Secretary of State said that unavoidable and essential repairs to service accommodation amounted to £323 million, and in an answer to me last week the figure had gone up to £360 million? The hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) said that troops seemed to be happier in the worst conditions, but does he think that the state of affairs implied by those answers is good?

Mr. Mates: My remarks related to troops on active duty in the Falkland Islands, and the argument holds ground. The hon. Gentleman should go to see them because he would then understand the context of my remarks. I am talking not about baths and showers leaking, but about the most primitive conditions where people think they are doing any essential job and are thoroughly happy doing it. That is a remarkable characteristic of the British soldier in service.

In Northern Ireland we were much impressed with what we heard and saw, particularly with the vigour with which the third brigade pursues its task of border security. I pay a sincere tribute to the men and women of the Ulster Defence Regiment, whom we visited when we were there, and whose job is possibly the most thankless of all in the services. That they can continue—most of them part-timers and civilian members of the community of Northern Ireland—to do that job knowing that their lives are at risk both on and off duty, at home, on holiday or wherever they may be, is nothing short of remarkable. I am glad to pay tribute to them for the way in which they carry out their work.

The Committee decided last winter to embark on an inquiry into the defence implications of recent events. We have finished that inquiry and will be reporting to the House soon, following our visit next week to Moscow and Berlin. Our report on the White Paper concentrates on, as it states,

"those aspects of defence policy which continue to deserve the attention of the House in the midst of dramatic changes."

To put it in less grand terms, we have concentrated on the daily and weekly grind of Ministry of Defence life. I hope that it is helpful that we have done so.

Contrary to some reports, defence expenditure is not increasing. We tried to set out the complex picture in paragraph 2.2 of the White Paper, which I commend to the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) if he wants to look at a complicated sum and talk about facts rather than dogma. This year is already a tough one. In 1989-90, the Ministry spent much of its accumulated savings carried forward from recent years. Inflation has been higher than expected, which has meant a real terms fall in defence spending this year compared with last of about £700 million. Some of that was anticipated, but most of it was not. Sir Michael Quinlan, the Permanent Under-Secretary, talks of

"a very tight programme management problem."

We have seen the six-week procurement freeze, which is a desperate measure, although not a new one.

For the next years in the planning cycle—1991-92 and 1992-93—plans suggest a small annual real rise, partly because £260 million extra was found for 1991-92 in the public expenditure White Paper. But the Committee is not confident that the sums for those years will represent an increase. As we state:

"Past experience does not inspire confidence in recent Treasury inflation forecasts . . . the planned small recovery in defence spending in 1991-92 and 1992-93 looks extremely susceptible to the cumulative effects of inflation."

inflation can eat away at the defence budget, although we are happy to congratulate the MOD on having managed for three successive years to keep rises in the price of defence equipment below the rate of general inflation. That is a tribute to successive procurement Ministers, and not least Sir Peter Levene, who has had an electrifying effect on the way that contracts are let within the Ministry of Defence and on competition policy in general.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): Did not the Select Committee report that unreliable equipment in the armed forces costs the taxpayer £1 billion per annum? Why has the Committee made such a feeble attempt to get the Government to do something about it?

Mr. Mates: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman should think that it is us who are being feeble. There is a report tagged to this debate on the reliability and maintainability of defence equipment which I commend to the hon. Gentleman. If he wants to make a speech on the subject and catches Mr. Speaker's eye, no doubt he will do so. That is a worrying factor to which I shall turn later.

Mr. Cohen: About £1 billion per annum could be saved if we dealt with the unreliable equipment.

Mr. Mates: It is a bit rich for a Member who has done nothing but call for reductions in defence expenditure to say that we are not doing well enough in spending the MOD's money.

Mr. Benn: My hon. Friend's point is that there is massive waste in defence spending. The Conservative party always criticises people for what, allegedly, they waste—for example, local government. But when my hon. Friend points out the savings to be made—Rapier overspent by about £300 million—why do we not have a clearer indication of the Government's acceptance that there is major waste in the defence budget?

Mr. Mates: I do not know why the right hon. Member for Chesterfield puts those questions to me. Has he read the reports which my Committee unanimously agreed, and which have been critical of such matters? The MOD is due to answer those questions and I am not sure why the right hon. Gentleman should criticise me for bringing the issues to the attention of the House. It is hard to take such criticism from people who do nothing but criticise any expenditure defence.

There is no doubt that there is pressure from the Treasury in the public spending round to lop off the odd £1 billion from the defence budget—it was ever thus—and leave it to the MOD to decide which pet schemes to abandon. A few years of that, some say, and the defence budget will be well down. That is crazy, and those who write and talk about it do no service to themselves or to the defence of this country. It is essential that any changes in defence expenditure reflect a planned and orderly process of matching commitment and resources, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said. Arbitrary cash cuts and deliberate attrition by inflation make prudent management of the defence budget next to impossible.

In some senses, there will be little need to reduce service manpower because it is steadily reducing itself. The Committee has noted a shortfall from requirement of 12,342 in the services. The British Army of the Rhine is now below 55,000—the figure that used to be regarded as the floor. We looked at some of the measures taken to improve retention. Everybody has his favourite scheme. I am concerned about the fall in planned expenditure on recruitment advertising, to which the Committee referred, and about the huge falls in advertising for the reserves.

The advertising budget for the Territorial Army is down 30 per cent. this year and that is difficult to understand when the reported difficulties in recruiting people to the services are so great. That does not seem to be a prudent saving. As we say in the report, the increases in the regular reserve, which simply reflects the number of people leaving the forces early and retaining a commitment. Few of those regular reserves seem to attend training, and Ministers should look carefully into that.

Women constitute about 5·5 per cent. of service strength. Wrens now serve at sea, and no doubt some of my colleagues will want to express their views on that. In any event, it is essential that the MOD keeps an eye on the effects of the decision. I also hope that Ministers will be able to announce that all the remaining differences between men's and women's pay and conditions of service will shortly be removed. There is no justification for any remaining differentials.

Because of MOD policy, we still do not know what proportion of service strength comes from the ethnic minorities, but we know from recruitment records that the proportion is very low. Only about 250 ethnic minority service personnel join each year—barely 1 per cent. of entrants. The Peat Marwick report was welcome, but the Committee calls on Ministers again to reconsider cap badge monitoring. There is nothing to lose from that and there could be much to gain.

As for procurement, we refer to the need for another auxiliary oiler replenishment vessel soon. I note that when the Duchess of York named the "Fort Victoria" in Belfast on 12 June, describing it as a "floating supermarket", the Secretary of State was reported as having responded to questions about further orders by saying,

"I am not sure I can afford this one at the moment."

We hope that he can, and that a third one will be ordered soon.

The Committee also drew attention to what is not in the White Paper—in particular, the older Royal Air Force aircraft which will soon need expensive replacements: Buccaneer, Nimrod, Andover, and Canberra. We also mention the long pause in deciding whether to go ahead with a new generation of nuclear-powered fleet submarines and further diesel-electric Upholder class submarines.

The Committee also looked at merchant shipping. As the House knows, we have been studying the defence implications of the availability of merchant shipping for some years. The White Paper has a depressing and worrying situation to report. It accepts that this remains an area of concern for the United Kingdom and the alliance. In paragraphs 5.12 to 5.21 we examine the figures in some detail, and we are worried about the continuing decline in United Kingdom merchant fleet manpower and in shipping in certain categories. For instance, we depend on roll-on roll-off ferries being made available by our NATO allies. That is reflected in the fact that most of the ships chartered for United Kingdom national exercises were Danish roll-on roll-off ferries—none of the 29 ships chartered was British, although on NATO exercises most ships chartered seem to have been British.

Recent events may increase rather than diminish the importance of shipping for reinforcing our forces in Germany. The channel tunnel has obvious weaknesses as

[Mr. Mates]

a means of reinforcement, so we look to Ministers for a further sign that steps are being taken to reverse the decline in the merchant fleet and in merchant navy personnel.

The Ministry is now untied from the PSA for works services, so for the first time we had a duty to examine the MOD works programme—a formidable task. Nine per cent.—£1·9 billion—of the defence budget goes on works and maintenance. The Ministry is a huge landowner, with more than 250,000 hectares of land and with comparable property interests abroad. Among the many construction and modernisation projects are a substantial number for BAOR and Royal Air Force Germany. Some of them may prove to be unintended presents for Germany, although there are clearly commitments which will have to continue, however long and in whatever strength we remain.

In paragraph 4 we recommend that the possibility of replacing the old barracks at Aldergrove in Northern Ireland be kept open; that would enable the previous balance of four roulement and six resident battalions in Northern Ireland to be restored which would reduce turbulence for service personnel in the Province.

The Ministry is looking for more land for training; so much is openly declared in the White Paper. We discovered that since 1987 freehold holdings for Army training areas and ranges had risen by 3,000 hectares. Sooner or later the Ministry will have to deal with the question of additional training land for forces withdrawn from Germany. Knowing as I do how desperately short the services are of training land, I add that this is a policy which, although it sounds strange, makes every sort of sense, and I hope that it will be pursued.

We have again examined MOD's new management strategy, which is reported to be proceeding well and on target for full introduction in 1991. With recent events in mind, it could hardly be introduced at a more vital or difficult moment. Tight budgetary control, the introduction of genuine performance indicators—on which we are obliged to report somewhat sceptically—and the setting of targets will all be needed if MOD and the services are to carry out what could be the most radical shake-up since the second world war.

Finally, the Committee looked at defence research and development which, like works and maintenance, is a major and mostly unregarded part of the defence budget. This year R and D will cost £2·7 billion, or 12·6 per cent. of the budget. As a Committee regularly examining defence equipment procurement projects, we are only too well aware of how the money goes. Government policy is to reduce defence R and D's share of the nation's scarce technological resources—at present it accounts for almost half all Government-funded R and D. But the figures suggest that civil R and D is planned to fall faster than defence R and D. We cannot entirely share MOD's confidence that industry is increasing its share of financing defence R and D. All this is taking place at a time when the four principal MOD research establishments are to be set up in 1991 as the defence research agency. We are worried lest innovative strategic research be squeezed out by an approach dominated by the agency's commercial remit, based on a customer relationship with MOD and others.

I have mentioned research and development at £2·7 billion; construction and works at £1·9 billion; 250,000 hectares of land; and 172,000 civilian employees. The list gives some idea of the scale of MOD's budget and of the scale of reductions in public expenditure that could theoretically be achieved. It is also a measure of the sheer scale of the management problem that making these radical changes presents. We shall be looking in the months and years to come at the way in which the Ministry handles these matters.

I had intended to make some detailed comments on our two reports on reliability and maintainability of defence equipment and on Rapier, but as it is clear that hon. Members taking part in the debate have read them I shall leave the making of those remarks to them.

Speaking on my behalf—although colleagues may agree with some of what I say—I should like to mention the atmosphere in which these changes are taking place. My right hon. Friend was absolutely right: we could never have believed the speed with which recent changes have happened. Some are now saying that the pace will slow down and steady, so we shall have time to take stock. I venture a different opinion—I think that the process is likely to speed up.

Some of the positions that some countries are adopting in the negotiations are no more than that; I do not believe that they will bear examination in the light of those countries' experience. The Soviet Union is naturally uncomfortable about a united Germany being part of NATO. While trying to negotiate—not very realistically—that the military forces of the new Germany should somehow be associated with both NATO and the Warsaw pact, which does not make sense, the Soviets are also trying to negotiate guarantees of the presence of a large number of Soviet troops in the new Germany for five to seven years.

We may have to allow the Soviets a transitional period. I should be all in favour of our negotiating one, but I believe that when the time comes matters will seem very different to the Soviet Union. When there is a united Germany that is part of NATO and the European Community, and when that new Germany speedily brings the living standards of those living in what is now the German Democratic Republic up to western standards, as we know it will, it will become even more uncomfortable for the Soviet Union to leave such an enormous part of its armed forces sitting in Germany in those new surroundings. One hears of strains already; East Germany under the old order was much better off than Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, exciting comment among the Soviet forces about the differences between the quality of life there and in the Soviet Union——

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I am interested to hear what the hon. Gentleman, as Chairman of the Defence Select Committee, would say to the proposition that a united Germany might be governed by the SPD, which might have won an election on a platform calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from German soil, with the result that a united Germany was in neither the Warsaw pact nor NATO. What does the hon. Gentleman say about such a proposal, which seems to be gaining a great deal of popularity with people in East and West Germany?

Mr. Mates: Not for the first time I disagree with the hon. Gentleman. I do not think that what he suggests will happen and it is therefore not fruitful to speculate on it. At

the moment both sides want the new Germany to be a member of NATO and the EEC. The European Community is the key to this matter. When the new Germany is formed—some people say that it will happen in a year while others say that it will take two years; I do not wish to make a forecast—it will start to become a western nation. There is no denying that and it is what people in East Germany want. That will not be compatible with being part of a military alliance of the old order of the Warsaw pact. I cannot see any free German wanting that.

I was speaking about the speed of change and how it will affect Britain and the other NATO nations as much as it will affect Germany. Contrary to what some people say, although there will be difficulty over a CFE-I agreement, it will happen because the Americans and the Soviets want it. Far from there being a pause, the pressure to move to another round of conventional troop cuts will be enormous. It may be partly because of the politics of the new Germany and certainly because of what I have said about the desire of the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces from the new East Germany because of the discomfort that the Soviet Union will face if it leaves them there for any length of time. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and his colleagues will turn their attention to that. Although we may have debates about the size of the Navy, the Army or the Air Force, over the next two or three years we shall see a relentless downward pressure on manpower on both sides. Provided that reductions take place logically and in sequence and are balanced, I am all in favour of them.

It is wrong for people to talk now about specific reductions. That is putting the cart before the horse. Unlike some Opposition Members, I do not believe everything that is said in the press. I am totally content with what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence said about the debates that are taking place in the Ministry of Defence. If those debates were not vigorous I should be disappointed. People should argue their corners and at the end of the day it is up to Ministers to draw the arguments together. To talk of chiefs as ostriches because they are putting forward the points of view of their services is crazy and can only be said by those who do not understand the system in the Ministry of Defence. It may have many faults, but vigorous discussion and debate is certainly not one of them.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The hon. Gentleman has sought to outline accelerating changes in continental Europe. Does the hon. Gentleman or his Committee think that the training grounds that are available in the United Kingdom may not be adequate in the near future?

Mr. Mates: I think that I alluded to that. We are desperately short of training grounds and always have been. We have never had enough and that is why we send troops to train in Canada, Kenya and Cyprus. That is partly to give them overseas experience, but it is largely because there is no way in which they can carry out in Britain the scale of training that can be undertaken in Canada. If we were able to offer such training in Britain, I suggest that the hon. Gentleman and his constituents would complain loudest.

My last point does not deal with peripheral matters: it is at the heart of the debate. I said in the debate on the Army, and I make no apology for repeating, that when we have gone through all these changes there is only one asset that counts and it is the people who serve in our defence forces. They are the people who matter and they must be able to find a career and a career structure for the next 10 or 20 years. We do not do them a service by giving potted examples of how to cut this, save that and change the other.

I was delighted to hear my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State say that a rational look is being taken at the changes. I hope that that will be an urgent look because, as I have tried to depict, the changes will be fast. That brings us to what will inevitably be a political rather than a military conclusion about what we need to defend our interests. By "us" I mean the European Community and western Europe in general. We must decide how to defend our interests through the next decade and into the next century. We must decide how to structure our forces so as to provide a career for people, and we must equip them in a way that will help them to carry out their task. Those who are trying to do that backwards in the interests of cheap headlines do us no service at all.

5.35 pm

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): I hope that the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) will forgive me if I do not discuss in detail his remarks about the Select Committee on Defence. I do not mean any disrespect to him or to his Committee, but I wish to return to the speech of the Secretary of State for Defence who defended the Government's policy.

The Government's attitude and response to worldwide international events is grotesquely inadequate. The whole country must look at the Government's proposals to see whether we can get some better remedies and better prescriptions. That applies especially to nuclear weapons and the possibilities for nuclear disarmament, because those are the most important questions. To anyone who says that that is a peculiar way to think, I would say that President Gorbachev, who is rather popular in some quarters, takes the same view. He has said for years that we have to reach a time when we will be able to have full-scale nuclear disarmament.

The Secretary of State has presented a White Paper that does not deal with that matter at all. It does not mention the non-proliferation treaty. In a few months the Government will have to give their view on that. The Secretary of State looks puzzled, as if he has never heard of it. Perhaps he has not, because many members of the Government talk as if they have never heard of it and as if they are not proposing to do anything about it. Under the preamble to the treaty that we signed—and if we had not signed such a preamble there would be no treaty—we have an obligation to do our best to get rid of nuclear weapons. That is one of the reasons why other countries were prepared to sign the treaty. The Government have produced a White Paper in which that is not even discussed and they do not think that it is a matter of any significance. That is an absurd way to deal with what remains one of the major questions confronting the world. We have a much better chance of dealing with that question now than we will have in five or 10 years.

Anybody who doubts the significance of the squalid inadequacy of the Government's response should read what the Prime Minister said when she returned from Moscow after her meeting with the Soviet President. She

[Mr. Michael Foot]

did not seem to have learnt anything from her conversations there. Perhaps I should withdraw that in one sense, because she made one reference which showed that she had learnt something which perhaps she should have taught her Ministers. I remember our discussions on the previous two or three defence White Papers. There was one two or three years ago which reviewed Soviet policy but did not mention that the Soviet Union had been on our side during the second world war and had suffered considerable casualties. It seems that the Prime Minister has at least learnt that. The right hon. Lady referred to the fact when she returned from her visit to the Soviet Union and made a statement on 12 June.

The Soviet Union and its President attach some importance to the fact that it lost 27 million people during the last world war. That, of course, has influenced its judgment on some of the issues that are now before us. I grant that the Prime Minister mentioned that, but the rest of her remarks suggested that she has learnt nothing from the events that have taken place and are taking place.

If we were to believe what the Prime Minister said, and if we and others were to act on what she said, we would be taking steps to intensify the risk of conflict, not to reduce it. In about six replies to questions the Prime Minister said:

"Wars are caused by the weakness of nations, not by their strength".—[*Official Report*, 12 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 143.]

Does the right hon. Lady think that that is an adequate description of what has happened over the past 20 or 30 years? If she thinks that other countries should take notice of what she says, she is, in effect, issuing an invitation to every country to embark on a huge programme of rearmament. There are some countries and some peoples who believe the right hon. Lady. I do not say that they do so because of the statement that I have quoted, but if they read what she says and take the same view, they will act accordingly. We know that the right hon. Lady has some strange pupils in her school for rearmament.

Mr. Tony Banks: The right hon. Lady has a strange view of history too.

Mr. Foot: Indeed.

I doubt whether the first world war was caused because some nations were weak. It is much more likely that it was caused because some nations which had the greatest power thought, "If we do not strike now, other countries will become strengthened and will rise against us. We must strike first before that happens." In those fanciful days our fanciful methods of describing such matters had not been invented. We might have described what they had before the first world war as a strategy of calculated response. It was partly that which landed us in the arms race. It was in part the arms race, not the weakness of other countries, which led to the outbreak of the first world war.

Mr. Mates: I am trying to follow what the right hon. Gentleman is saying. What would have happened if we had had a deterrent strategy and capability in war? That might have saved us in 1939.

Mr. Foot: We thought that we had that with the Dreadnoughts. We had some of the most powerful weapons in the world but that did not stop the war. It did not stop the calculation of what was going to cause the war.

The Prime Minister says—I suppose that some people must take some notice of her—

"Wars are caused by the weakness of nations, not by their strength."

That is an invitation to every country to strengthen its weapons and to make itself stronger and stronger. It is an invitation also to take precautionary steps, if necessary, to prevent other countries from strengthening their weapons. That was the circumstance of the pre-1914 arms race which led to the first world war.

The war in 1939 might bear a closer relationship to what the Prime Minister said. Although the Secretary of State talked about these matters earlier this afternoon, it is a piece of cheek when representatives of this Conservative Government tell us how the second world war was started. More important than any comparative strength or weakness was the fact that Conservative leaders at that time—they had almighty power in this place with majorities as large as the present one—favoured the aggressors. They favoured Hitler. They favoured Mussolini in Abyssinia and the fascists in Spain. They gave them enormous power and encouragement. If anyone disagrees with me, they have only to read the authentic accounts of what happened. If they wish, they can read a book entitled "Guilty Men", which was published about 50 years ago. It wears remarkably well and is still extremely good. If anyone wishes not to accept the account which is set out in that book—it was published almost this week 50 years ago—let him read "The Gathering Storm", which was written by Winston Churchill. Winston Churchill's book says that it was the perfidy of a Government who were prepared to align themselves with fascist powers that led to the second world war, not the weakness or strength of nations. If Conservative Members do not like to learn these historical truths, let them read "The Gathering Storm", the first book which Churchill wrote on how the war happened.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): If what the right hon. Gentleman says is true, will he explain why the Labour party before the second world war voted consistently against an increase in defence expenditure to counter what was going on in Nazi Germany, and why his party voted against conscription before the war so that we would be unable to meet that threat?

Mr. Foot: I must refer the hon. Gentleman to the unchallengeable works of reference to which I have drawn attention. He will find the story and the arguments set out much more fully and much better in those works. If he reads them, he will learn exactly what happened and why it was more the alliance of Conservative Ministers with Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and the rest than any single factor that led to the outbreak of war.

Let us bring matters up to date. Let us consider some of the countries throughout the world that are accepting the doctrine that was espoused by the Prime Minister when she returned from Moscow. It seems that it is a doctrine which is now accepted by the Government. The right hon. Lady said:

"Wars are caused by the weakness of nations, not by their strength."

Was she saying that we must all go and look for nuclear weapons? The dictator of Iraq is one of the Prime Minister's leading pupils. I am not sure whether the gun that was sent to Iraq was meant for full-scale nuclear weapons. No one has yet been able to discover whether

that was its purpose. I hope that someone will be able to do so in due course. If the Prime Minister thinks that her doctrine is correct, there is no reason why a British Government such as the present one should not be fool enough to encourage the dictator of Iraq to follow it. If that happens, what about the others? Gaddafi made a statement today on the same subject. In effect, he said that he was determined to have nuclear weapons. Under the Prime Minister's doctrine, that is a valid course to take. Why not? It is sensible of countries with interests to protect to say, "If the British Prime Minister says that this is the only way to protect ourselves, we might as well follow her doctrine." It is not an academic matter. It is an extremely topical one. If the horror of a third world war ever comes to us, it will be the result of failure to do anything about the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

I suppose that much the most dangerous place is the middle east. We have read about the trial of the Israeli citizen who did his best to try to tell the world about the Israeli weapon. Other countries are building up nuclear weapons as well. Gaddafi says, "If the others have these weapons, I must be allowed to have them, too." I have no doubt that the leaders of Iran think that they should have a nuclear capability, too, especially as the leaders of Iraq are arming their country with nuclear weapons. As I have said, it is not an academic matter.

The non-proliferation treaty, about which the Minister was sneering a short while ago, was signed for the reasons which I have advanced. About 10 or 15 years ago some wise statesmen said—this is one of the few wise things that has ever been done in the nuclear age—"We must stop the spread of these weapons." Indeed, that is the only way in which the race can be stopped. The Government are so little interested in these matters that they make no mention of them, even though three or four weeks hence they are supposed to go to a conference to present their views.

I agree that the future of Germany is likely to shape the future of Europe and much else, as it has done twice before in the lifetime of some of us. Let us suppose that a newly elected Government of a united Germany say—this has not been said yet, but if the Prime Minister's doctrine were accepted it could well be—"We want nuclear weapons on the same basis that the British Government demand that they should keep their nuclear weapons." Why should not a Government of a united Germany say that? What would be the British Government's response? Would they say, "Yes, that is fine"? The Prime Minister's reply would surely be, "The more the merrier." Her view is that the more countries which have nuclear weapons, the safer we all are. However, that would not be President Gorbachev's answer, or that of whoever may be the Russian leader over the next five or 10 years. One of the reasons why that wise statesman President Gorbachev has been raising that issue ever since he had the chance to do so is because he saw the perils. I am sure he recognises also the perils in respect of Germany.

What is the answer? The Minister of State for Defence Procurement is quite capable of giving answers for the Government even when he is not speaking for them, so I would be happy if he will tell us his own mind now. What if a new democratically elected German Government representing a powerful consensus of the country says, "All we ask is that we are allowed nuclear weapons on the same basis as the British Government"? The Germans have not done that yet, but if they do it would be wrong, in my opinion, for us to agree to such a proposition.

Long before that danger arises there should be a treaty, agreement and understanding about the abolition of nuclear weapons. I repeat that President Gorbachev has insisted on making the same point right along. He will put the arguments to the Government, even if they do nothing about answering them now.

The Government's response to the great, exciting and liberating events in Europe is quite inadequate. I have listened to a number of such debates in the House concerning the response that the west ought to give to the new, convulsive events in the Soviet Union. I recall again one of the most significant debates that ever I heard in the House, which occurred a year or so after the fall of Stalin, when the Prime Minister of the day, Winston Churchill, made his last speech as Prime Minister of that Government. In those days, I used to sit below the Gangway, where my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) usually takes his place. He is not there now, but his place has been taken by my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). It is an interesting vantage point. One can see best of all from there what the Government are up to, though one has to be a little careful about what the members of one's own Front Bench are up to as well. From that place, I witnessed the 1954 debate, when Winston Churchill made a very different speech from that which the right hon. Lady made when she returned from Moscow last week.

Winston Churchill's speech was made at a time when the assurances were far fewer and when the prospects looked much grimmer. He told the House, the country and the world that the horror, perils and intensified dangers of a nuclear arms race and of nuclear war were such that a huge effort ought to be made by the west to make the proper response to the Soviet leaders of those times—who were a good deal less liberal than their counterparts today.

He pleaded for the United Kingdom and the United States to respond in such a way that a real disarmament agreement could be achieved. He was stopped partly by the Foreign Office and partly by American intervention. If he had not been, think how the world could have been saved the epoch of most of the cold war. Of course, Winston Churchill brought vision and imaginative statesmenship to bear on those issues, but we have seen nothing of that kind from the present Government.

Are we, as a result of the west's failure, to see a great opportunity again trickle through our fingers, as it did in 1954 and on some other occasions? My right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) has written that that was one of the great lost opportunities of the post-war world. It is all the more remarkable that my right hon. Friend should have said that in his book, because he did not say it at the time, and admitted as much. But some people did. Aneurin Bevan said it in this House—as did Churchill, speaking for the Government. If Bevan and Churchill had had their way, and had raised the debate above the lower ranges to its proper level, and if a proper response had been made to the Soviets, what horrors, perils and costs in human life we might have avoided.

We have another wonderful chance, yet all we hear from the Prime Minister is that wars are caused by the weakness of nations, not their strength. The sooner that the Government are swept away, the better it will be for the people of the world.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. There is much interest in the debate, and it will be helpful to all concerned if right hon. and hon. Members limit their speeches from now on.

5.56 pm

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): That was a fascinating piece of rhetoric but it was basically devoid of fact. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) raised the spectre of a unified Germany asking for nuclear parity with, for example, Great Britain. Has he never heard of the 1954 Brussels treaty, which makes such a thing impossible? The right hon. Gentleman is fond of telling right hon. and hon. Members what he thinks they do not know, but he conceals the facts that he chooses to ignore. His whole speech was built on that basis, and showed that he has for years lived in a time warp. He still lives in the days of Aldermaston and the CND, but the world has moved on considerably since then. Only the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent could resurrect the discredited Gollancz yellow books.

What really matter are the contributions made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and by the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill). At the heart of the debate is the future of NATO and of the Western European Union. Both hold the key to what may happen in the world. Clearly, the hon. Member for Clackmannan has not read the recent report adopted by the WEU which sets out Europe's place in the alliance and makes it plain that the retention in Europe of North American troops is vital. That report was unanimously accepted by communists, socialists, conservatives, liberals and Christian democrats.

The Hague platform also made it clear that the nations of western Europe believe that there is a need for the nuclear deterrent for a considerable time ahead. That platform was endorsed by socialist France and Spain, coalition Holland, and by other western European countries. In arguing that we should not have the nuclear deterrent, Labour Members are out of touch with the rest of the world. It is not the House and the Government who are out of touch but the Labour party. That is why it failed to win office on three consecutive occasions, and why it will fail on the fourth.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): I do not suggest that my hon. Friend makes his point with insufficient clarity, but it is worth mentioning that at various stages in Labour's recent defence thinking it has been in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament in the face of a communist regime. As that regime is now highly unstable, and it is conceivable that there could in the future be a militaristic, introverted, nationalistic regime in the Soviet Union, it is interesting to pose the question whether Labour would still be in favour of nuclear disarmament.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: That would depend on what the Labour party thought would win the most votes at the time that it had to answer the question. Given the present defence policies advocated by the Opposition, there is no possibility that they will win another election.

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said in his opening speech, there are no real signs of any reduction in conventional weapons by the USSR. There have been many promises and statements of intent—and I do not doubt Mr. Gorbachev's intentions—but we do not have sufficient evidence of reductions, and until we have, we must not let our guard down.

Last year the Western European Union featured in the defence statement, as a result of the action in the Gulf and the aftermath of The Hague platform. I am sorry to see no mention of the WEU this year because the out-of-area danger still exists. As my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed) said, we cannot afford to overlook that danger.

The future of Europe's security depends upon America and Canada continuing to commit forces to Europe. Had America not become isolationist after the first world war, it is pretty certain that there would not have been a second world war. We have to make every effort to keep American troops in Europe.

When Mr. Gorbachev addressed the Council of Europe it was interesting that he made it plain that he believed there was a need, as far as the west was concerned, for America to remain in Europe. He did not call for the removal of American troops. Therefore, we have to make America feel that it is wanted and needed to protect this continent.

Surely NATO must include a unified Germany, which is going to come, at whatever pace. The USSR is rightly anxious because of the 27 million people killed in the war —I shall leave aside the 20 million murdered by Stalin —and she has a right to be reassured that there is a way to protect her security. The USSR needs those assurances.

I have a specific question for my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, who is to reply to the debate tonight. On the day that the East German Länder join the Federal Republic of Germany, under article 23 of the federal constitution the whole of Germany becomes part of the Western European Union, and all her allies in the WEU are obliged to defend her at the border. Do the Government accept that that is not a matter for discussion by the four-plus-two, but will automatically happen and that no documents need to be signed, as they were signed in 1954? I should like confirmation of that fact.

I have mentioned the Western European Union a few times because the Soviet Union has great respect for and a good relationship with it. The Supreme Soviet and the Parliamentary Assembly of the WEU have established annual visits for discussions and we found them to be most valuable when we were there about six weeks ago. At that stage we, too, were worried about the apparent stalling of the conventional forces in Europe negotiations. It was clear from talking to members of the Supreme Soviet that they had not yet satisfied the military as to what would happen to the military establishment. When one has granted virtually everything that the military establishment wanted for decades, one has to convince it of the need to make the sort of reductions required by CFE, or because of Mr. Gorbachev's promises. Let us consider just the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany, Poland and Hungary. The Soviets have to face the problem of rehousing those soldiers when they return and that is why they must have the support of the military establishment.

Civilian members of the Supreme Soviet want to reach an accommodation with the west as rapidly as possible. NATO and the Warsaw pact have kept the peace in Europe for well over four decades. Now we need to build a new organisation to secure peace for both east and west.

The European Community has no place in that because it has no defence powers or obligations whatsoever. The only organisation which has a treaty obligation to deal with defence is the Western European Union.

We now face the prospect of success for the CSCE, but it lacks one vital factor—democratic parliamentary oversight. Proposals have been made at the Western European Union and the Council of Europe that parliamentary input should be built into the CSCE process. Whether it is for baskets 2 and 3 for the Council of Europe or basket 1 for the Western European Union is immaterial. What is not immaterial is the fact that something has to be done to make Governments accountable to the representatives of their national Parliaments. When one studies CSCE it is interesting to find that about 30 members are already either full or associate members of the Council of Europe, which leaves only half a dozen or so outside the council, and they could be brought in in a way that would be satisfactory to them. The Soviet Union is already a guest member of the Council of Europe, and it also already has an excellent relationship with the Western European Union. The confidence that we have established in those two organisations gives hope for the future.

Mr. Tony Banks: Earlier the hon. Gentleman referred to President Gorbachev's address to the Council of Europe, which was an excellent speech. However, President Gorbachev also talked about the common European home at that time, and I should be interested to know whether the hon. Gentleman believes that that objective is attainable. If we start talking about a Europe which stretches from the Atlantic to the Urals, what will be the position of the United States with regard to the defence of Europe?

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: Briefly, the answer to the second part of the hon. Gentleman's question is that, as Mr. Gorbachev made clear in that speech, he recognises that there will still be a need for the United States to be associated with the defence of Europe. That was very clear from his speech and the hon. Gentleman was there to hear it, as I was. The common European house is not a new idea. It was originated more than 20 years ago by a distinguished Austrian statesman, and has been recreated recently by Mr. Gorbachev. I believe that it is attainable, but no one can prophesy the time scale. Indeed, if the hon. Gentleman and I had debated what would happen in Europe 18 months ago, and had predicted what has happened, little men in white coats would have taken us away, and that would probably have been the only time that the two of us would have occupied a common home.

Another aspect of out-of-area threats is that we cannot ignore dangers that come from outside Europe. I do not believe that the Soviet Union takes a different view on that issue from this country or from NATO. If the Soviet Union and NATO were to abandon all their nuclear weapons, the sole result would be that the Soviet Union, eastern and central Europe and the emerging democracies there and the west would be at the mercy of nuclear blackmail from Libya, South Africa, Israel or China—it does not matter where. Therefore, one has to retain the residue of a deterrent and that is recognised by both east and west. I hope that official spokesmen for the Labour party in the House do not deny that, because it would be a tragedy if they were so out of touch as to say that such threats were not a real danger. We need to be alert.

Europe today is a very different place from the Europe of 12 months ago, when we considered the previous defence estimates and debated them. The hon. Member for Clackmannan, who opened the debate for the Opposition, was highly critical of the part that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has taken in unfolding events. He is entitled to say that sitting in the fastness of this country. Those of us who have been lucky enough to visit Poland and Moscow and to talk to the Hungarians and the East Germans who have experienced free elections know that they are united in their belief that it was the efforts of the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev that broke the log-jam in eastern and central Europe. Anyone who denies that is, frankly, a fool and one hopes that the Labour party does not want to be considered as such.

The Opposition's hatred and dislike of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister must not allow them to deceive the public into believing that she has not played a major role in opening eastern and central Europe to democracy. Next year will see even more change.

In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), I pay tribute to him and the Select Committee on Defence for the enormous amount of valuable work that it undertakes when analysing defence issues which it then puts before the House. It is sad that we do not have sufficient debates on those subjects because defence issues are still at the heart of what makes this country survive. If we fail to match our intentions with our deeds we shall be in a sad way, but I do not believe that the Government propose to let the country down in that manner.

6.10 pm

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): It is legitimate to argue that, at this time, all the assumptions and doctrines that have sustained our domestic defence policy and that of NATO in the past 40 years demand review. I do not use the word review as a term of art because I must confess that I find the distinction between a "defence review" and the consideration of "Options for Change" somewhat metaphysical.

However the exercise is described, to be realistic it requires first an analysis of the threat, if any, an assessment of the means necessary to meet that threat and an estimate of the resources required to provide those means. Imposing a financial cut of £1 billion at the instigation of the Treasury or £5 billion at the behest of a party conference seems to be an inherently flawed approach, not least because we run the risk of raising the threshold of expectation among the public. We also run the risk of damaging the morale of the service men and women who are likely to be affected.

It is perfectly understandable that there should be a desire for the release of funds previously earmarked for defence to provide additional financial resources for health, education and social security. It has already been said, however, that that is not capable of being achieved by turning off one tap and turning on another. More profoundly, if we are to have a financial dividend out of the changed political circumstances, we want a permanent dividend. A unilateral reduction in expenditure can just as easily be reversed by a unilateral increase in expenditure.

[Mr. Menzies Campbell]

The most lasting financial dividend arises best out of negotiated arms reductions, reciprocated by reductions in the arms of others. A peace dividend secured by agreement is much more likely to be a long-term one.

There are many uncertainties that are yet to be resolved. No one yet knows properly the cost of restructuring our forces to meet the changed threat. Who can say what will be the cost of the verification of the treaties that are currently in the course of negotiation? What will be the cost of making men and women redundant and equipment inoperable?

Sometimes the unreasonable expectations of the public are due to ignorance. We now know from what the Secretary of State has told us that we are holding this debate against the background of intense internal Government activity. The options for change, however, have been considered in cloistered secrecy and if the Secretary of State is pained by misrepresentation I fear that he has himself to blame. It should not be necessary at this time, in a democratic country of this description, to have the kind of off-the-record briefings which formed part of so many articles in this morning's newspapers in advance of this debate.

I believe that the document which some, with no regard for ministerial dignity or longevity, have come to describe as the "Clark Memorial" document deserves a much wider circulation. During the Army debate I invited Ministers to put a copy in the Library in advance of this debate so that we could all see its contents and consider the extent to which its logic is susceptible to challenge.

The internal debate in which the Government are engaged should be a public one because many of the questions that fall to be answered require an answer from the public. If £800 million is to be released by declining to build a fourth nuclear missile submarine so that more can be spent, for example—I offer it as no more than an example—on mitigating the effects of the poll tax on certain poll tax payers, does the public understand the implications for Vickers and for employment? If we save money on the surface fleet by reducing our programme of type 23 frigates, is the public willing to accept the consequences for Yarrow and Swan Hunter? Some may say that the answer to those and similar questions is diversification, but we know from the Soviet Union that such diversification takes time and can be extremely painful. If one diverts money to mitigate the effects of the poll tax, for example, that money will not be available for retraining or retooling.

The most regrettable thing is that the type of debate that we should be having in public is now taking place in the United States where the opportunity for freedom of and access to information is much more enhanced than any opportunity we enjoy. We deserve that opportunity, and it is a matter of profound regret that we do not have it.

Against the background of a lack of detailed information, it is dangerous to attempt to construct a blueprint either for our domestic defence policy or for that of NATO. It is fundamental that we preserve a common purpose in the alliance. The communiqué issued by Ministers after the Turnberry meeting reflected an entirely different tone from that used by the Prime Minister when she addressed those Ministers and a number of other fortunate invitees, including myself, at lunch-time.

The distinguished United States architect of the alliance, George Kennan, argued in 1947 that the fundamental purpose of the alliance was to contain the belligerent forces of the Soviet Union until such time as internal developments and generational change led to a society and leadership which no longer sought confrontation with the west. If that was the fundamental principle upon which NATO was founded, that purpose has now been virtually achieved.

We now know that there is no longer a threat from a united Warsaw treaty organisation. It is rather curious, however, that in the past 10 days it seems that members of that organisation want it to continue, at least in some limited political role. We also know that the Soviet Union remains the major military power on mainland Europe. It is, however, subject to economic and ethnic instability and it would be unwise—I put it no higher than that—for us to assume for ever that no military threat of any kind to our security could come from the Soviet Union.

NATO needs a new purpose, and that thinking has begun, but thus far it has reached no more than vague conclusions. It is argued that NATO should become more political, but those who advocate that are surprisingly short of instances of how that new political profile should be etched.

NATO could give an effective signal to the Soviet Union, in particular, by embarking on a review of—and, preferably, a change in—several of the doctrines that have sustained it for so long. In July, at the instigation of President Bush, NATO is to discuss embracing the doctrine of no first use of nuclear weapons, which would constitute an extraordinary step. It will also discuss the question of flexible response.

As soon as the issue of short-range nuclear weapons became one on which political considerations had a profound effect, and as soon as it became clear that the modernisation of short-range nuclear weapons would not be politically accepted by a unified Germany, a substantial hole was drilled in the doctrine of flexible response. If the first nuclear step is taken away, not a flexible response but an inflexible response is created: countries are driven much faster towards taking the next nuclear step.

I understand that NATO is to consider abandoning the doctrine of forward defence, at least in mainland Europe. That is politically necessary, as the doctrine would apply to countries which have broken free from the yoke of the Soviet Union, and which, in many cases, are expressing an enthusiastic desire to embrace the principles of parliamentary democracy that exist in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in western Europe.

In these changing circumstances, there is a risk that some NATO countries will feel less committed to the alliance. That requires sensitivity. Instructing a unified Germany that it must accept forward deployment of a tactical air-to-surface missile may produce not only rejection of the proposal, but a longer-lasting distaste for the alliance. If the price of keeping a unified Germany in NATO—and having that Germany accepted in that organisation by the Soviet Union—is to agree to a nuclear-free Germany, it is a price worth paying. Such a price would be consistent with what is now the only logical nuclear doctrine for NATO to espouse: that of minimum nuclear deterrence.

We know that NATO can play a vital part in the creation of a new security structure in Europe. There is debate about whether NATO should continue. I believe that, in the foreseeable future, there will be a requirement for NATO—for an alliance of 16 nations. However, we also require a structure that binds in the United States and the Soviet Union and enlists their weight in an organisation that will need to be able to resolve the disputes of which we have already had a foretaste in the emerging democracies of eastern Europe.

A paradox of the Gorbachev years is that as the uncertainty of a divided Germany has been removed the traditional ethnic uncertainties elsewhere in eastern Europe have been unlocked. We have seen a resurgence of nationalism—although not in its 19th century mode. There is uncertainty within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, of which Mr. Boris Yeltsin is an eloquent example. Whatever structure emerges for the security architecture of the new Europe, there will still be a place for NATO. Its place will be complementary to that structure, and not a substitution for it.

The Chairman of the Defence Select Committee, the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), rightly pointed out that these—mainly procurement—issues must be seen against the background of the possibility of a CFE treaty: of phase 1 being signed by the end of the year, and of ensuring further pressure for a phase 2. They must also be seen against previous undertakings by Ministers that, if strategic arms reduction talks reached agreement on 50 per cent. levels of reduction, the Government would give consideration to the introduction of the British strategic forces in the succeeding strategic arms reduction talks.

It will be necessary to maintain the nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future, and that will have to be done through the medium of four submarines. There are proposals to deploy only three. Although some would say that they are arguing in their own interest, senior naval officers say that, if there were only three, there would eventually come a time when it would not be possible to deploy the deterrent. The notion that a submarine should be left sitting in the harbour and that only in a moment of crisis should it be put to sea is surely flawed: the mere act might well represent the kind of escalation that the existence of the deterrent on station is designed to avoid.

There must be reductions in the British Army of the Rhine. Arising from that, there must be a greater emphasis on mobility, which will require helicopters. Even if there had been no planned or suggested reduction in expenditure on defence, the funding of such an extension of the provision of helicopters would have to be at the expense of some other component of existing expenditure. The inevitable conclusion is that that expansion must be at the expense of tanks, either in principle or in numbers. I hope that, in his reply, the Minister will give us some information that will end the damaging and demoralising uncertainty about the Government's attitude towards the EH101.

Mr. Tony Banks: The hon. and learned Gentleman said that there would have to be reductions in the British Army of the Rhine. What would be the function of the BAOR in a united Germany? Who would it be there to defend us from—Poland, Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union? Where will the front line be?

Mr. Campbell: The front line will be where it presents itself. Of course we all hope that there will be no necessity for conventional or nuclear war on mainland Europe. I fancy that if the hon. Gentleman were to address his question to the other members of NATO, he would find little enthusiasm for the notion that BAOR should depart completely from mainland Europe.

Mr. Banks: I was asking the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Mr. Campbell: I think that I gave the hon. Gentleman the answer that he deserved.

At present, there cannot be any justification for embarking on a replacement of the WE177 free-fall bomb by the United Kingdom by means of the SRAM-T or the French equivalent. I cannot understand the logic that suggests that that replacement is necessary now or in the future. If we move towards a doctrine of minimum nuclear deterrence, the existence of such weapons in the hands of the United Kingdom is surely unnecessary, and, at this moment, liable to give a wrong signal to those whose confidence—in theory, at least—we are trying to build on the other side of what used to be called the iron curtain.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): Can the hon. ahd learned Gentleman explain an apparent paradox in his remarks? He emphasises the need for the United Kingdom to continue to have a strategic nuclear deterrent with no fewer than four Trident submarines, but no level of nuclear deterrence under that retains any meaningful capacity. Without stand-off weapons, the sub-strategic capability of the RAF would be taken away.

Mr. Campbell: The hon. Gentleman has clearly not followed the logic of my argument. I argued for minimum deterrence. I cannot conceive of the circumstances in which the United Kingdom, acting unilaterally, would consider it right or appropriate to use a sub-strategic nuclear weapon on the mainland of Europe.

While accepting the need for four boats to ensure that the system is effective, there is no justification for the planned increase in nuclear capacity which would inevitably be brought about by deploying the proposed number of warheads on Trident. If the level of warheads on Polaris is effective, to increase that number simply because of a change in the system or a change in the submarines is wholly unnecessary and destabilising.

The Defence Committee has made some effective criticisms of the Government's policy on the ordering of the type 23 frigate. I need do no more than associate myself with those comments. However, "Options for Change" must surely include consideration of the important contribution which the surface fleet makes in western Europe by representing 80 per cent. of the contribution of the mainland European countries. There is a high degree of United Kingdom specialisation in naval matters, and it would be extremely unfortunate, and in my view unhelpful, to say the least, if that specialisation were in some way to be diluted or reduced.

Procurement must always be subsidiary to defence policy, which must be subordinate to the system of security which evolves for Europe. The bolder and the more lasting are the decisions made in Europe, the greater scope there will be for long-term reductions in domestic expenditure, and all the signs are that the prize is well worth winning.

6.31 pm

Mr. John Wilkinson (Ruislip-Northwood): The debate has been remarkably low key. It has appeared perplexed and uncertain. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) meandered somewhat trying to adduce historic parallels that did not exist. Even my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was hypercautious and gave very little away. However, he said that the military capability of the Soviet Union remained formidable. He cited in particular the naval construction programme and the potential threat that it posed. I understand that my right hon. Friend will not wish to disclose in advance the contents of the review, "Options for Change". Yet it would have been helpful for the House had he been somewhat more precise about the general principles which he is trying to follow.

I shall divide my speech into three parts, like Caesar's Gaul. First, we must establish the aim and long-term purpose of any review. Secondly, we should set that review in the context of creating a stable and enduring security structure for out continent—and we can briefly examine what the structure might entail. Thirdly, we should try to define at least in outline the dispositions of a British defence policy and the related manpower and procurement policies to match.

We have heard next to nothing about the aims and objectives of any review. Clearly, the aim must be to eliminate, by means of a grand strategy involving every political, diplomatic, economic and appropriate military means at our disposal, the residual Soviet presence in central Europe. Within the shortest possible time scale, Soviet divisions should return home. I am sure that it is the wish of the Soviet soliders stationed abroad. General Secretary and President Gorbachev has enough troubles at home. There are plenty of roles for those armed forces in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Uzbekistan and Georgia, but there is no meaningful purpose in retaining a military presence in central Europe. We are really out to facilitate the process of Soviet withdrawal. That is the first cardinal and central point.

The establishment of those alien Soviet forces in central Europe and the perpetuation thereby of an inherently unnatural ideological order upon the people and nations of central Europe have prolonged the cold war for too long. How thrilling it has been to see the wall come down and, by the process of self-determination and democracy, the peoples and countries of so many central European nations restored to their true independent status.

What about the European security structures? First, there has to be an all-embracing structure, a reconciling edifice to bring together in a single concert of Europe the east, as represented by those residual communist regimes, the west and the neutrals and to provide an input for our north American allies, Canada and the United States. We have that structure in embryo—the CSCE process. There are understandable calls for making something more concrete out of that process and establishing a secretariat. But we should be careful and not try to adduce to the CSCE as an organisation, when it becomes one, powers greater than it will ever possess. There will be such great divergences of interest, outlook, allegiance and social systems between the 35 component nations of the CSCE that we can never expect too much from it, except for the key factors of reconciliation, better understanding, building bridges and increasing confidence. As a forum for achieving those ends, it would be incomparable and we must work as part of the grand strategy to bring it about.

The second element must be the building of a truly strong and reliable European pillar of our western alliance. Again, we have it in embryo; we do not need to create anything new as we have the Western European Union which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg), the leader of the British delegation to the WEU, reminded us, is the sole organisation in Europe empowered by treaty to assume defence responsibilities.

The great merit of the WEU is of course that it imposes clear obligations on its signatories. The obligation to come to the aid of another signatory if attacked is much clearer and more explicit than in the North Atlantic treaty. There is no possibility of evasion of its meaning and, furthermore, again as my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate made clear, the Brussels treaty provides an option for signatories to come to the aid of another signatory where that signatory's interests are beyond the strict geographic limits of NATO. The classic example was the action taken in the Gulf by five WEU members of NATO working together in a WEU context. I was saddened that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State dismissed the possibility of using such a WEU framework for out-of-area operations in the future, because there could be occasions when our European interests are not identical with those of the United States. NATO is not the appropriate body to conduct out-of-area operations.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate said that the WEU is already a focus for central European countries who recognise that the Warsaw pact is useful only as a temporary negotiating framework for CFE 1, but beyond that is moribund or dead. They will still need a collective security framework because they will not feel secure on their own. They know that CSCE will not come to their assistance. Like the Pope, it has no divisions and, like the United Nations, it has no peace-keeping forces. They will still need the ultimate sanction of allies coming to their assistance if they are attacked.

That is why, to take one example, the Hungarians are interested in joining the WEU. It does not involve their becoming members of an integrated military structure, as NATO does, but it provides certain safeguards. As their political and instinctive interests and loyalties lie with the community of democratic, free nations of Europe, they rightfully aspire to playing their full part in the political development of Europe.

It was interesting that the Hungarian Foreign Minister, speaking earlier this month at the WEU Assembly in Paris, suggested that Hungary should apply for guest-status membership of WEU. He has asked for a delegation from the WEU to visit Hungary to examine that suggestion further. I would expect that where the Hungarians lead other central European democracies will follow, and they should be encouraged to do so. If we are seeking to establish a glacis in central Europe without foreign troops, the WEU is the ideal basis on which to work. I am confident that in time perhaps the Czechs and other central European countries will follow suit as they become truly democratic.

The third aspect of the European security framework is NATO. We are still, and will remain as far as we can

foresee, an Atlantic community of free nations. We will still need, as the Soviet Union remains the preponderant military power in our continent, to call in aid the new world to address an inherent imbalance in the old. That imbalance is redressed by two guarantees—first, nuclear, which we all understand; and, secondly, to some extent conventional, a residual American presence in Europe. I envisage in the longer term, as I am sure do analysts on the other side of the Atlantic, that the American presence will tend to be to the rear and to the flanks and not so much in the central front. Ultimately, the logic of events is for the withdrawal of foreign troops, both east and west, from Germany. When that happens, we will have taken a great step forward and there will then be no need for Soviet troops to remain in Poland. We will need NATO, which will continue to be basic to the underpinning of security in Europe.

Where does that leave the United Kingdom? First, as has been said many times, the nuclear deterrent is the ultimate expression of our determination to remain sovereign independent people. We cannot sacrifice it and remain true to our historic inheritance. I differ from the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-West (Mr. Campbell), because I think that there must be gradations of deterrence if the nuclear deterrent is to be credible, just as there must be gradations of conventional deterrence.

Secondly, we shall need to defend the home base with, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, an air defence system and appropriate coastal forces.

Thirdly, we shall need an out-of-area capability. It goes without saying that we shall need more air mobile forces, more intervention forces and more amphibious forces, with the mobility, firepower and ability to concentrate force on a decisive spot early. Those are inherent characteristics of air and sea power, and must remain part of our out-of-area capability.

I was somewhat surprised that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State did not unambiguously declare that the United Kingdom will have a major role in the eastern Atlantic. As the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East made plain, because there will be fewer in-place forces the need for reinforcements and reserves will be greater. I see it as a vital interest of the United Kingdom, and a vital contribution to the defence of NATO and our continent, that we play an active and full part in the eastern Atlantic. For that purpose, as the Soviet submarine threat remains, we will need the highest anti-submarine warfare capability. Before too long, we will need a new generation of maritime patrol aeroplanes, but in the immediate future and now, we must equip the type 23 frigates with the helicopter they need—the EH101. A production order should be placed forthwith without delay. Our helicopter procurement policy has been dilatory and plagued by procrastination and delay, which has not helped our industry and has not facilitated the necessary modernisation of our armed forces.

The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent, and perhaps the Secretary of State, went back to the period immediately after world war one and the 10-year rule. I refer them to Lord Trenchard and the manpower pattern that he established for the Royal Air Force, which stood the test of time and provided a basis for the expansion of the service in the middle and late 1930s, leading up to the battle of Britain. For our manpower, we will need a cadre of the highest quality—well-educated, long-serving professional regulars, with every attribute of professionalism accorded to them and every emphasis placed on making the profession of arms worthwhile. I should wish to see not cuts in training at service academies but more training and more professional courses.

We shall need much larger reserves, and herein lies the key. I hope that we will have more warning time and the ability to build up reserves, which must be of all three services. We have a unique chance to put in place exciting Reserve opportunities for the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, involving a worthwhile flying role for the Royal Air Force. The Air National Guard of the United States is a classic example. It flies the latest aircraft to exactly the same standards as the regulars.

Procurement in the United Kingdom has been a catalogue of errors and a long tale of many expensive catastrophies. Perhaps part of the cause of that is that Parliament has never exercised effective scrutiny—in his interesting speech, the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East referred to this—because we have no appropriation function and we shy away from taking on the Executive in this key area. Our reports are advisory and we often bewail the fact that the stable door of expenditure was left wide open and that the horse has bolted out of sight.

That is by the by. Perhaps Parliament is beyond redemption and beyond reform. Nevertheless, I would hope that we will grasp two lessons. We must press much more vigorously for a genuine concerted European programme of procurement with a common research fund, properly administered, with the whole common procurement process, through the Independent European Programme Group, answerable to Europe's directly-elected representatives on defence, the Assembly of the Western European Union. In this way a corpus of opinion will be created in Europe that supports collaboration, concerted operational requirement and common re-equipment time scales. I hope that that will be done and that it will be done soon. I know that Her Majesty's Government are active in their chairmanship of the Independent European Programme Group and that there has been much progress. The progress needs to be taken boldly forward.

The task that we face would be much easier had some of the difficult decisions been taken long ago. They were evident throughout the 1980s. In two books that were published in the 1980s, one in 1982 and the other in 1987, I referred to the fact that BAOR needed to be reduced. I spelt out the idea of reducing BAOR to one division, covering the clutch of Royal Air Force airfields west of the Rhine. It is possible for this to be done now as a first step towards a genuine withdrawal of foreign troops from Germany. As so often in European politics and security matters, the German question lies at the heart of so many of our problems.

If the Soviet Union can be encouraged to withdraw its forces from what is now the German Democratic Republic and from Poland, NATO can make commensurate withdrawals. That will make our continent a much safer place and, in the process, save us a great deal of money.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I remind the House of the earlier appeal for brevity.

6.52 pm

Dr. John Gilbert (Dudley, East): There is on the Order Paper a most extraordinary motion that the House approves the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990. It was moved by the Secretary of State. I have never seen a man show less enthusiasm for a Statement on the Defence Estimates; he hardly referred to them, from start to finish. I suspect that next year's defence White Paper will look very different from that of 1990.

The timing of this debate, not for the first time, is wrong. I sincerely hope that the decisions of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement—I am glad to see that he is maintaining the tradition of a Minister of State making the decisions in the Department, particularly with respect to defence procurement—will not dribble out one by one, but that we will have them in a coherent form and that there will be another defence debate in the autumn.

It is no secret that I consider it essential that we keep NATO and that the United Kingdom keeps its strategic nuclear capability. I am delighted that my party seems to be coming to the view that three, if not four, of the Trident submarines should be retained.

What is the Government's intention in this respect? One idea that has been floated—I was startled to see it—is the possibility that this Government will reduce the number of submarines from four to three. I see that the Minister of State is nodding his head. I hope that that is a reflection of the Government's policy. I cannot imagine what the quick reaction alert time might be in certain circumstances. I do not believe that the British people would agree to a nuclear deterrent that could be activated at only a fortnight's notice.

We need to maintain a strategic capability for as long as every other country has one, and that will be for a very long time. The number of missiles per submarine, the number of warheads per missile and the amount of throw weight per warhead can come down. It is absolutely essential that we keep a minimum of four submarines.

The Warsaw pact is disintegrating; it appears that the Soviet Union may also be disintegrating. The possibility cannot be ruled out of civil conflict, or even of civil war, within the Soviet Union. Anyone who tries to foretell who will come out top in that tortured country is either a fool or a charlatan. Who will have control of the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal in the years ahead is not known. It is not impossible that more than one nuclear-capable sovereign state will emerge out of what is now the USSR. This is a further reason why the United Kingdom should not consider giving up its own capability.

Nor do I think—this is an even more unfashionable view on this side of the House—that we should abandon all our short-range nuclear capability in Europe. Some of the arguments that have been raised in this respect show a lack of logic. People often ask how on earth we could conceivably consider using these weapons against the newly democratic countries and populations of Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The only circumstances in which they could be used against those territories would be if somebody else in those territories had done some very unpleasant things to us beforehand. Those are the only circumstances in which we could consider using them. The logic of the argument is that, because those countries are now democratic, we could not possibly use our weapons against targets in their territories. Had we deployed those arguments between 1939 and 1945, the Royal Air Force could never have attacked legitimate targets in France, Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands, or any other country that was under occupation by a hostile power. Unfortunate though it is, we have to maintain the capability to strike targets in those areas.

On the conventional scene, this is where the greatest danger to peace lies, not only in Europe, but in the middle east, Africa and the far east. I do not ignore the very worrying spread of missile inventories and nuclear capabilities in some of the most volatile areas of the world. I remain convined that the main hope for future peace lies in conventional force reductions. These have to be savage and accompanied by inspection regimes that are capable of ensuring that there are no breaches of treaty agreements relating to stocks, training and defence manufacturing plants. We must press ahead with more confidence-building measures—a point on which I disagree with our American allies—because it is essential that they should cover naval as well as land forces.

The Soviet Union has just sent 2,000 of its most modern tanks east of the Urals. Who can blame it? That is a perfectly natural thing for it to do. It is sending not its old tanks, but its modern tanks. I do not know exactly how long it will take to bring them back, should it want to do so, but, if it chooses to do so, it would take much less time than it would to bring back tanks from Georgia or Texas.

I echo what has now become the commonplace of this debate and what I am sure will be the commonplace for many years to come. We must place every emphasis on mobility inside and outside Europe. We must develop a capability to deploy in a hurry, not just in British national interests but in NATO interests, the sort of interests that we were hoping to safeguard when we sent our minesweepers to the Armilla patrol.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) referred to the possibility of an SPD Government in Germany requesting all foreign troops to leave the territory. He may be right. I certainly think that he is right that there is the possibility of an SPD Government, but my hon. Friend would have been startled, as I was recently at a colloquium in London, to hear the comments of two senior members of the SPD, a former Minister and a spokesman. To my amazement, I heard them say that they thought that, in future, when foreign troops have left German soil, a united Germany should think of an intervention capability. One of them said—because of the circumstances, I am not allowed to identify him—"Of course you and the French already have this capability and have experience of it." When I asked whether the idea of deploying German forces, whether or not in support of other NATO countries outside the territory of the Federal Republic, would require an amendment to the German constitution, I was told that it would and that it would probably come to just that. I do not know whether that will be the case, but I certainly think that the House needs to bear it in mind that two members of the SPD, who would certainly consider themselves far to the left of me, are prepared to talk in such terms in a semi-public forum when abroad.

I agree with the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell). It surprises me, as it may surprise him, where the cuts will have to fall. I shall not refer to them item by item because I would merely repeat what other hon. Members have said.

I must confess that I am revising my views on the value of the surface fleet. I particularly welcome the arrival of the new logistical supply ship Fort Victoria and I regret to say that we shall have to think again about convoys and about how to protect them. I can remember a former distinguished Conservative Secretary of State for Defence, Sir John Nott as he now is, standing at the Dispatch Box and telling the House, "We can forget about convoys—the days of convoys are over." That was a perfectly accurate reflection of the world only a few months ago.

We must emphasise our amphibious capability and the role of the Marines. I hope that there will be no thought of cutting the capability of the Royal Marines.

What has been happening in the past few months gives us an opportunity for drastic and collective rethinking throughout NATO. I emphasise the words "collective rethinking". The shock to public opinion of what has happened cannot be overestimated, and it will become increasingly difficult, and rightly so, to persuade public opinion of the need to maintain defence budgets throughout the western world at anything like their current levels. Therefore, we have an opportunity, if we could only take it, to get some rationality into the deployments of our land and naval forces and the relationships of those forces to their supply depots.

For example, extravagant amounts of naval assets—NATO naval assets—are floating round the Mediterranean. The relationship between BAOR's supply depots and the deployment of troops is idiotic, and the same could be said of most deployments of NATO troops in West Germany. If there are to be fewer troops and if more emphasis is to be placed on predeployment and the building up of munitions depots, I hope that the opportunity will be taken to get them all on a far more rational basis than there are at the moment.

The case for the European fighter aircraft becomes weaker every day. Here, as elsewhere, the pressure to buy American will become stronger unless we can get firm American agreement on staff targets and procurement decisions over the range of military equipment.

It is obvious that the threat from the Soviet Union is disappearing to the verge of invisibility. Although, as the Secretary of State may fear, the Soviet procurement programme, which has helped to bankrupt it, is continuing apace, morale in the Soviet forces is in a very serious state. The Soviet officer corps has no sense of purpose and no sense of mission. Desertions are on the increase and are likely to become more frequent, particularly as troops are used to suppress civil unrest, whether caused by troop shortages or ethnic tensions. In fact, if there is a threat —I rather doubt it—to peace in central Europe, it will probably come from elsewhere, for example, ethnic tensions in Romania and the possible disintegration of Yugoslavia. Many other tensions and dark forces are at work in the lands that have just liberated themselves or partly liberated themselves from tyranny. We need to remember that both European wars of this century started in central or eastern Europe. Alas, we cannot be certain that such things will not come to pass again, and that is why we must postpone giving ourselves the full peace dividend until the world in which we live is a much safer place than it is now.

7.7 pm

Mr. Robert Boscawen (Somerton and Frome): Hon. Members have just heard an honest, almost breathtaking speech by the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert). Many hon. Members would have been delighted if they could have made so eloquent a speech. If the debate is being held at a rather odd time, it is worth it to enable us to hear the right hon. Gentleman's speech. I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman.

Hon. Members knew that the Government would not be able to say anything startling or new in this year's defence estimates debate. If they had done so, it would have been premature and wrong, for caution underlies the expressions by the Government of today, and rightly so. The introduction to the White Paper states:

"our approach to defence must be based on being able to respond to a range of possible outcomes, not just the one we hope to see."

Those words show a degree of wisdom that has been bred out of the bloodiest century of all time, and it is a degree of wisdom to which we would be wise to stick.

In all the euphoric talk about the end of the cold war and the so-called peace dividend that must follow, in the welcomes that we rightly give to the return of freedom and the great reforms that are appearing in country after country in eastern Europe, and not least the changes and possible instabilities appearing within the Soviet colossus itself, we must not be lulled into doing foolish things. We must cling tightly to the hard facts about the defence capabilities that still exist in Europe, in the eastern part of the world, and elsewhere. We must concentrate specifically on the weak spots where war could still result if the injustices that cause it are allowed to fester.

The only peace dividend that we can gain is the continued successful deterrence of war—not the few hundreds of millions of pounds that we might squeeze from the defence review for spending on more comfortable and sociable things. In the first half of the century the democracies fatally preferred the latter until it was too late, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said earlier when referring to the fatal 10-year rule from 1919. If some people did want to buy off Hitler in the 1930s, it was because they were terrified of having another war. The last thing that the people of this country wanted to do was to go to war again so soon after the war to end all wars of 1914. I disagreed profoundly with the book of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) when it was first published, and have done so ever since, because he got the message wrong.

In the second half of the century, we paid our insurance premiums more regularly, and, with the tremendous support of the United States, we took advantage of the nuclear weaponry to do so. For more than a generation, we gained a peace divided—albeit uneasily, but emphatically. Whatever we do now, above all it must play a substantial part in the well-tried pillar of NATO that has been built up over the last half century. We must make our full share of contribution's to NATO's forces at whatever level the negotiations on conventional forces manage to agree. That message was put succinctly and effectively in the chapter on defence and security in a changing world in the White Paper.

I believe that the presence of British forces, as well as those of the United States, inside a united Germany—and more than just a few cadres for rapid reinforcement—is important for some time ahead. I am sorry to note that I

[Mr. Robert Boscawen]

did not agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) on that point. Whether we like it or not, there are still lingering fears about a united—albeit a democratic—Germany, even if it is inside NATO, which has one of the largest armies in Europe, not having any allied troops inside its boundaries for some years to come.

We may not have the same feelings about that in Britain because, mercifully, we were never occupied. That point was brought home to me in a small way only a month ago when I was privileged to address sixth forms of secondary schools in the part of northern Holland that suffered most grievously from occupation half a century ago. Sadly, those lingering fears among young people as well as old were only too apparent to me and surprised me. Among the searching questions that I was asked was, "What part will Britain play in Europe's future?" along with questions about my attitude to a united Germany and whether British forces should remain there.

I believe that British forces in Europe could have an ambassadorial influence as well as a military role for the time being, both in NATO and central Europe. They should remain there in some measure for some time to come. Just as I believe that it is too soon to be sure about all the possible outcomes in central Europe, I believe that the maintenance of an independent deterrent in the hands of a country that is not one of the remaining super-powers is vital because it gives the world another point of decision so that, should anything happen, another country with a reputation such as ours would have the power to make a decision and those who may be causing the trouble could not be certain of how we would react. It is important to maintain that threat of uncertainty given the conditions that might recur in future.

Those of us who have large defence establishments in our constituencies, which we are proud to represent, and those who have large work forces who work on defence contracts must be concerned—just as our constituents are concerned—about the outcome of any options that are selected. We await the decisions. I know that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench—and, I hope, the Opposition Front-Bench team—will take carefully into consideration the feelings of those who have spent their long-term careers in the services or in working on defence contracts or for the industries that make some of these terrible weapons before making cuts too far, too fast.

I am glad that the White Paper acknowledges that progress has been made recently on the EH101 helicopter. Many of my constituents are engaged in its development. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement will soon announce a prime contractor because he knows that, in terms of future helicopter manufacturing in Britain, it is vital that the Ministry of Defence places a firm production order very soon. Until we have a full commitment from the Ministry of Defence for that remarkable project, a civil production order seems remote in today's world.

In the past; whenever peace appeared to break out, huge irreversible cuts were invariably made by the democracies of western Europe so that hard-pressed politicians could pay out a peace dividend to the hungry and the deprived. I ask the present political leaders of our country to note that this is the time to heed the lessons and to be wary of making irreversible cuts in our defence forces in the short term. If they take heed of that, future generations will be grateful to them.

7.19 pm

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): A debate on the defence estimates inevitably falls into three parts: first, the technical debate among those with the greatest knowledge of the armed forces; secondly, the political debate about the background against which we are discussing the subject; and, thirdly, the financial aspect. If the House agrees tomorrow night—I hope that it does not—to this defence budget, every man, woman and child in Britain will be taxed £400 next year for weapons.

According to the Blue Book, when the Government of which I was a member left office in 1979-80, the budget was £17·4 billion and, in real terms, allowing for inflation, it is now £18·7 billion. Next year, it will be £18·8 billion, and in 1992-93, it will be £19·1 billion. Nothing has been said by anybody, including Ministers or serious commentators, to show that there is a greater military threat to this country and the west than there was 11 years ago. I cannot and will not vote—I hope that others will join me in the Lobby—for a defence budget that is unnecessary, wasteful and unacceptable.

If we vote, we vote for money. The real question is the assessment of what has happened in Europe during the past few years and since the beginning of the century, and what is likely to happen. There have been at least five quite different Europes this century. At the beginning of the century there was the Europe when Queen Victoria's grandsons sat on every major throne—George V of England, Kaiser Wilhelm II in Germany and Tsar Nicholas II in Russia. We did not hear much about human rights and civil liberties in Russia when Queen Victoria's grandson was on the throne. That was the pre-first world war imperial Europe, which I shall come back to, because some things are now being said that suggest that European leaders, east and west, would like to return to such a balance of European supremacy vis-a-vis the rest of the world.

During the first world war, two of the grandsons fell out, then there was the Russian revolution and a British intervention when we sent troops into Russia. That is not mentioned in the history curriculum that is being imposed on schools. But the 1920s and 1930s were characterised by a period when most western leaders hoped to overturn the Russian revolution of 1917. There has been some discussion in which my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) joined and anyone who reads the captured German Foreign Office documents will know that Neville Chamberlain supported Hitler. When Lord Halifax visited Hitler in 1937, he was instructed by Neville Chamberlain to congratulate Hitler on destroying communism in Germany and acting as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. It was not weakness to Hitler, but support for Hitler, that gave him his advantages.

Pre-war Europe was not a Europe of great democracy. Field Marshall von Mannerheim in Finland, Pilsudski in Poland, King Carol, King Zog, King Michael, Hitler, Mussolini, Salazar and Franco: none of them contributed to a democratic Europe in 1939. The theory that we are now going back to a pre-war Europe is, I hope, not right.

Then came the war-time alliance when Churchill and Stalin paid elaborate tributes to each other. As I have said

at many meetings—I believe it—the liberties that we have in Britain were partly won by the sacrifices made by the Russians in holding the Germans at bay. My generation will never be able to thank the Russian people sufficiently. In the period since the cold war I never believed for a moment that the Russians were just about to invade us, and that only nuclear weapons held them back. We can all look back at the cold war with the benefit of hindsight, and I do not believe in any of the other arguments put forward in favour of nuclear weapons. One such argument was that atomic weapons kept the peace to which I have referred. Another popular argument was "better dead than red." How many people in eastern Europe would have thanked us for applying that principle to them when they were in the process of developing democratic movements that allowed them to be alive and democratic at the end of that period?

To speak candidly, many of the Conservative party and others, including my right hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert), have not come to terms with the terrible problem confronting them, for they do not have a military enemy, which has been extremely convenient to the regimes in both the east and west. Anyone who has made the criticisms that I am making, as I have done for many years—I made my debut as a Front-Bench defence spokesman in 1957—could have been dismissed a few years ago as agents of the KGB. That was why the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) had the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament bugged by MI5. If one supported CND, one was considered subversive. That argument no longer applies, even in the Soviet Union, because the Soviets have no enemies threatening them. It will be difficult to come to terms with a Europe in which no military threat is perceived or accepted.

When the Berlin wall came down last year, the structures of the west, as well as those in the east, were outdated by that change. When I was a new Member in 1950, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was to be our great defence against the possibility of a Soviet threat, but that argument no longer applies. We need new security arrangements in Europe. One or two hon. Members have spoken about the CSCE process playing a part in that.

I was re-elected to the House in 1983, along with other Labour Members, on the policy that we put before the electorate of the mutual dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw pact. I think that my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent led our party into that election on the pledge that we would seek to dissolve NATO and the Warsaw pact. Like everything else, that policy was dismissed then, but we put it to the electorate then, and it is relevant now.

The point has been made by the hon. Member for Somerton and Frome (Mr. Boscawen) that there is anxiety about a reunited Germany, not least in the Soviet Union, but also elsewhere. Reference was made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, East to the possibility of Germany having intervention forces. That country certainly has a capacity for nuclear weapons. I know that from visits I paid to Germany as Energy Minister. How is that Germany to be contained, like any other potential power including the Soviet Union, in a peaceful Europe? That can be achieved only by a European security treaty replacing NATO and the Warsaw pact. That possibility is emerging in some statements from the Soviet Union. That suggestion was made in the amendment my hon. Friends and I tabled, but which was not called.

If it is true that there have been changes—as the Secretary of State said in a speech that fell short of showing the enormity of those changes—is it sensible that we should retain, modernise and contemplate the use of British nuclear weapons? The Americans will take away our nuclear weapons, and that will be the end of that. Already, in discussions with President Bush, Gorbachev has begun to say that in any arrangement, the Americans must stop supplying nuclear technology to Britain. We no longer have a capacity to produce nuclear weapons alone. Before we start telling people—as the hon. Member for Somerton and Frome has just said—that nuclear weapons are the symbol of our sovereignty, we had better remind them that we have them on hire purchase from a superpower that will be ready to bargain them away in return for an agreement with Moscow.

I and many others would like to see a Europe in which troops and nuclear weapons were withdrawn from east and west—as Mr. Gorbachev suggested in one of his first speeches on disarmament. I do not want NATO to be a permanent force; nor do I think that the Russians could ever be content with the thought that NATO was part of a nuclear alliance that was potentially hostile to them.

If the Hungarians, Czechs and others would like Russian forces to leave their territories, we should also look to the day when American bases and nuclear forces leave our territory. I dislike the annual farce of renewing the Army Act when we say that if we do not pass the measure the standing army in Britain will not be maintained. We have a large standing army, but it is American, commanded by a President whom we do not elect and cannot remove. The only time that army has ever been used out of area was when President Reagan used it, not for NATO purposes but to bomb Libya. That is the danger.

I detect in some of the military and political speeches that are being made a desire to use the new Europe to re-create European hegemony over the Third world. We hear a lot about Islam and Islamic fundamentalists. I do not want to go back to the Crusades, but I can imagine circumstances in which a Christian Europe might arm itself against Islam and the Third world—the Europe that we had at the beginning of the century. Any attempt to use the recent changes for that purpose would be very dangerous. I know that I am looking a little far ahead, but anyone who wonders about fundamentalism had better listen to some of the born-again Christians in America, who have much in common with fundamentalist Muslims. Both have in mind a jihad—a holy war—to clear the world of their philosophical or religious enemies. These dangers must be taken into account.

At the end of the war there was a massive defence conversion. I do not know how many people were moved, as I was, from uniform to civilian life or from military to civilian production, but the operation was on a huge scale. It must be tackled this time with due regard to the interests of those who have committed themselves to the armed forces or who have developed skills in military technology. Conversion must be done in conjunction with them; our amendment describes urgent consultations with the trades unions and industries concerned about a practicable programme of defence conversion.

[Mr. Tony Benn]

Hon. Members should not believe for a moment that this cannot be done. For a third of a century I sat as a Member for Bristol where the Beaufighter bombers stopped coming out of the factories in 1945 and three months later pre-fabricated houses started coming out of those factories. Defence conversion requires planning: the people who leave the forces must be housed and there must be research and development contracts for those who have been making weapons before they can move into medical technology and other areas.

Market forces cannot help with defence conversion because the defence budget is artificial. There is no demand for this equipment from individuals—granny does not have a sten gun, dad does not have a tank. It is the Government who demand weapons. Britain needs more industrial development now than at any time in its history because our industrial base has been neglected. The oil is running out. German money covers our balance of payments deficit, but it will soon be pouring into eastern Europe, where wages are lower. This country's economic crisis is acute. Whether this Government or the next Government do it, there must be a major reduction of expenditure and a redeployment of money and skilled people from defence to civil production to meet civil needs here and abroad.

Should hon. Members want to know what happens to a nation that does not waste money on defence, they should look at the success of Japan, whose televisions, telephones, motor cars, motor bikes and videos are in every shop in the world. We, by contrast, are the second largest supplier of arms equipment to other countries—including to both sides in the Iran-Iraq war.

Last year I moved a modest amendment calling for a reduction in our defence budget to the same level as that of our European allies in NATO. It, too, was overtaken by events. Even the policy review published by the Labour party speaks of cuts that exceed the aspirations of 1989. What I said last year was right and events have confirmed that, but now we must make cuts on a bigger scale.

This is the time to rethink the real challenges facing humanity. Our oldest enemies—poverty, disease and ignorance—and the new realisation of the environmental threat to the planet pose far greater threats than does the likelihood of the Red army arriving by helicopter and forcing us to listen to lectures on perestroika in Wandsworth, Streatham or Westminster. We need a major redirection of our efforts and resources; we need to mobilise public understanding behind the scale of the effort, of the money and of the research and development that will be needed.

Against this background the defence estimates are unacceptable. I beg the House to reject them and the Government to come back, as we demand in our amendment, with a better proposal that we can debate more seriously before the end of the year.

7.36 pm

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): I shall pursue a different tack, but I shall have no doubt about casting my vote against the Opposition's amendment tomorrow night. I do not go along with the idea of decommissioning nuclear weapons, or of dissolving NATO, or of closing United States bases in the foreseeable future.

The speeches made by my hon. Friend the Member for Somerton and Frome (Mr. Boscawen) and by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) could hardly have contrasted more markedly—and I know in whose guidance I would place my trust. If the right hon. Member for Chesterfield honestly believes that the Japanese do not have a defence budget, he is sadly misinformed. They have the third highest defence budget in the world because they have such a high gross national product. So it is sheer illusion to suppose that Japan is a fine example of what the right hon. Gentleman was preaching. As ever, he is the master of the one-sided conspiracy.

Mr. Benn: I do not think it a conspiracy point to say that the Japanese spend a far lower percentage of GDP on defence than we do. I was not talking about absolutes; the Japanese have a bigger national income. Although this is not a debate about statistics, I believe that they spend far less—about a third as much as we do—on defence.

Mr. Key: They spend far less as a proportion of GDP, but that still leaves them with the third highest defence budget in the world.

I start from the point of view of a Member of Parliament who represents 12 military bases and all three services. I also have the honour to represent thousands of scientific and industrial civil servants. In the 70 or so villages around Salisbury that I represent there are people who have lived with the military for almost 90 years and who have profited much from the relationship with it. It is my overriding wish that any defence policy should have a close and constructive relationship with the villages, communities and people who work in the industry, and that that relationship should continue and prosper.

Times have changed rapidly, in terms not only of the great international issues but of the way in which Governments operate. They have become much more open. Civilians' expectations have also increased enormously. They expect much more consultation on and knowledge about military affairs, and that is entirely good.

In my community we have had a sad chapter in the shape of the development over the years of the training village in Salisbury plain—the so-called FIBUA, or fighting in built-up areas. That marked what I hope was a watershed—it is now water under the bridge—in respect of the lack of consultation and the creation of mistrust between the military and civilian communities in the area. FIBUA is in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury (Sir D. Walters), and I am grateful to him for allowing me to drop in on FIBUA a week ago to see it in operation. It is undoubtedly NATO's foremost and best training facility for that purpose and I observed a Territorial Army regiment in training. In view of all the changes that are taking place in Europe, it will become a more important facility in future. The people in those areas must expect a level of co-operation and consultation with the Ministry of Defence that they have not always enjoyed in the past.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I have some knowledge of the areas about which the hon. Gentleman speaks because my parents lived in that area before they died. Is he aware that many people throughout Wiltshire are concerned about cruise missiles being taken around that county? Those people join many of the protests and demonstrations against the missiles. They were worried

about the number of telephone lines that were cut while cruise missiles were being transported and about the loss of civil liberties and rights during cruise missile exercises.

Mr. Key: I disagree with the hon. Gentleman. The fact that the people there elected me to this House gives the lie to his argument. The local branch of the CND now depends almost entirely on activists bussed in from Southampton and other cities. That is because most members of the CND in Salisbury have defected to the Green party.

I disagree with the Ramblers Association, which recently published its land grab theory about the Ministry of Defence. I have good relations with the local Ramblers Association. We have heard that the Ramblers Association nationally is concerned about public access in areas such as Salisbury plain and Dartmoor. Any Rambler who wants to walk across the live firing areas of Salisbury plain must be barmy. It was entirely for the protection of people that the Ministry of Defence went to substantial lengths to open an alternative series of footpaths, expecially along the northern end of the plain, to enhance access to the plain. Access by large numbers of people to areas such as that would not enhance the environmental quality of the land—quite the reverse.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding about training areas. The Salisbury plain training area covers 93,000 acres, which is about the size of the Isle of Wight. About 60,000 acres of it are let for farmland, either under schedule 1 by which the land is farmed out and if the military damages crops the farmers are compensated, or under schedule 3, which means that about 50 grazing or grass cutting licences are issued for the plain. That is a significant contribution and gives the lie to the idea that the Ministry of Defence area is a no-go area for everybody at all times.

The Ministry of Defence, through the management of the defence land agent, has 6,300 acres of woodland on Salisbury plain, most of which is broadleaf. In the last 30 years the Ministry has planted 3.5 million trees on the plain. Co-existing with the military training area are 1,700 ancient monuments which are cared for by the Ministry of Defence in co-operation with the Wessex Trust for Archaeology and other bodies. I congratulate the Ministry on constructing that relationship which gives enhanced access to much of the plain for many people who are genuinely interested in it.

All our local squabbles must be placed in a national and international context. The Government must take account of events in eastern Europe. I welcomed the speech on 5 June by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces in which he outlined some of the options for change. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is right to stress the need for stability from the Urals to the Atlantic and to stand firm about the need for the continuation of NATO. I hope that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is at one with the Prime Minister on that and that the Government will take a firm stance on Britain's defence.

A peace dividend sounds beguiling to us all, but it should be modest, gradual and well-planned in international interests and in the interests of my constituents. Any service man who is surplus to military requirements deserves far better than a place in the dole queue alongside a former civilian employee of the Ministry of Defence who has been made redundant in return for the so-called peace dividend.

In recent years the civilian work force in the Ministry of Defence has had to be extremely adaptable. It has faced contractorisation and many defence reviews, especially in the context of the aeroplane and armament experimental establishment at Boscombe Down. That work force has had about 14 reviews of its future in the past 11 years or so; we urgently await the outcome of the latest review. Many hundreds of families are in suspense over their future careers and jobs.

The military machine could not operate without its civilian work force. Loyalty is at a premium, especially when war is declared. We need to think back only a few years to the civilian effort that went into the Falklands war. That old-fashioned loyalty could be taken for granted, but we would do so at our peril in terms of morale, efficiency, recruitment, training and skill. Many of my constituents who work for the Ministry of Defence receive low pay for the jobs that they do. Many of them are highly skilled and could rush off to Heathrow airport and service jumbo jets, but they stick with the Ministry of Defence and service fighter planes.

One of the problems for such people is the high cost of housing in that part of Wiltshire. There is great pressure on Salisbury district council and on many councils throughout the country which are the enabling authorities for housing. The council stock is diminishing, not least because of the success of the right-to-buy policy, and in many districts associated with military areas some 90 per cent. of new council tenancies are being allocated to people under legislation on homelessness. That means that only 10 per cent. of houses go to people on the waiting list and ordinary, decent, married folk in my constituency are for ever going to the end of the queue.

The number of Army families requiring accommodation as a result of homelessness in my area has increased from about 30 in 1985 to about 80 in 1989, and the problem is accelerating. Currently, about 20 service families are threatened with homelessness for various reasons and are awaiting the allocation of council houses. Of those, a quarter are two-parent families and three quarters are separated wives and children. My noble Friend Lord Arran has agreed the figures, but has said that each case must be considered individually. That will not do. The Government must have another look at the housing of our military personnel and at what happens to people when they leave the services.

First, we need an urgent review of the impact of homeless military families on the civilian community. Secondly, we must urgently consider the need for some sort of forces house purchase scheme. I am glad to see that my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) is present because he has done a great deal in this respect. I will gladly do my best to persuade the Treasury to support the Ministry of Defence on this issue. The problem is exacerbated by ex-service families who are accepted into council housing as homeless. Of course, they have the right to buy on full discount after just two years, and that diminishes the rented housing sector even more. Thirdly, we should have an assessment of the impact on local communities of all local government services, including housing, social services and education. We must look carefully at the redeployment at home of troops and their

[Mr. Key]

families from abroad. They will be welcome in the Salisbury area, as they would be in any military area, but we must ensure that there is proper planning for them.

Let me now deal with security. There is a double threat in southern England, first from IRA terrorists and more recently from animal rights terrorists. A balance must always be struck between the integration of defence and civilian families and the behind-the-wire security which may be an alternative. There is a balance for the families of service men between a relatively normal life on open camps and Fort Knox measures. The effects on recruitment and retention can be serious. Already soldiers are on guard duty at least one day a week. Of course there is no substitute for an armed and trained soldier on guard duty, but there are alternative measures. A massive sum has been spent on fencing, which is important, and I think that that expenditure should be increased. I hope that fencing will not become a victim of the temporary ban on new commitments that we heard about in the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

There is controversy about private contract guards. I read the report of the Select Committee on Defence on the issue and I asked about the impact made by security guards. It is clear to me that the effectiveness of private contract guards depends on their training and supervision. Such guards can be extremely effective, but so much depends on better training and supervision.

I am worried that we have too many different police forces involved in security and the military. In my constituency there is the Wiltshire constabulary, the Ministry of Defence police, the military police in all three services, the British Transport police liaising with British Rail and travel arrangements, the Atomic Energy Authority police, who are sometimes involved, and the Ministry of Defence patrolmen, who have no constabulary power and are answerable to the commanding officers of their units. If we are not careful, we may find ourselves faced with order, counter order and disorder. That we would all wish to avoid. I hope that due consideration will be given to the proper co-ordination of police services to the military.

Much is said about wrongdoing in the name of animal rights. In my constituency is the Chemical Defence Establishment, where only 10 days ago one of my constituents was the subject of attempted murder. She is a veterinary scientist. Animal rights activists are not so much lovers of animals but haters of their fellow men, women and children. It is a great irony that veterinary surgeons are at the forefront of those working towards the limitation of animal experiments or their complete replacement. Apparently, that is irrelevant to some evil individuals to whom murder of men, women and children is acceptable in pursuit of their ill-defined cause. That makes them terrorists. They should be given no sympathy, aid or succour by anyone inside or outside the House.

The CDE is a remarkable and much misunderstood organisation. About 600 of my constituents work there. They all have families in the community which I represent. They protect British and allied service men and women from chemical and biological agents. Britain has led the world in abandoning all offensive chemical and biological weapons. Without the work of the Porton Down establishment, we could not give technical support to the United Kingdom negotiators at the conference on disarmament at Geneva. We must achieve comprehensive and verifiable global bans on chemical weapons.

At Porton Down we have developed portable detectors and alarms, including a system for ships. The establishment has developed the most advanced respirator and mask in the world. It has developed the NBC suit, with anti-gas fabric and activated charcoal, which is now in service throughout the world. It has developed decontamination systems, methods of treating nerve agent casualties and a range of vaccines and antibiotics.

The civilian arm of Porton Down, in working within the CDE, not to mention the other arm, the centre for applied microbiology and research of the public health laboratory service, plays a major role in the detection of atmospheric pollution, in guarding against industrial and agricultural hazards and in developing methods of countering those problems. The CDE scientists lecture worldwide and publish in the open scientific literature of the world.

I must declare an interest as a member of the Medical Research Council. I feel strongly that the medical research community must be in no doubt that we in this place, like most right-thinking people, support the work that it is doing. There are many moral arguments in favour of what it is doing. Animal experimentation requires justification in terms of significant human gains. In the 19th century much legislation passed through the House that was designed to prevent cruelty to animals. It was enacted only because it was supposed that there was as a result a brutalising effect on human beings. That legislation was not placed on the statute book out of consideration for animals.

Why do animals need protecting today? First, there is the pain argument. Animals are conscious and feel pain. Pain is bad whether it is in animals or humans. That is the utilitarian argument. Pain can be justified when balancing individual harm against social good, but even such a utilitarian argument acknowledges that if there is benefit to humans of the sort that is produced in cosmetic experiments, which is regarded as trivial by most people, it is hard to justify the use of animals.

There is also the international dimension. It would be a cop-out to wash our hands of animal experiments only to see testing shipped across the world to other less scrupulous countries. There must be international action.

Secondly, there is the animal rights argument. If we allow animals to be experimented on in a way which we would not extend to humans, we could be accused of speciesism. That leads to deep philosophical waters in considering animal rights, the nature of them and whether animals properly possess rights. Most people would say that rights can be enjoyed only by autonomous individuals and that animals are thereby excluded. However, most humans have an intuitive feeling that not just anything can be done to animals and that they merit protection. That is the code that has been developed by hunters down the ages and throughout the world in many different cultures. Neither the argument of pain nor that of rights precludes experimentation, but neither argument licenses just any experiment for any purpose. That is why we must consider method and purpose.

Mr. Tony Banks: The hon. Gentleman has only briefly touched on the morality side of the argument. One of the features that I found especially upsetting and obscene

about experimentation on animals at Porton Down was the use of live animals to assess the impact of high-velocity bullets. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that that sort of experimentation is thoroughly unacceptable?

Mr. Key: No, I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. In representing my constituency, I have to give these matters careful thought. I must balance in my mind the arguments in favour and those against. In the example that the hon. Gentleman has presented, I came to the conclusion that the evidence of the benefits to mankind was enormous. Scores of lives have been saved in Northern Ireland as a result of the experiments which have been carried out at Porton Down. Scores of lives on the Falklands were saved because of that work.

I return to my point that we cannot do any experiment in any way. That is why the House enacted the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which laid down specific requirements. In determining methods we have to decide what constitutes paining and harm to animals, whether there are options and whether the experimenters are sufficiently skilled to reduce suffering to a minimum. We must then consider the purpose.

We can dismiss the allegation that no animal experiment ever has or ever will benefit mankind, but some benefits are too trivial to justify animal suffering. I think that we all agree about that. The possibilities of saving human life, eradicating disease and developing new surgical techniques are strong considerations in favour of undertaking research on animals. At Porton Down, to which the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) has referred, I believe that those criteria are met.

We must remember above all that defence is a partnership. It is a partnership with the NATO community. It is a partnership with service men and women and their families. It is a partnership with the civilian employees of the Ministry of Defence. Above all, it is a partnership with the constituents of each and every one of us. Let us never forget that it is they and our way of life that we are defending.

7.59 pm

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): The euphoria that has emanated from the events in eastern Europe has touched each one of us, and the apparent lessening of the threat of nuclear war in Europe is welcome. However, that euphoria must be tempered by common sense. Few dispute that the role of NATO has been paramount in maintaining peace in Europe during the past 45 years and that its deterrent effect has enabled us to arrive where we are today, in this period of hope and opportunity. That is not to question or detract from the significant part that Mr. Gorbachev played in making things happen now—but one would not have happened without the other. For that reason, we must continue to exercise caution. In other words, now is the time not for revolution but for the constructive evolution of our military strategy over the next 45 years and beyond.

It is irresponsible to speak of wasteful, unnecessary or unacceptable burdens when addressing the question of military spending. In an ideal world, one might be able to do so, but the lessening of conflict between the two major power blocs does not necessarily herald peace and stability worldwide. The implication that the USSR and its Warsaw pact allies were the only threat to stability is foolish and irresponsible.

As the events of the past week have shown, eastern Europe has a long and hard road to travel on the way to full social and political reform. In both the USSR and its former satellites, there remain significant elements who seek to reverse the process of democratisation. Any sign of wavering on the part of the United Kingdom or of NATO could give those factions the impetus to oust Gorbachev and other reformers. In their terms, such a reaction can be justified. They fear, perhaps as we should, that the ingredients exist that could yet lead to chaos in eastern Europe. They exist in the growth of narrow nationalism, which is the inevitable consequence of years of oppressive, centralised government, and from the opportunities presented by the changes that have taken place. We know the evils of narrow nationalism.

The European Community and NATO may have to confront at least one decade of new stresses from eastern Europe. The presence of a powerful and stable alliance of democracies, such as is enshrined in NATO, is more likely to encourage and sustain the movement to democracy in eastern Europe than to hinder it.

The potential for short-term turmoil in eastern Europe, together with the prospect of upheaval in southern Russia —and the growth there of Muslim fundamentalism— could destabilise further the already volatile situation in the middle east. The idea that Britain can somehow abrogate its responsibilities to world peace simply because the Warsaw pact has disintegrated is narrow-minded and confused. The notion that we can disregard the need for nuclear deterrence is also ludicrous, particularly when one realises that a number of countries having particularly unstable leaders possess the know-how to construct a nuclear bomb. The potential to employ and use nuclear weaponry must be deterred, as it has been for the past 45 years, by making it plain that aggression can expect to be met by comparable retribution.

However, in urging caution in terms of changes, I do not mean to imply that they cannot or should not occur. Rather, I urge that all changes be strictly in line with the needs of our military forces, with the role that we expect them to fulfil in a conventional NATO sense, and with the increasingly significant role that they must play in the fight against international terrorism—apart from the out-of-theatre peacekeeping duties that they will no doubt be expected to undertake from time to time.

The ever-widening gap in our defences is the size, strength and age of our surface fleet. I might have been encouraged by the Secretary of State's remarks about the Navy were it not for the fact that, year after year, our surface fighting ships grow more outdated. We are not building replacements for them quickly enough. Add to that the virtual disappearance of our merchant fleet and it must be acknowledged that, in an emergency, Britain would not have the capacity to move her troops and heavy equipment. How can the Secretary of State talk about flexibility and versatility in such a situation?

Is not now the time to examine the rate at which we replace obsolete ships and how we can provide an incentive for the merchant fleet? There is no easy answer when vast financial resources are involved, but decisions must be based on the most urgent and likely needs of our forces over the next decade.

I always feel proud when I hear a compliment being paid to our forces for the work that they do in Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to those indigenous forces which, year after year after year, have borne the brunt of

[Mr. Ken Maginnis]

terrorist attacks. Here at home, one asks why, after 45 years of anti-terrorist experience—20 in Northern Ireland, but this country had experience of anti-terrorism long before Northern Ireland—are our forces still constrained by inadequate and outmoded resources? For example, we literally kill our own troops by forcing them to travel around their tactical areas of operational responsibility in armoured Land-Rovers—veritable deathtraps against the sophisticated and well-equipped terrorists whom they are fighting.

Adequate helicopter support is imperative in Northern Ireland. I have tried to put over that message in the House for the past seven years, but without success. Helicopters, with their greater flexibility and dramatically faster response times, are a necessity in anti-terrorist operations. That issue must be addressed now.

The potential of slow-flying, low-flying, low-cost, fixed-wing aircraft in photography and surveillance is not realised to anything like its true potential. I wonder why few are being used in Northern Ireland today. Why has there been no utilisation of low-cost remotely piloted vehicles in reconnaissance work? Used in conjunction with conventional patrolling, the potential for RPVs is exciting and can be life-saving. The more imaginative use of computers, to allow information to be collected, interpreted and disseminated to standard formats, would give our forces an advantage that they are currently denied. They have literally been left behind. They should be equipped with new generation computers capable of more than just churning out vehicle registration numbers.

Those are some of the points that I would have liked the Secretary of State to address. They are practical points that affect the day-to-day lives of those in our security forces. Ours is a peacekeeping Army of men and women doing a real job. They stand between us and the aggressors —between those who believe in democracy and the right of nations to self-determination, and those who would exploit and enslave.

Fortunately, we live in a more peaceful world than did our fathers and their fathers. If we are to improve on that for our children, we have to defend peace where it presently rules and work to create peace where strife presently exists.

8.9 pm

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis), and on this occasion it is a pleasure to echo the eloquent tribute that he paid to the security forces in Northern Ireland.

I am amazed that there is such a sparse attendance for such an extremely important debate. There have been some vintage speeches from both sides of the political divide and some most impressive comments. At this moment in our history and in the parliamentary cycle it is amazing that defence does not attract more comment and debate.

I found a number of the speeches tonight moving and interesting. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Somerton and Frome (Mr. Boscawen) made a most moving speech—and who can ignore the historical perspective which he brought to the debate? The right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert) made a speech which most Conservative Members agreed with, although that agreement was not echoed across the political divide.

The debate comes at a time of tremendous opportunity for my generation and for the older generation of right hon. and hon. Members. An extraordinary change has taken place since we last debated defence estimates, and it is now hard, if not impossible, to see the Soviet threat in the same light that past generations saw it or to imagine a Soviet attack across the central plain of Europe. Perhaps we cannot yet see swords turned into ploughshares, but we can see a new and different European order. The debate tonight is part of that opportunity for my generation.

The Government's strategy in exploring options for change is absolutely right. I understand the anxiety of people in the armed services who wish to know where they stand. Many highly-skilled soldiers, sailors and airmen, who have decided to devote the best years of their lives to defending their country, want to know what will result from current uncertainties for them, for their families and for their careers. I understand their anxieties, and all hon. Members accept that we owe a tremendous duty to them and to their families. However, we must now have a period of vigorous debate on the options for action in defence of our country in the light of the changed circumstances that we now face.

Those hon. Members who are familiar with the views of my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Sutton (Mr. Clark) on this issue and have followed them, rather opaquely, in the press during recent months will be listening with great interest to his comments when he replies to the debate tonight. If what has been said in the press is true—though it would be most unwise to believe what one reads in the papers—many people will support the points that he makes.

I hope that this period of vigorous debate will continue until we know what range of options is available, and can make sensible decisions based on our country's needs.

Another matter, which is not inevitably party political but is nevertheless important, is the fact that the British people trust this Government—who have never shirked difficult decisions on defence—to find the right response to our changed circumstances. The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) said that defence costs us £400 a year per person. Many people would regard that as a good premium on this insurance policy. However, if he meant that there is now an opportunity to translate some of that funding into social services, education or health, no hon. Member would disagree.

The Government can be trusted to consider the issues seriously and to decide what is the best way to proceed. Two irrefutable aspects must be considered when the Government survey the matter. The first is the basic need for NATO and for Germany to remain within it. We derive great advantage from the American commitment to NATO and any move to decouple that would be extremely dangerous and unwise. We also benefit enormously from the integrated command structure that NATO provides. That may allow us to play a wider role through NATO than the role we have enjoyed so far.

The second aspect is the importance of our nuclear deterrent, and the Government and some Opposition Members have made a clear commitment to that tonight. In a dangerous world that insurance policy cannot be changed. I fully support the Secretary of State, who said that we intend to continue and put in place not only the

Trident programme but sub-strategic nuclear weapons, which are critically important to the seamless web of defence.

Since I completed my brief but enjoyable military service in the United Nations forces in Cyprus in 1975, it has always seemed to me that there is a greater role for the United Nations, and that the work done by UN forces has been consistently underestimated. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to see that a tribute is paid in the Statement on the Defence Estimates to the efforts of the United Nations in Namibia and Cyprus, and to its valuable work in Pakistan recently. In the light of changing circumstances, there will be opportunities for UN forces to play a wider role.

I welcome the emphasis in the estimates on the implementation of the CFE talks in Vienna, and on the control of chemical weapons, especially the common approach to the proliferation of such weapons and to proceeding with the complex and difficult work of verification. I hope that when the next White Paper is published substantial progress will have been made in both those areas.

A number of other strands are important when considering options for change. The first, and most important, is that we have to accept that the British Army of the Rhine is no longer the central engine of national defence. It is difficult to change procurement policies overnight, and it would be unwise to do so, but we must be conscious of what one might call the haemorrhage of ordinance: we continue to pump out the same hardware and military kit which has been the perceived requirement for NATO in Europe for a generation. It may not be needed in the future. When we look back in a year or two that money may be seen as a wasted investment. We should welcome the temporary bar outlined by the Secretary of State in his speech, but we should also be conscious of the significant changes taking place.

The second strand that we must consider is the importance of effective mobile forces, whether they are airborne or amphibious, which has been a common theme in the debate. The right hon. Member for Dudley, East mentioned the importance of the Marines and the Parachute regiment to mobility. We must recognise the tremendous change that has taken place, and the importance of the mobility and effectiveness of our forces, and consider a training and career structure which is relevant to that.

Mr. Wilkinson: I have paid great attention to my hon. Friend's interesting and constructive speech. Does he include the brigade of Gurkhas within the mobile forces? Does he consider that it is important to retain a role for the Gurkhas beyond 1997?

Mr. Mitchell: I have no doubt that my hon. Friend is right about the role of the Gurkhas, although it would be imprudent of me to speculate on their future role in isolation from other changes that may be made.

We must recognise that much greater costs may be associated with developing our mobile forces than hitherto. Such costs are part of the restructuring that will result.

It has not been clear from the statements to the press from service chiefs that the dangers of salami slicing the armed forces have always been readily conceded. If such cuts were made at any level in our defences to reduce expenditure, that would be an absolute disaster and a great danger to morale in the armed forces. The smaller national armed forces of NATO must be a spur to specialisation. We must have a closer integration of weaponry and command structure within NATO. I hope that any future changes act as a spur to that.

It is also important to consider the role of the Territorial Army and that of the Navy and Air Force Reserves. One of the critical aspects to consider is that the lead time for reinforcing Europe is perceived by strategists to be very different from what it was a year ago. It is important that the role of the Territorial Army is greatly enhanced, as it has an important part to play as a reserve force and as part of a rapid reinforcement within Europe.

There is no reason why we should not now encourage our young people more actively than in the past to spend some time with the Territorial Army—the Swiss example should comfort us.

As part of the new scheme of things there is a great deal to be said for paying people in the TA far more than they have received in the past. We should make it an attractive force in which young people seek to serve. The benefits of such service would not be felt by those young people themselves, but would be a real benefit. As part of the new system under which our armed forces are managed the reservists must be given more training and a greater commitment. In the future, Regular Army units and TA units should be integrated so that the TA can give much greater support to the Army. We have already heard about the pain and anxiety that are likely to be caused by any cap-badge amalgamation. I believe that the TA could be extremely helpful in dealing with that problem.

The hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone has already demonstrated that we live in a dangerous world. Although the threat within Europe has diminished in recent months, the threat from the middle east to our interests there has grown even greater. As we look with growing concern at what is happening in the middle east we appreciate the threat that that poses to our strategic interests in Europe and Britain.

The changing international situation means that meeting our obligations and security needs will allow for lower costs for our armed forces. When assessing our security needs, however, we should look not for the peace dividend, but for ways in which to restructure our armed forces most effectively to meet the challenges of the future. It would be fortunate if, as a result of that, the peace dividend could emerge.

8.23 pm

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): I shall try not to repeat the points already made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). He has already dealt with the historic, moral and political reasons why the defence estimates should be rejected.

I want to approach this subject on a more mundane level. I believe that the House should reject the estimates because they are bloated and beyond the nation's capacity to sustain them without damaging our economic prospects. The same could be said about any of the defence estimates of the past 40 years because the underlying pattern that differentiates Great Britain from any other western European member of NATO is that we spend on

[Mr. Ken Livingstone]

average 2 per cent. more of our national wealth on defence than we used to spend. That pattern has continued year by year, and decade by decade.

In a time of peace our defence spending has, historically, been of the order of 2 per cent. of our national wealth, but in recent times it has fluctuated between 4·5 and 5·5 per cent. We spend a crucial 1 or 2 per cent. more of our national wealth on defence than do West Germany and France! Such spending decade after decade has had a weakening effect on our economy. That is clear when one compares our economic strength with that of West Germany, France or Japan. It is obvious that a nation cannot spend more than it earns on defence any more than, as we are continually told, we can spend more than we earn on pensions, health, welfare, or investment.

In the past 40 years the psychology of both main political parties has rested on the idea that, somehow, defence spending should be preserved and should continue to receive a disproportionate amount of the nation's wealth. Fortunately, the events in eastern Europe and President Gorbachev's initiatives now give us the chance to break out of that spending. Because our spending on defence is more bloated than that of any other western European nation, we have a greater opportunity of real economic gain and thus to modernise and rebuild the British economy.

The case that I have outlined is backed by solid academic research. In an intervention in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) I mentioned the Cambridge Econometrics study, which detailed the impact on the British economy if we reduced our defence spending to the same levels as that of the rest of western Europe—effectively to halve our spending. If we made such a saving it would release, this year, a little more than £9 billion to invest in rebuilding our welfare state, modernising the infrastructure of our economy and perhaps investing directly in industry, but that would necessitate a more enlightened Government. That vast sum of wealth would be released year by year and would represent a major shift in the resources of the British economy.

The Cambridge Econometrics study revealed the wonderful opportunities that would be open to our nation if we reduced our defence spending. It is true that such a cut would cause some dislocation as spending moved away from the defence industries, but one would still have to retain and retool those defence industries. The Cambridge Econometrics study, however, revealed that after a decade in which defence spending was cut by 50 per cent. overall unemployment in Britain would have been reduced by 520,000. When one took into account the jobs lost as a result of contracting the defence spending, there would still be a net gain of 500,000 new jobs. Despite the job losses, a far greater number of new jobs would be created simply because defence spending represents the least labour intensive form of public spending. That money would create more wealth for the nation if spent in other ways.

The Cambridge Econometrics group also studied the impact of such cuts in spending on our gross domestic product. It estimates that Britain's GDP would increase by £10 billion a year. That money could be used to enrich the lives of people in the public and private sectors. That increase would also lead to a 5 per cent. increase in investment in which we have notably lacked in comparison with our major competitors.

Christopher Huhne, the economics editor of *The Guardian*, for some reason writing in *The Independent on Sunday*, pointed out that apart from the Soviet Union and America no other country has more to gain from the peace dividend than Britain. There is an obvious historical parallel with the France of the early 1960s. Then President de Gaulle decided to break with France's imperial tradition and to reduce dramatically defence spending to fund a major modernisation of the French economy. French defence spending, which until then had been as bloated as Britain's in relation to national wealth, was cut savagely throughout the decade. As a result, resources were released to modernise the French economy, which performed a major leap, overtaking the economy of Britain and relegating us to a position far behind France. We have never caught up.

Now, however, we have the same option. We could make major cuts in defence spending, and—by redirecting funds towards the modernisation of the British economy—find ourselves at the forefront rather than slipping further and further behind other modern European nations. I do not see why anyone should object to the economic case for defence cuts.

Who are our enemies? No one has seriously suggested today that President Gorbachev is about to invade western Europe, or Britain. According to the current opinion polls, he is three times as popular here as the Prime Minister. He would not have to invade; if he wanted to take over the country, he could come here and win the next election.

Given that no one expects a war with the Soviet Union, what other threats are seen by the Ministry of Defence? Some of the answers are hilarious. Spain, for instance, appears to be seen as a threat. Even we accept that a war with Spain over Gibraltar is unlikely; we are reducing the garrison and cutting military expenditure in the area. In any event, how could we have a war with Spain? The place is full of British holidaymakers, and pensioners who have discovered that they can get more for their money in Spain than in Britain.

The MOD also considers that another war with the Argentines over the Falkland Islands is a possibility. I doubt it; the outcome of the last war is hardly likely to encourage anyone else to invade. Indeed, the Argentinians seem willing to negotiate some kind of permanent settlement of the conflict, which would allow us to invest some of the wealth that we now spend on defence in the development of the region.

We are enjoined not to forget that we may have a war with Guatemala over Belize. If the British people were told that the current bloated defence expenditure should continue because of the possibility of a war with Spain, Argentina or Guatemala, I believe that they would question whether that was the wisest use of national resources.

We should not, however, talk merely of the scale on which we wish cuts to be made. Even Conservative Members, I think, will demand a reduction in defence spending. We need to ask, "From whom are we defending ourselves? What military machine do we require in the 1990s, and in the next decade?" What worries me is the suspicion that the real reason for the Government's resistance to major defence cuts is that they hanker after the idea of creating a Euro-force that can, for instance,

intervene at will if some third-world regime nationalises our assets, or makes a decision of which we do not approve. There is a danger that, with no real political debate in Britain or in western Europe, we shall slide into mimicking the United States—that we shall intervene anywhere on the face of the planet to impose political solutions on people who have the right to determine their own destinies, and to decide for themselves how their economic resources are to be used.

My criticism is not limited to the present Government; we see the same basic pattern in the defence spending of previous Labour Governments. In 1950, a Labour Government destroyed the country's chance of emerging from the recession that had been created by a major devaluation. The potential for growth, leading to a major reconstruction of the economy, was wrecked by the level of defence spending that was forced on Britain by the American Government because of the Korean war. Anyone who doubts that should refer to the details spelt out in an excellent biography of Aneurin Bevan, who led the fight against the wrecking of Britain's domestic reconstruction by the demands of the military machine.

In the end, the money that had been raised could not be spent fast enough, and remained unspent. Our prospects of domestic recovery had been wrecked by the military—and, sadly, by a Labour Government who gave in to pressures that they should have resisted.

In 1970, we discovered the key to the wreckage of all Labour's plans for the economic regeneration of Britain. After six years of Labour Government, Britain was still spending 4·9 per cent. of its wealth on defence. France was spending 4·2 per cent., West Germany 3·3 per cent. and Italy 2·5 per cent. Six years had been wasted, with one economic disaster following another, because of the Government's failure to make the break with the imperial past and get out of Suez—and east of Suez—quickly and decisively.

We saw the same pattern in 1979. After five years in office, Labour was still spending 4·6 per cent. of our national wealth on defence. France's expenditure had fallen to 3·9 per cent., Germany's was still 3·3 per cent. and Italy's was 2·4 per cent.

On what do we base the claim that we should spend more of our national wealth on defence than the people of West Germany, who stood face to face with the iron curtain? That is nonsense, as is the fact that we are still spending £4·4 billion on keeping our Army on the Rhine. Although, under an arrangement with the West German Government, the whole burden does not fall on the balance of payments, the effect last year was a deficit of £1·4 billion. The British Army of the Rhine is costing every man, woman and child in the United Kingdom £80. It must be phased out: its members should be brought back and retrained to do productive work and rebuild the British economy.

That is part of the attraction of defence cuts—personnel who are much in demand in British industry would be released. We hear many forecasts of a shortage of labour in the 1990s. Moreover, the private economy contains a large number of industries that are part of the defence sector: their employees include some of the most highly skilled workers in British industry, with the most modern equipment. No group of workers could be more important to us, if our aim is to retrain and retool, and to rebuild our manufacturing base. Those workers are needed to make the high-quality manufactured goods that we are currently forced to import from West Germany, France, Japan and the United States. Every economic argument suggests that the time has come for a major break with the past—that we must divert the resources that are at present consumed by a defence budget which we know will never be used, and devote them to the modernisation of the British economy.

Earlier, I mentioned the difficulties of not living beyond our means. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, made a very good speech at a meeting of the parliamentary Labour party last week. Many of us argued for more spending on a range of matters, but we were told, "A Labour Government will not spend more than it earns. It will not repeat the mistakes of the past, but will bring about real growth in the economy." I agree: I see no point in spending money that we do not have, and stoking up inflation.

If a Labour Chancellor is to exercise such fiscal rectitude, however, it is more important than ever for us to cut into our bloated defence budget to provide the funds that we need to recompense those whose pensions have been eroded so dramatically over the past decade, or to put money into the national health service. I do not believe that we shall be able to come to power and, simply through massive tax increases, restore the neglected welfare state. We must stop spending on other matters to release the necessary funds. Every argument points in that direction.

I make no apology for constantly returning to precise figures. I want to hear from the Opposition Front Bench firm commitments for a Labour Government to reduce the defence budget by about 50 per cent. over their five years in office. It should not be done in a manic rush to slash everything in sight, but through planning and consulting unions and employers and discussing how to retrain and reskill. If we do that, we can go to the British people at the next election with our plans to change the nature of the economy and to modernise Britain's welfare state and our neglected industrial base—without crippling increases in taxation for ordinary families and rising inflation, but simply by redirecting resources from defence.

Finally, there can be no question of our ducking the issue. It will not go away. We have to have precise and clear figures. If we thought that we could fudge the issue or hope that the Conservative party would not notice or that Fleet street, wherever it has dispersed to these days —*The Sun*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*—will not remind us of that at the next election, we should be putting our heads in the sand. We need to go into that election knowing what we intend to do, that it is achievable in a five-year period and how we will use those resources.

There has been some confusion about the figure of £9 billion. The Secretary of State for Defence said that some people talk about £5 billion and other people talk about £9 billion and that there are two ways of calculating our defence budget. If anyone believes what is written in the defence estimates, I advise them never to go into business as they will not survive for long. They are largely a cosmetic exercise with a heavy dose of propaganda, as are every other nation's defence estimates. People put things in and take things out. We have heard all the Soviet defence expenditure being calculated in a different way from ours. We have heard that Soviet defence estimates include the cost of pensions for service personnel which are excluded from our estimates and we have heard about the cost of maintaining military estate roads.

[Mr. Ken Livingstone]

When I mentioned £9 billion, I used figures from an authoritative right-wing source—the Institute of Strategic Studies, an organisation created by Conservatives throughout the world to analyse defence expenditure and make it generally comparative. Those figures lead to the conclusion that when we talk about cutting our defence spending to western European levels—at the moment it would mean a 40 per cent. cut, but given that almost every other western European nation is making bigger and more rapid cuts than we are the gap is opening up—it is clear that the figure is £9 billion and not £5 billion. The only way that one can reach the figure of £5 billion is to believe the Government's statistics. I do not believe that the Government's statistics on defence are any more honest than they are on unemployment and no doubt soon will be on inflation.

It is interesting that Conservative Members have made not one objection to the facts that I have laid before the House. I quoted facts which are not a matter of opinion. I did not get them from *Tribune* or any Labour party journal. They are economic statistics on which people in the chancellories of the world base their defence planning and expenditure. We should do well to consider the Institute of Strategic Studies' statistics. They demonstrate that if we talk about scaling down our defence to the same level as that of other western European nations, it would immediately give us in the lifetime of the next Labour Government a peace dividend of £9 billion. That would be the beginning that we need. A Labour Chancellor will need those resources to rebuild the British economy without taxing the British people to pay for it.

8.43 pm

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): It is now 15 months since I raised the issue of search and rescue helicopters in the RAF debate. The Wessex search and rescue helicopters are now more than 30 years old and, as was demonstrated recently, they suffer from the logistic problems created by their lack of range. Increasingly, search and rescue helicopters are required to go further out into the Atlantic, and the Westland Sea Kings have that extended capability. A search and rescue order for Westland would enable the company to capture other overseas search and rescue orders for the Sea Kings. The interim results published by Westland a few weeks ago show that the company has just five helicopters left for delivery this year. My concern is that the lack of orders for the helicopter division will overbalance Westland Technologies and Westland Aerospace in my constituency.

As I am sure my hon. Friend the Minister knows, aerospace structure contracts are long-tail business requiring massive investment up front with profits flowing only in the later stages of a contract. That makes the position of the helicopter division all the more parlous and I hope that my hon. Friend will bear that in mind when making the announcement that he promised.

I apologise for introducing a parochial note at a time of such great international changes. I recently visited SHAPE and NATO, and I am certain that it is more important than ever that we do not accept the cellophane-wrapped sugar-candy proposals of the Labour party for a peace dividend that will leave the nation naked and bereft of modern nuclear weapons and efficient services.

I recommend my hon. Friend seriously to consider the suggestions I recently made to him about increasing the use of Reserve forces. I believe that we should return to county regiments, resurrected as volunteer forces. We should not sell HMS Intrepid and HMS Fearless when they are replaced; we should use them to raise a stand-alone volunteer capability for Territorial Army marines with amphibious capability; they should be crewed by Royal Navy Reserves.

So often the Regular forces have acted as a safety net for our reservists. We must convince chiefs of staff in the 1990s that Reserve forces must be encouraged to exercise in a more stand-alone capability with their own allocation of equipment.

I was particularly interested and pleased to learn about the investment made in our armed forces by Jersey, which, as part of its contribution to the defence budget, paid for a new Reserve camp on the Isle of Wight which will be used to train Reserve forces as well as regular forces for the south of England land force. I am sure that it is unique in the history of our armed forces for such a contribution to be made by overseas taxpayers.

The cost of adventure training in the new leaner, meaner services of the next decade could be contracted out to organisations such as the Ocean youth club, rather than maintaining sailing vessels in all three services. By such means we shall surmount the recruiting problems by the use of Reserve forces and we shall be able to deliver the so-called peace dividend politically while maintaining efficient fighting forces. It may be necessary to introduce a period of compulsory service in the Reserve forces. Above all, by maintaining our nuclear forces in a modern state of readiness, Britain will continue to enjoy the longest period of peace it has ever experienced. That is my hon. Friend's duty and our children's inheritance. It must neither be negotiated away nor starved of money. That is the challenge in the 1990s and I have no doubt whatsoever that only a Conservative Government can manage those conflicting interests and maintain a sound defence policy.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Chairman of the Defence Select Committee is not present to hear me disagree with his views on the withdrawal of Russian troops from East Germany. If I may say so, as a mere donkey walloper, that is typical of the cavalry—if in doubt, charge. How can we expect Russia to withdraw 350,000 troops and to accommodate them in Russia when more than 17,000 Russian officers and men spent last winter under canvas inside the Soviet Union because of the lack of barracks?

How can we expect Russian generals and field commanders, who, as a result of President Gorbachev's sacking of 300 Russian generals, now have an average age below that of their NATO counterparts to accept an accelerated withdrawal when the best logistic estimates are three years using existing rail capacity to move out the ammunition, stores, fuel and vehicles in East Germany alone? How can we expect that to be completed sooner rather than later? When the bear's back is against the wall, the bear lashes out. The faster the pace, the greater the risk. Mr. Gorbachev is like a rodeo rider—he shows remarkable ability to stay in the saddle of a bucking bronco, but he has no control over the horse, he does not know where it is going and he cannot get off with any dignity. Now is not the time to cash in on our military muscle.

8.49 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): The debate takes place in the most peculiar of times. I have been waiting for Conservative Members to say—perhaps the Minister will say something in his reply—that we should think back five or 10 years and remember the efforts made by President Gorbachev and previous Soviet leaderships to pursue policies of peace and disarmament, and all the arguments advanced by peace campaigners throughout western Europe in the past 20 years calling for nuclear disarmament and a rapid cut in arms expenditure and opposing the siting of cruise and Trident missiles in Europe. Those arguments have finally come to fruition.

It is said that the Minister and many Conservative Members seem to be pretending that the Soviet Union is our enemy. I do not believe that it has ever intended to invade western Europe. That theory was put forward by NATO and the Marshall plan. Today, they are once again seeking to raise the spectre of some Russian menace. A country that lost 20 million people in the second world war fighting fascism is not about to embark on a war against anyone.

The great search for enemies continues. I understand that SHAPE headquarters is running computer models on whether Libya or another country in the middle east could match up to the size of the threat. There is a perpetual search for enemies to attempt to justify arms expenditure of £21 billion. Even by the rather glossy productions of the Ministry of Defence, the comparisons are awesome. Britain spends £21 billion on armaments, almost the highest in western Europe and the highest per capita of any comparable industrial country. Is it any wonder that social services are grinding to a halt and poverty is increasing continually? There is a direct correlation.

The Ministry of Defence has put much effort into promoting such expenditure on armaments and into exports to poor countries to prop up elitist regimes. My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) mentioned the wringing of hands throughout western Europe about how appalling the Iran-Iraq war was, yet it was being fuelled by every industrial country in Europe, by selling the precursor chemicals, which were made into the most devastating chemical weapons by Iraq, by providing credit, by buying oil on the spot market that propped up the economies of those countries and, over the years, by selling arms to those two countries. The sale and export of arms create conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq war.

It is no strategy to continue promoting the sales of arms to countries that can ill afford them and should not have them because the needs of their people are far greater than the needs—*[Interruption.]* If the Minister wishes to intervene, I shall happily give way. I am saying, and I am sure that he will agree, that it is far better to consider the needs of the poorest countries rather than to force them to accept arms. The people of those countries certainly do not need them. The arms industries fuel conflicts rather than reduce them. That surely is a problem that we should be considering.

I spent a pleasant afternoon yesterday outside the Royal Naval college at Greenwich, which is a beautiful building, taking part in a CND demonstration protesting about the presence of, I believe, a nuclear-armed ship anchored in the Thames, only a few miles from this building. That ship is a threat, because if those warheads are set off it will spark off a nuclear war and because it is a magnet to someone who may want to attack. It is a threat to every Londoner, because if fire broke out on that ship millions of Londoners' lives would be at risk. Despite repeated questions, the Ministry of Defence has refused to confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons on that vessel.

The reaction of the people to whom we were talking was interesting. They agreed that Britain's expenditure of £21 billion could be better spent. Nothing could be more ironic than having this huge ship, with all its danger, might and cost, anchored in Greenwich, which this week has been told to cut its social services budget, its housing budget and its recreation programme. Councillors in Greenwich must this week decide which day centre for the elderly must be cut because of poll tax capping. It is absolutely obscene that so much is being spent on defence when there is such need so close.

I support the amendment tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield and other hon. Friends. It is the only amendment that offers a real possibility of achieving rapid reduction in arms expenditure and a strategy that looks beyond just creating a political role for NATO that will inevitably maintain, if not increase, a nuclear capability throughout Europe. It opposes what the Government and many Conservative Members continually talk about—the rather ominous term, out-of-area activities by NATO forces.

Mr. Tony Banks: More jargon.

Mr. Corbyn: As my hon. Friend says, it is more jargon, but it is serious and dangerous jargon.

The last out-of-area activity by the United States was to use bases in this country—we are still awaiting the details of its arrangements for occupying those bases, which it did in 1948 without proper treaty arrangements—to fly planes to bomb people in Libya and kill children in Tripoli. Similarly, the French have used the Foreign Legion in North Africa to remove radical Governments and to prop up elitist regimes that are under threat. I foresee a dangerous trend developing, with a new era of European imperialism that maintains wealth for itself in Europe and uses the world debt crisis to impoverish the poorest countries. When there are rebellions in those countries against the low commodity prices and the investment of multinational capital, the iron force of that imperialism will fall on them, as the Government of Burkina Faso found to their cost when they opposed the economic strategies being imposed by foreign forces.

I find much of what the Government say in the defence estimates extremely depressing. Surely to God, at this time of all times, we need a different approach in the world in view of its problems, such as the growing pollution and impoverishment of two thirds of the world population, the growing destruction of the air and sea environment, of the forests and of the savannah grass lands and the damage to the environment throughout the industrial countries. Do we need a strategy that exports that pollution and poverty to other countries, or do we need a world strategy that reduces the resources spent on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and conventional arms and instead uses them to solve the world's environmental and social problems?

Unless we change our approach and strategy, the scenario of the last few months of French activities in Africa, or, in the last few years, the American

[Mr. Corbyn]

bombardment of Libya, will grow, because the United States now has forces in a number of central and south American countries. What are they there for? They are there to extend the influence of the United States and its interests in those countries.

Unless we change direction in the next 10 years—if we are still debating the subject then—we shall be debating the question of millions of environmental and economic refugees attempting to get away from the poverty and impoverishment of their countries that has been created by an economic system which continues that impoverishment.

There is now a chance to cut massively arms expenditure. As my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) has pointed out, if we reduced our arms expenditure—I look forward to a Labour Government reducing it by 50 per cent. over the first Parliament of that Labour Government—many of the United Kingdom's social problems would be solved; we could rebuild our economic base and play a role in the world that was of real benefit to the world and that would make us face up to the environmental disasters that we are approaching. Instead, we are going in for the myopic maintenance of a high level of arms expenditure, pretending that there are enemies who are about to invade when it is known that they are not. We are putting our heads in the sand and ignoring the realities of life around us.

At this turning point, with all the changes in Europe, now is the time for a real change rather than the nonsense of the imperial images of grandeur that are offered by the Government, with poverty for the people of Britain and of so many other countries.

9 pm

Dr. Charles Goodson-Wickes (Wimbledon): It is the hope of most hon. Members that their speeches will stand up to examination in future years. To take part in this debate appears to make one peculiarly vulnerable in this respect: seldom, if ever, has a defence debate taken place in peacetime with the world in such a state of flux. I speak as someone who, when serving in BAOR, regularly took civilian visitors to see the Berlin wall. It never failed to move me or them, and never in my wildest dreams did I conceive that it would be removed within my lifetime. We live in exciting times. Nevertheless, there is a risk attached.

There are two themes on which I will concentrate—first, the battle that was won against unilateralism, and its aftermath; and, secondly, the battle that has yet to be won against terrorism and steps to combat this.

On the first issue, I doubt whether a single fair-minded hon. Member would deny the credit due to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and successive Secretaries of State for Defence over the past 11 years in their determination to negotiate from a position of strength within NATO. The events speak for themselves. The Soviet Union has been brought to its knees not by a battle on a conventional battlefield but by an economic battle, in an unsuccessful attempt to match the installation of sophisticated defence systems. However, now that the Warsaw pact is defunct, a reassessment of the position of NATO and of Britain's role within it is clearly inevitable. It is doubtful whether this reappraisal will take place in a Europe which is significantly more stable than hitherto.

One hears from some quarters of nostalgia for the cold war, because at least everyone knew where they were. As every day passes, the fragmentation of the Soviet Union, under pressure from nationalist and ethnic feelings—so long suppressed—becomes more likely. Civil wars in the newly emerging democracies in central Europe and the Balkans cannot be discounted—there is precious little history of democracy on which to build—and border disputes between them may erupt.

Against this background, we have been prepared for further delay in reaching agreement on the conventional armed forces in Europe—CFE—negotiations.

If I were President Gorbachev I would have certain reservations about the presence of thousands of demobbed lieutenant colonels, let alone their troops, with time on their hands and without jobs, roaming around the Soviet Union. Some former Warsaw pact nations have even developed a sudden enthusiasm for inspection, not of a former enemy's force levels, but of force levels in the Soviet Union itself.

Overshadowing all that is the forthcoming unification of Germany and the formidable political, economic and military implications of that process. In the circumstances, I urge my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his colleagues—indeed, if they need any urging—to adopt the utmost caution. Nothing is nore dangerous than instability. In the face of instability, we must retain, to coin a phrase, flexibility in response. If President Gorbachev falls victim to his own revolution, who can tell to what use the superiority of Soviet armour will be put?

Quite apart from our role to reinforce Europe, we have our out-of-area capability. Hon. Members have heard the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) describe that as jargon. Jargon it may be, but at least we know what we are talking about. We must maintain and protect British interests in a world that is still an inherently dangerous place, not least because of the spread of nuclear weapons to unstable countries.

For example, I hope that we will have reassurance from my hon. Friend the Minister of State that the vital and little-discussed importance of our supply lines across the world will not be neglected. After all, we rely significantly on imports. According to the best figures that I can find, we are only 75 per cent. self-sufficient in food and raw materials.

Recently it has become fashionable for sources close to the President of the United States to describe NATO as predominantly an expression of shared political ideals rather than a framework for a defence strategy. That seems to have been picked up on this side of the Atlantic. It must be a new theory. I doubt whether the United States felt comfortable with Portugal, Greece and Turkey when they were dictatorships within NATO. Indeed, the main influence for fostering democracy in western Europe was not NATO but the European Community.

It is my fervent hope that those statements from Washington are not a prelude to United States military withdrawal from Europe. The conference on security and co-operation in Europe—CSCE—which was well described by my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg), is all very well as a vehicle to give a sense of reassurance within the so-called common European home, but a continued American defence

presence is vital, with the British providing the historical link between the United States of America and the continent of Europe. I hope that that role will be developed, given our proven talents in the leadership of multinational military formations.

To meet the changed circumstances, we have the current "Options for Change" review. There are many who are better qualified than I to assess the arguments that are filtering through from the inner circle, but I trust that consideration of such matters will be based on one principle, and one principle alone—the need to address a continuing, if diminished, threat. We need a balanced though smaller Army with a job defined first and funds made available. It would then be for the Army to come up with suitable detailed structures to achieve that aim. One sometimes feels that financial reductions may be recommended, but conclusions about the fate of specified infantry battalions and armoured regiments are made before the military implications are thought through. I trust that that is an illusion. In any case, I welcome signs from my hon. Friend the Minister of State of an enhanced role for the Territorial Army and Reserve forces and possible joint training exercises for contingencies which, after all, range from a major war to international disaster relief.

There are two relevant questions. First, do we have adequate strength? Secondly, do we have the right balance? If the answer to either question is no, we have gone about the task in the wrong way.

The second issue I wish to touch on is terrorism. The recent atrocities that were carried out by the Irish Republican Army in this country and on mainland Europe have highlighted the dilemma over security for our troops. I am conscious that I am making these remarks in the presence of my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), the Chairman of the Defence Select Committee.

The introduction of new security measures at military installations throughout the country was an obvious step, but I question certain aspects of that policy. Of course, its purpose is entirely defensive, but perhaps those measures cut off the Army from the community that it serves. Not only does service life imply risk, but there is the added danger that the terrorists will either upgrade the weapons used against military targets or shift their attack to soft targets. Unfortunately, it seems that the latter is already happening, with tragic results.

I understand that £30 million was allocated in 1989-90 to physical security measures, but I wonder whether such a sum would be better spent on intelligence. I recognise that this is a peculiarly difficult balance to strike and I do not expect my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement to answer on the Floor of the House questions that relate primarily to the Home Office budget. However, I am confident that as a distinguished former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, whom I am pleased to see taking his place on the Treasury Bench, will give that matter due consideration.

As it is likely that more troops will be stationed in this country in due course, I am certain that there will and should be more contact between the Army and civilians. Given the unique good will that exists, perhaps a type of military neighbourhood watch scheme should be considered as it could, at least, be an effective adjunct to barbed wire and chain fences. It is in the interests of all of us in the country that terrorism is defeated.

In conclusion, may I make the plea for early reassurances to be given to the armed services, which exist as much to prevent wars as to fight them—contrary to some of the things that we have heard from Opposition Members this evening? The armed services need to be told of the value that we place on their activities, and especially on their ability to adapt to the unexpected.

The level of recruitment may be satisfactory at present, but the retention of trained and experienced personnel is proving increasingly difficult in these changing times. Morale has been knocked in so many ways. The general mood of uncertainty has been aggravated by the postponement for nine months of the retention bonus scheme, by the moratorium on new contracts as a result of the unfortunate defence budget overspend, and by the ban on civilian recruitment for the more mundane tasks. It may seem a trivial point, but in an all-volunteer Army, a trained soldier should be doing what he has been trained to do and should not, for example, be cleaning the cookhouse.

The armed forces have no wish to be immune from the concept of financial accountability, which has been promoted so vigorously by this Government. In due course, there will be a peace dividend, allowing more resources for health and education and all the other issues that we recognise need the Government's attention. However, there is nothing more radical, in the true sense of that word, than the sense of security that comes from well-trained, well-equipped, well-housed armed forces, with reduced disruption of family life, and more contact with the community. That is the service dividend and I am confident that my right hon. and hon. Friends will not neglect it in the days ahead.

9.13 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): As one who did his national service in a tank crew, with the 31st land infantry brigade, I should like to pay tribute to the brigade's commander at that time, General Victor Campbell, who died earlier this month. Victor Campbell was unfairly portrayed in the brilliant film, "Tunes of Glory", and was played brilliantly, as Colonel Barlow by Sir John Mills. However, it was an unkind caricature of a considerable man to whom many people have cause to be grateful.

I now make a complaint to the Secretary of State for Defence. As his parliamentary colleague for many years, I say to the right hon. Gentleman that it was quite wrong that he did not ensure that the official Opposition and the Liberal party were represented when he went to Gallipoli. That broke all precedent. Two of my right hon. Friends, who are Members for Leeds constituencies, would have represented the Labour party with great distinction, as would my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill). But there should have been a representative. The hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) should also have been asked. I hope that the representation at the Gallipoli commemoration is in no sense a precedent for such occasions.

While we are on the subject of anniversaries, I pay tribute on its 50th anniversary to something that is forgotten——

Mr. Tom King: The only request that we received was from the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). We offered to arrange for him to attend, but he did not take us up on it. I cannot understand why he chooses to raise the matter at this time. In no sense—I deplore the idea—is the commemoration of Gallipoli a party political matter, and I certainly sought to respond to any request.

Mr. Dalyell: The offer to me was not to go with the official party or to have anything to do with it.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Wrong again.

Mr. Dalyell: No, I am not wrong. No offer was made, as it certainly was when Jim Callaghan was Prime Minister or in Harold Wilson's time—my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) will correct me if I am wrong. But no offer was made to the Opposition spokesman.

My personal view is that I no longer see any need for this country to have a new battle tank. A long time ago I was a member of a tank crew. In the present context, I feel for tank crews and think that nowadays they would easily be "brewed up"—I think that is the right term. Is it not a fact that the Americans have under development a SADARM, a search and destroy armoured missile? There are heat-seeking missiles—doubtless the Soviet forces have them, too—against which a tank, however well armoured, would stand little chance.

The American weapon, which will certainly soon be developed by other countries, is designed to take out the most modern tanks. What is the Ministry of Defence's assessment of heat-seeking and other related weapons taking out tanks? If my argument is right, is it sensible to go ahead with the expense of a new main battle tank? The tank is heading for obsolescence in the modern European battle field. It is conceptually obsolete because we want defences that do not make the other side worried and create instability. The tank is basically an offensive weapon.

In his opening speech, the Secretary of State for Defence gave various figures on how we should take into account the fact that eastern Europe was not disarming to the extent that it was supposed in some countries. Are my statistics accurate or not? Is it not a fact that the Czechs have already cut their forces by 30 per cent., the Hungarians have cut theirs by 35 per cent. and the Soviet armed forces will be out of Czechoslovakia and Hungary by the end of 1991? Is it not a fact that 10,000 Soviet troops have already been withdrawn from Poland; that East Germany has reduced its forces from 165,000 to 100,000 in two years; that Soviet tank production has been halved; and that last year the Soviet Union cut its forces by 5 per cent.? My figures come from the CIA—*[Interruption.]*—so perhaps I am all right.

Not only our so-called enemies but our friends have been making cuts. The West Germans have cut troop levels from 495,000 to 400,000. I want to associate myself with the arguments of my hon Friend the Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) on this.

What discussions have taken place about these matters with the chiefs of staff? I do not believe everything that I read about their not being consulted, but enough has appeared in the press to legitimise my question. I remember that when I was first a parliamentary candidate —the Minister of State, who is a military historian, will remember this well—Duncan Sandys carried out the 1957 defence review behind closed doors. It will be in the collective memory of the Ministry of Defence that that created great difficulty at the time of the 1957 White Paper.

What do we want? My hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East suggested an end to BAOR. I say that BAOR could realistically be cut by a third within18 months and by two thirds in three years, bearing in mind the accommodation problem. I believe that the RAF in Germany should be cut forthwith from seven squadrons of Tornadoes to three—I refer to the GRI which is the strike arm, not to the interceptor arm which, as far as I know, is based in the United Kingdom. That would send a signal to the Soviets that we were serious about cuts. For the moment, we should keep in place the Phantoms, the interceptors, and the Harriers, the close air support.

I now approach a delicate issue that affects my constituency. The Secretary of State asked earlier what would happen in Edinburgh if there were any cuts in the European fighter aircraft programme. Is it not highly likely that the West Germans will cancel their participation in the EFA? If so, someone had better make contingency plans for the many skilled people in Edinburgh——

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Alan Clark): The hon. Member must know that, thanks to the continuous and dedicated efforts of my right hon. Friend, the Germans have signed up for the relevant stage of the EFA contract. I am sure that if the hon. Gentleman searches his memory he will recollect that.

Mr. Dalyell: In that case, many people in Edinburgh will be reassured; but were the Germans to cancel, we should have to make plans for arms conversion. Many people who are worried about their jobs will be relieved in the short-term by that assurance, if I have interpreted the Minister aright.

We must take advantage of the peace dividend, and I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East that we have to use it for the industrial base of the 21st century. Britain's security is economic and depends on reinvesting in industry.

The worst danger that we face would be the discontent of the peoples of eastern Europe if we were unable to help them economically. Some of us think that, without exaggerating and being too dramatic, the best thing that we could do for our own security would be to have some kind of Marshall-type plan for eastern Europe. Anyone who says that that is fanciful should contrast the treatment of Germany in 1918 with its treatment in 1945. Which is preferable? The treatment from 1945 to 1955 led to a far more stable West Germany than the Germany that began to go wrong before 1929.

In that context I refer to the Dublin conference which has just taken place. At that important conference, for the first time western and eastern Environment Ministers met to see what we could do to help eastern Europe overcome its monumentally appalling environment problems. Unless we have the wealth to solve that problem, we can do very little to help those eastern European countries. Some of us heard Carlo Ripa di Meana, the European Commissioner, say how important it was for the countries of western Europe to do something to help the east.

There are many other problems in which we should become involved in furtherance of the peace dividend. They are the conservation of energy and metals, projects for anti-corrosion, recycling technology, the problems of

winning metals from lower grade ores and the problems of creating efficient public transport. All those matters have far more to do with our security than the making of tanks or other military expenditure to which we seem to be committed. We need to return to the Op Macc—operation military aid to the civil community—schemes of General Sir Derek Lang and do what the United States corps of engineers did in the 1920s and the 1930s. They made a great contribution. We must think in terms of personnel and encourage many in the forces, and not only officers, to take university degrees so that those who remain in the forces can make a high quality contribution and be fairly certain of a welcome into civilian life when they leave. Otherwise there will be no career.

Speaking about his union members, Bill Morris, of the Transport and General Workers Union, said:

"Defence workers are proud people; they're not ashamed of what they do, they're highly skilled and very patriotic. But they haven't made a conscious decision to produce weaponry. Circumstances have taken them into it. They now see their future and security threatened as a result of world events. They are looking to the unions, and to opinion-formers and decision-makers to help them reshape the events which affect their lives and to give them a more secure future.

My union believes that we have to make real demands of political parties."

That is the demand that we must face. We must do something constructive for our armed forces.

9.29 pm

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): I appreciate that there is only a very short time before the Front-Bench speeches are due to begin. I thank the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) for enabling me to make a brief contribution to the debate.

I commend to the House the report of the conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at Bonn on disarmament. I shall not go into detail about it because there is not time to do so. It was a co-operative conference which was attended by delegates from throughout the world.

I appreciate the figures on our balance of payments to which the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) referred. I think that West Germany may lose about £10 billion. I look forward to seeing additional tank troops based in south Dorset. My constituency could do with the foreign exchange.

I have something sweet to put around the bitter pill, which involves the sea systems controllerate. About two and a half years ago I became aware that the controllerate in my constituency, at which there are about 650 jobs, was to be centralised somewhere near Bath. That sounded qute a good idea until it was investigated. I discovered that the employees at Bath were rather fed up with their tatty offices, at which there are 2,500 employees, and that they had a lovely plan to persuade the Ministry of Defence to build brand new offices for 4,000 employees. They persuaded a predecessor of my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement that if the staff were cut by about 10 per cent. that would pay for the £40 million that the move would cost over 10 years.

That was a ridiculous proposal, yet £40 million has been set aside to increase the defence establishment by building yet more offices at Keynsham. I urge my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench to reconsider that arrangement. For about two and a half years reorganisation has been blighted within the organisation. I am sure that the controllerate could work more efficiently. Indeed, a 10 per cent. staff reduction has already been made without moving staff through natural wastage. I do not believe that another three years of blight should be allowed to take place. Reorganisation is overdue and there should be a careful examination of what is happening. I ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to review the decision.

9.31 pm

Mr. Roland Boyes (Houghton and Washington): This could be the most important defence estimates debate for many years because of what is missing from the estimates and not because of what is in them.

We are on the verge of a major transformation of relationships between the states of Europe and between the super-powers, and that is not confined to diplomats. We must recognise that changes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union—I hope that the debate will reflect this fact —mean major changes within the United Kingdom and western Europe generally. The days when military force, or the threat of it, was seen as a credible means of solving international disputes are numbered. The ever-increasing opinion is that western Europe is no longer seriously threatened militarily. It will be increasingly difficult to convince the tax-paying public of Europe of the necessity to vote for defence budgets which are based on the assumption of an imminent attack by the Soviet Union.

In an interview during "The World at One" on 14 April, Lord Carrington said:

"the truth of the matter is that if there isn't a threat or a very serious threat, from the East, there is no way in which public opinion is going to continue to support defence spending—and nor should it—on the basis that we have at the moment."

Moreover, with an ever-decreasing threat, fewer and fewer young people will be attracted to the military as a career, because the values that it projects and represents are no longer considered appropriate.

Having twice been to the base on the Falkland Islands, I agree with everything that the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) said about the conditions there. They are awful and must be improved. I do not agree—this is only a point of view that is exchanged between us—that the soldiers are happy down there. Many of them dislike living in such conditions and being so far away from Port Stanley. I agree generally with what the hon. Gentleman had to say about the soldiers in the Falklands.

I do not wish to denigrate the Government's review of defence commitments before it is completed. It would be silly to do so. I hope only that the Secretary of State's "Options for Change" will be bold enough to tackle the major issue of civil-military relations. If it is not, the Government will create severe problems for the future, which the Opposition will not be afraid to address when we form the next Government.

As I said in the Army debate earlier this month, we do not like the secrecy surrounding the Government's current defence review. I hope that, when we eventually hear what they have decided, we shall find that their plans include not only consideration of the nitty gritty of forces structure and of procurement decisions but an open, objective assessment of the current and future military threats to Britain.

The Secretary of State acknowledged that the Warsaw pact is moribund as a military organisation, and that was

[Mr. Roland Boyes]

publicly accepted by the NATO defence planning committee at its meeting last month in Brussels, which the Secretary of State attended.

What of an attack by the Soviet Union? Last November, the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* published substantial parts of a leaked paper to the Defence Secretary that spelt out a new assessment by the United States intelligence community of the scale and nature of the Soviet threat. It concluded that there is no longer any justification for NATO maintaining its forces on readiness for a short-warning attack. The standard period quoted for a considerable time was 10 days, but the report said that the size and posture of the Warsaw pact forces meant that NATO would now have at least 33 to 44 days' warning of an attack, and possibly much longer.

When I attended Sealink in Anapolis last year—and I know that some Conservative Members were there, too—it was made clear that the major difficulty was getting men, munitions and other goods across the Atlantic, whereas the Soviets could trundle through eastern Europe using the railway system. When I put that to a senior retired admiral, he said that under present conditions he would much prefer to cross the Atlantic than try taking trains through the countries concerned to reach the German border. When I was in Moscow just before the Secretary of State, I put that point to one of the senior Soviet foreign affairs staff, and he said that if he had a choice, he would agree with the retired admiral.

It has been said for a long time that a threat would be posed by tanks coming through central Europe, but that does not take into account the fact that between Moscow and Germany there are some 50 nuclear power stations. The consequences of a tank battle in central Europe with that many nuclear stations around would be incredible.

The leaked report to the United States Defence Secretary addressed the nature of the Soviet threat before any of the cuts announced in Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations in December 1988 took effect, and before any of the massive upheavals in eastern Europe that occurred in 1989. Without the political and logistic support of neighbouring countries, a Soviet attack would be impossible. Many of the countries that Russian troops would have to trundle through have thrown out their old Governments and rejected Soviet domination. None of us regrets that.

According to the latest CIA threat assessment released on 20 April, at least three of the six tank divisions that Gorbachev promised in 1988 to disband have gone, as have three quarters of the 8,500 artillery pieces and 800 aircraft that he promised to cut. Soviet defence spending is in decline and morale is so low among Soviet forces that the USSR would have great difficulty in launching any attack, let alone a short-warning attack.

That leaves the threat of a Soviet nuclear attack. In what possible circumstances would the Soviet Union, which clearly has no intention and, more importantly, little or no capability now to attack western Europe with conventional forces, want to start a nuclear war?

We can now make the transition to a more mature form of international relations where the de facto situation of constant and deepening interaction between east and west in trade, technology, culture and environment may be matched by the abandonment of the xenophobic nuclear chest-beating which has characterised the past 40 years.

The nuclear supporters would say, "But what about instability in the USSR?" The Secretary of State and I were in the Soviet Union at similar times, and we are well aware of what is happening in some of the states. People ask what the Soviet military would do if Gorbachev continued to squeeze them, or, what is worse still, if Yeltsin takes power and attempts greater cuts in the Red Army's resources, power and status. Would not there be a risk of a military coup? Again, we must be realistic. Even if the army took over, what could it do? It could not hope to turn the clock back, and since it could not hope to deliver economic reforms, it is a spent political force.

When I was in Moscow earlier this year I saw the immense economic and social problems which face the Soviets—by gum, they are immense. It is now obvious that the military could not solve those problems. The most that it can do is to delay the process of reductions in Soviet military strength—which it seems that it is doing—by slowing down progress in arms control talks and reducing the pace of some withdrawals from eastern Europe.

Even the CIA has publicly acknowledged that there is no danger of the Soviet Union reverting to the Brezhnev era, when the military's political power was at its height. When the director of the CIA expressed such a view to Congress earlier this year, it was much to the chagrin of United States Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, who was trying to persuade Congress to tone down its defence cuts, as a hedge against the hawks regaining control in the Kremlin. Some notable United States Sovietologists, such as Stephen Meyer at MIT, have recently been predicting that Gorbachev will appoint a civilian as Defence Minister later this year, for the first time in Soviet history. That will be another sign that the chances of the hawks regaining control in the Kremlin are nil.

Therefore, a Soviet attack on western Europe is inconceivable, even as a result of Gorbachev being deposed. What about the risk of nationalist unrest in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union? What if the problems of Lithuania or any of the other states become so great that they lead to widespread civil unrest and military intervention? Could not that lead to war engulfing the whole of Europe?

Even if Gorbachev decided to send troops to quell nationalist unrest, the chances of internal problems spilling over into a wider international conflict are minimal—there would be enough to deal with at home without risking a wider war. In such circumstances, what on earth could NATO do, other than to take diplomatic measures? The only possible contribution it could make would be to act as a symbol of political cohesion between states. Perhaps it could play a part in developing and promoting within Europe the type of political relationships and structures which minimise the risk of nationalist uprisings occurring in the first place, and which maximise the chances of solving problems when they occur.

Mr. Ian Bruce *rose*——

Mr. Boyes: No, I have nearly finished my speech.

That would be a political function for NATO, but the Warsaw pact and NATO are military institutions, within which military solutions to political problems have always predominated. We need to make a transition to forms of

international politics in Europe that are not predicated on the ever-present threat of unleashing mass destruction. As long as we feel that we cannot trust each other, our attempts to solve serious political problems will always be based on threats of violence. If the institutions that we use to seek solutions are founded on the concept of political coercion by threatening violence, we shall have narrowed the options from the start. We are now approaching a time when there is no longer any role for military force in Europe, at least in the countries west of the Soviet border. Therefore, a symbolic display is fast becoming an empty gesture.

The Secretary of State said some kind words about the forces, which I endorse. We want the best trained forces with the most up-to-date equipment to meet the reality of any threat in the new and ever-developing situation. Fortunately, for those such as myself who are grandfathers, I now believe that our grandchildren will grow up in a Europe of peace and not conflict.

9.44 pm

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Alan Clark): What has made this debate particularly interesting has been the broad scope of contributions. However, I was relieved and disappointed that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) was unable to make one of his lively and original contributions. The critical damage that he did to my career with the praise that he heaped on me during the Air Force debate was something that I hoped would not be repeated.

This debate has been utterly different from its predecessors in its content and setting. I quote:

"We are entering a new period in relations between east and west."—[*Official Report*, 12 June 1990, Vol. 174, c. 137.]

"In terms of military effectiveness and cohesion . . . the Warsaw Pact is effectively defunct now.

We no longer think of them"—

the countries of eastern Europe—

"as potential enemies or as part of a wider threat to our way of life".

If anyone thinks that that is another example of the political recklessness of which I am so often, but so unjustly accused, let me say that I was quoting from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and again from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

The changing situation has had three consequences. There is a public expectation that expenditure appropriate to—and tolerated during—a higher level of tension is no longer required; that force deployment, structure and weapons procurement conceived in a virtually unaltered context for the past 45 years should now be changed; and that close consultation with our allies in NATO is required to ensure that such changes are effected in an harmonious manner that safeguards alliance cohesion. It is in reconciling those three elements that close attention, patient and constructive thought and a wide degree of consultation are necessary.

Of course I understand that the press is impatient as it must subsist on a day-to-day feed of information which it tends to draw mainly from its colleagues' clippings. For instance, I read at the weekend that the service chiefs—whatever that means—are calling not for my resignation but for my dismissal on the grounds that they disagree with what I was allegedly proposing and that they have not seen a report that I have allegedly written. I assume that the service chiefs are honourable men; at no time has any of them expressed any dissent with what I proposed or asked to see the report that I wrote. Against that background, I can only assume that it would have been highly dishonourable of them to have briefed the press, so I am reinforced in my view that that piece in the press was pure invention.

Mr. Cohen *rose*——

Mr. Clark: I shall cope with interventions in a little while, but for the moment I should proceed.

This critically important subject has not only been widely debated in this place. We have had contributions from such distinguished academics as Sir Michael Howard, Professor Laurie Freedman and former serving officers such as Sir Julian Thompson. Today we have had a number of varied and constructive contributions from both sides of the House.

My right hon. Friend said that I would tell the House about two procurement decisions immediately that relate to Tornado aircraft and the EH101. As regards the EH101, it is more than ever important that the contractual arrangements are put on a sounder basis. Work that has been in hand to prepare a new overall performance specification for the helicopter has now been completed. We plan to invite tenders next month for the award of a prime contract for the completion of development and initial production of a Royal Navy variant.

The right hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) looks alert and poised, but I shall not give way to him, as he has not been in the Chamber for long.

The specification against which we shall invite tenders calls for the production aircraft to be fitted with the Rolls-Royce Turbomeca RTM 322 engine to provide the extra power needed for the aircraft to fulfil its mission effectively. Work on integrating that engine in a development aircraft will now proceed.

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): I welcome my hon. Friend's important announcement, which is in the national interest as well as that of my constituents, and I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones) is in his place to hear it.

Will my hon. Friend bear in mind the fact that this engine, which was funded by his Department's support for a high-lift and heavy-lift capability, was on test with the American air force about three years ago? It has taken all this time to give it evaluation and certification. Without doubt the Australians did not wish to buy a unique engine, and therefore we possibly lost their order of 170 engines. We also lost the follow-on order to the Saudis of 200 engines. My hon. Friend's announcement, however, means that we will stand a good chance of winning the Canadian order for some 180 engines. Equally, we can hope to win the Italian order for 170 engines. It is a good announcement, but I wish that it had come a lot earlier, as that would have benefited British industry.

Mr. Clark: I appreciate my hon. Friend's views, and I am grateful for his welcome for my announcement. I am certain that the engine is right for this aircraft.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that, in constructing the short-term measures and in the continuing scrutiny of new commitments, we have used the emerging picture from the options exercise as a yardstick against which to assess individual issues. An example is the

[Mr. Clark]

eighth batch of Tornado orders. At present, I cannot foresee a place for additional Tornado aircraft in the programme. I have therefore decided not to authorise further work on that order.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): What consultations has my hon. Friend had, or will he have, with British Aerospace about the way in which his announcement will be handled? Can he give some reassurance to the thousands of British Aerospace workers in Lancashire who will be concerned about the implications of his announcement for future projects such as the European fighter aircraft?

Mr. Clark: I can reassure my hon. Friend that we are in almost continuous consultation with British Aerospace. As I said in reply to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), largely thanks to the efforts of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in a series of discussions with our German counterparts, the future of that aircraft is assured throughout its development phase.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) made a number of points. The one that is most immediately relevant related to the main battle tank order. In spite of the highly personal view of the hon. Member for Linlithgow that there was no future for the main battle tank, which he based on his experience of serving in armoured vehicles 40 years ago, the combined view of both east and west staff is that there is a continuing demand for a main battle tank. The hon. Member for Clackmannan drew the attention of the House to the question of unit costs, which are likely to rise as numbers in the order fall. We are certainly aware of that and it is a factor in our discussions with Vickers. However, it is not yet certain that Vickers will win the competition, although it is proceeding through its various evaluation stages most successfully. We are well aware of where the thresholds exist and they will certainly be borne in mind should any procurement order result.

I recognise the wider issue of putting in place some imprecise Government machinery to cover manufacturers which are disappointed at not winning competitions and getting orders as a somewhat outdated socialist nostrum which the countries of eastern Europe are busily discarding. It certainly is not my role to second-guess the commercial judgment of those companies which, as has been widely recognised in speeches by hon. Members from both sides of the House, deploy very highly skilled work forces for whose labour and skills there is a high demand in civilian companies. How they decide to deploy those skills, if they have to shift from one form of production to another, is a matter which I am perfectly prepared to leave to their commercial judgment.

The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) always makes entertaining speeches. He tripped down memory lane quite extensively and reminded us several times of his book, "Our Guilty Men". When he spoke about nuclear proliferation, he displayed that special engaging Fabian naivety that is almost extinct except in elderly socialists of his generation. He believes that nuclear proliferation could be restrained by treaty, by a piece of paper indistinguishable other than at the closest range from the one that Mr. Chamberlain waved when he got off the aircraft in 1938 and for which the right hon. Gentleman in his book glibly and tendentiously blamed the Conservative party. If a piece of paper could not prevent Germany from invading Poland and Czechoslovakia, why would a piece of paper prevent other powers from acquiring nuclear technology if they so wished? When my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) quite properly responded to a question about what would happen if a united Germany ever resumed certain activities by saying that it would be restrained by the 1954 treaty, all the Opposition Members burst out laughing, saying that treaties do not count for anything. Treaties do not count for anything when Opposition Members do not want them to, but they pin their beliefs on the non-proliferation treaty as a measure which will lead to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Opposition Members choose to ignore the fact that there are two categories of signatories to the non-proliferation treaty. Britain is among those signatories that already hold nuclear weapons and scrupulously and at all time abides by the provisions which prevent us from disseminating and imparting knowledge of how to construct nuclear weapons to parties other than those which already have the technology.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson) made a radical and constructive speech emphasising the importance of the Western European Union. That organisation may grow in stature and importance. Many of the issues that he raised are more properly a matter for a wider debate on foreign affairs rather than one on the defence estimates. However, he made an important point when he touched upon the gradation of nuclear response, which is absolutely fundamental to rejecting the arguments of the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) who, if he is not the leader of the Liberal party, certainly should be—*[Interruption.]* The right hon. Member for Yeovil bolted from the Chamber to catch the last train to Yeovil. I should have held him at bay and made him miss his train.

I get the feeling that the Labour party is still deeply uncomfortable about defence. It wants to avoid, at all costs, defence being effective. Its ideal is a lightly armed gendarmerie, staffed by graduates in social studies, that is answerable to an international agency, or, more sinister, a militia of miner vigilantes.

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

PETITIONS

M11 Link Road

10 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): I wish to present a petition, which says:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of The Stop the M11 Link Road Action Campaign sheweth:

That the A12 Hackney Wick to M11 Link Road will be injurious to the health and well being of the Petitioners insofar as it will cause homelessness through their homes being demolished with in many instances no replacement being offered, it will cause ill health through noise and pollution and will be unfavourable to the community at large.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House will seek an assurance from The Right Hon. Member

The Secretary of State for Transport that he will show as much leadership in cancelling the A12 Hackney Wick to M11 Link Road as was shown in cancelling the East London Assessment Studies Options.

It is signed by 70 affected residents. I share the concerns that they express and consider that my constituents have been badly treated by the Department of Transport.

To lie upon the Table.

European Central Time

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): This is a humble petition of the people of Scotland, and has been signed by about 800 people. It sheweth

That the proposals to introduce European Central Time to the United Kingdom will impose upon the people of Scotland a system of time keeping which will take no account of the hazards facing school children going to school in the dark winter mornings or the difficulties faced by farmers, the road haulage industry and commuters when low temperatures create black ice and fog on Scotland's roads.

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your Honourable House reject the European Community Proposals to harmonise all of The Community into one time zone.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will forever pray.

To lie upon the table.

British Rail Operations (Noise)

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): I have the honour to present a humble petition of residents of Newport, Gwent, with which I entirely agree. It sheweth

the noise and environmental difficulties experienced by local residents over the past three years as a result of British Rail operations at East Usk Sidings, Newport, Gwent.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House urge the Secretary of State for Transport to prevail upon British Rail to take remedial action.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

Natural Beauty Products, Bridgend

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

10.4 pm

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): I do not know how many unacceptable faces there are to VAT enforcement but I know that in the case of Natural Beauty Products in my constituency I have come across an ugly and costly one for the company's banker, its directors, work force, creditors and—a savage irony—for the VAT collectors themselves.

The whole matter came to a head on 30 January of this year when a VAT official from the Swansea office walked into the Natural Beauty Products factory on the Bridgend trading estate and demanded the immediate payment of some £43,000, following a final demand sent to the company three days before. He was told that the company had virtually completed a refinancng package and he even spoke to a representative of the Australian company with ultimate responsibility for it. It was made clear to him that the whole deal would be settled the following week and that a further check on the accuracy of the claim could be made by telephoning Barclays bank in Cardiff, which was the company's debenture holder and by the far the largest creditor.

The VAT official did not speak to Barclays bank but he spoke to someone from the Inland Revenue who confirmed that it had a £9,000 levy on the company's fixed assets and was not proceeding against Natural Beauty Products for a much larger debt of £93,000. An arrangement had been reached with the company to repay this sum over a 10-month period.

This official, acting in what I can only describe as a blinkered, inflexible and even dictatorial manner, with no apparent thought for the consequences of his action, then ordered a Transit van and requested a VAT supervisor to attend and oversee the removal of equipment, goods and stock from the factory—which, incidentally, had a value of over £800,000. He did this in spite of an immediate offer of £10,000 across the table and the repayment of the remainder of the debt within a maximum of 10 working days—the longest time that the directors considered would be needed to complete the refinancing and pay their VAT debt.

The VAT official continued with his plan for the removal of materials. A van arrived and the goods were loaded and removed. The directors were informed that the VAT official would return the following day to complete the seizure of the goods considered necessary to enable the VAT debt to be paid in full.

At this stage, to try to salvage something from the havoc wreaked by this inflexible and blinkered VAT official, the directors contacted Barclays bank and requested that an administrative receiver should be appointed to enable the company to be sold as a going concern. The company ship had already endured just over a year in very rough, stormy waters; franchise deals in the United Kingdom which had turned sour had forced the company to become directly involved in retailing, just at the time when interest rates began to soar. This meant that the company was soon financially overstretched. However, by January 1990, according to the administrative receiver, the company had

"disposed of its loss-making activities in an orderly fashion"

[Mr. Win Griffiths]

—that is, the company was about to launch itself into calmer waters. Unfortunately, the action of the VAT official from Swansea led to the company ship hitting severe VAT rocks, and it was damaged beyond repair.

Twenty-seven people lost their jobs at that stage in the company's life, leaving only 20 employees on the books. Thirty-three employees had already been forced to leave the company the previous November as part of the exercise to make the company shipshape. The company was just about to retrieve its fortunes, but all its hopes were dashed by an inflexible VAT official.

I made inquiries of other accountants to find out whether such action was unusual. My inquiries provoked some rather surprisingly savage responses. One accountant—not the one who was involved in the administrative receivership of the company—said that VAT officials sometimes acted as the fascists of the financial world. One case was cited in which VAT officials were not even prepared to reschedule a debt of less than £1,000 when the company involved was prepared to pay 60 per cent. immediately and the balance when the next VAT bill was due.

The VAT official in question acted inflexibly and was perhaps too rigorous in following the guidelines set down by Customs and Excise in its document "Aims of Enforcement Action", which state:

"Whatever action is contemplated, however, there is a simple guiding principle which is always to be borne in mind —DELAY COSTS MONEY."

Unfortunately, in this case delay cost the taxpayer, the workers, the creditors, the bank and the Government a great deal of money. What were the consequences of that? In the end, the VAT officials got their money—£36,000, because the company had a rebate due of more than £7,000. Twenty-seven people lost their jobs. Also, £37,000 in wages was lost as a result of that action. Some of that money will be recouped through the workings of the Employment Protection Act 1975, but not all of it. Trade creditors lost £500,000, excluding the VAT write-off. Poor old Barclays bank has probably lost about £250,000, but, perhaps most ironic of all as a result of that intemperate action, the VAT officials have lost more than the amount they got by acting so speedily against Natural Beauty Products. In gaining their £36,000 they lost about £75,000, which is the VAT write-off of the creditors of Natural Beauty Products who lost their money because of the action that was taken by the VAT official.

Virtually all the creditors had already agreed with Natural Beauty Products to reschedule their debts over a year or to take a single payment less than what they were actually owed. That was the situation on the day on which the VAT man arrived and the tragic events unfolded.

I was concerned about that, so I tabled some questions to the Treasury to try to elicit some information and to discover whether what had happened in my constituency happens all over the country. I wanted to know whether the insistence of VAT officers when collecting debts was forcing other companies into receivership. I specifically wanted to know what had happened during the past three years. My question on 16 February was:

"how many companies were forced into receivership because of Custom and Excise action to recover outstanding value added tax payments in each of the last three years, and the current financial year"?

I was told:

"None."—[*Official Report*, 16 February 1990; Vol. 167, c. *423*.]

However, as the House now knows, because of the insistence of a VAT official, who wanted his money there and then, a company in my constituency was forced to call in the administrative receiver simply to keep the company going.

If the VAT official decided that the company was lost beyond all hope, I must advise him that he was badly mistaken. Within 10 days of the administrative receiver advertising in the *Financial Times* for companies interested in buying Natural Beauty Products, he had received 160 replies. Within six weeks, he had determined that there was one company that had an extremely good chance of putting Natural Beauty Products back into a healthy trading position. Within a fortnight, that deal had been completed and by the beginning of May, a company called Brown and Johnson, which is better known in the high street for the Poundstretcher shops that it runs, had taken over the company and within a week the 20 employees had been augmented by another eight, such was the health of Natural Beauty Products and the loyalty of those who had previously bought from it, such as the Betterware company.

I am pleased to report that the company will now survive. However, because of the inflexibility and intemperate behaviour of one VAT official, Natural Beauty Products' previous trade creditors have lost £500,000, the bank has lost £250,000 and the Treasury has lost £75,000—which is much more than the £36,000 that it eventually received.

Perhaps the VAT official was working to strict instructions. My purpose in asking for this debate which, as you know, Mr. Speaker, I have now been seeking for more weeks than I care to remember—of course, I am pleased to have it at last—is to try to persuade the Treasury to set aside its poor imitation of Pontius Pilate when trying to deceive the public by saying that it has never caused a company to go into liquidation by insisting on the immediate repayment of a VAT debt, and to urge it to take some action to prevent that happening in the future.

To some extent, I believe that what I am seeking is already happening. Earlier today I telephoned a number of accountants to check what was happening on the VAT scene. I was told that over the past few months VAT officials in Swansea have adopted a much more flexible approach to the rescheduling of debts. I do not know whether that is a coincidence or the result of the questions that I have asked about the fate of Natural Beauty Products, but I am glad that it is happening.

I should like the Treasury first to amend its guidelines in its document entitled "Aim of Enforcement Action", so that the phrase "Delay costs money" is not emblazoned across it, because the Treasury is, indeed, losing money now. Indeed, in this case it lost a lot of money by insisting on the action that its official took. Secondly, I should also like the Treasury to amend the Insolvency Act 1985, which I believe may have been consolidated in another Act in 1986. The crucial amendment to the previous legislation occurred in 1985. Until then, both the Inland Revenue and VAT had a preferential claim on a company's debt for one year. For some obscure reason, in 1985, an amendment in the House of Lords changed the limit for VAT from one year to six months.

If there was something wrong in principle with VAT having any preferential claim, the claim period should have been got rid of altogether. To bring it down to six months quite arbitrarily and make it more difficult for the Inland Revenue to reclaim its debts seems grossly unfortunate. It was perhaps one element that led to the rigid and overbearing approach of the VAT official who visited my constituency and the company, Natural Beauty Products.

I hope that the Minister's response will contain some words of encouragement about a more flexible approach from VAT officials, a commitment to change the guidelines in "Aim of Enforcement Action", and a consideration of returning to the position in which the Inland Revenue and VAT both had one year in which to make a preferential claim for debts owed them by companies. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the assembled hosts for listening so carefully.

10.22 pm

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Richard Ryder): I congratulate the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) on securing this debate and on the assiduous interest that he has shown in the issue.

We all recognise the vital role that small businesses play in the economy. Obviously, no one likes to see a business in financial difficulty. Customs make every effort to avoid taking enforcement action against traders who do not pay their VAT debts and use enforcement action only as a last resort. However, Customs has a responsibility to protect the Revenue and to ensure that traders who pay their taxes promptly are not disadvantaged.

With value added tax, enforcement action is designed to ensure that traders who fail to pay tax on time do so as soon as possible. There are two steps to be taken in the enforcement routine. These are the establishment of the debt due from the trader and the start of appropriate recovery action. Both those steps were taken in the case of Natural Beauty Products of Bridgend.

All VAT-registered traders have a legal obligation to render returns and pay any tax due on or before a given date. That is known as the due date and is normally, as the hon. Gentleman knows, one month after the end of the tax period. If, however, a trader fails to render a return by the due date, an assessment is issued, in the majority of cases by the computer at Southend-on-Sea.

Natural Beauty Products, in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, was registered for value added tax from 16 October 1984. The company manufactures toilet preparations, a high proportion of which were exported and, therefore, liable to tax at the zero rate. As it was expected that the company would normally receive repayments of tax, VAT returns were made monthly.

VAT returns were received on 8 and 19 January 1989 showing a payment of tax due from the company of £29,294·61 and a further return on 6 February 1989 showed a repayment of £8,346·72. As no money had been sent, a demand notice for immediate payment of the balance of £20,947·89 was sent to the company on 7 March 1989. Cheques were received for £10,473·95 and £10,473·04, but one was subsequently returned by the bank as unpaid. Further VAT returns were made by the company, but again no money was sent. The balance of tax owed by the company for the period ended 30 April 1989 was £11,428·44 and a further demand notice for immediate payment was sent to the company on 24 July 1989.

When a trader fails to pay tax, schedule 7 paragraph 6(4) of the Value Added Tax Act 1983 makes provision in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for distress to be levied on the goods and chattels of the debtors. Distress is a means of recovering debts by taking possession of traders' goods, with certain restrictions, as security for the debt and enables their sale if the debt remains unpaid. Customs does not own the goods even though they may be in its possession and custody; they continue to be owned by the trader until they are sold.

Distress is levied by an authorised officer and distress for recovery of VAT takes precedence over any other distress except one levied by the Inland Revenue. It has been found to be a most cost-effective method of recovering tax as few traders are prepared to allow the distraint on their goods and subsequent removal and sale. The price obtained in a forced sale is usually significantly lower than that received when the goods are sold in the normal course of business. Distress can be levied for debts that arise from an assessment issued because of an under-declaration of tax or a failure by the trader to render returns. There must be a 30-day delay before distraint can be levied in respect of the former.

The decision to distrain takes into consideration the size of the debt, and larger debts are given priority. Before distress is begun a demand notice of immediate payment is sent to the trader, either direct from the computer at Southend or from the local VAT office. Delivery can be made by hand when the tax may be at risk and an urgent levy is required. Normally, payment by cheque is acceptable but, dependent upon the debtor's history of payment, cash or banker's draft may be stipulated.

If, after allowing time for the trader to respond to the demand notice, the trader pays none or only part of the debt, an officer of a rank not below that of senior executive officer signs a warrant and authorises a named officer to levy distress. The former must be satisfied that there are sufficient assets available to justify the distress and the utmost care is taken to avoid impairing the business of other traders.

In most cases a bailiff is employed to assist the officer named in the warrant, particularly in estimating the realistic value of the goods. The bailiff, however, is not authorised to levy distress on behalf of Customs. Distress may be levied by the authorised officer accompanied by a colleague. Whenever possible, the proprietor, partner, director or company secretary is seen.

In this case, there was no response from the company; since it had already received a demand notice of immediate payment, a distress warrant was signed and the company"s premises were visited by an officer of Customs and Excise accompanied by a bailiff on 24 August 1989. At that visit Mr. K. G. Ueber, the managing director of the company, completed a post-dated cheque for the tax debt to 30 June and stated that a repayment of tax would be due for July.

The July return, however, was received by Customs not in July but on 13 September, and it showed not a repayment, as Mr. Ueber had claimed, but a payment of tax due from the company of £8,166·21. The post-dated cheque was also returned by the bank as unpaid for the second time on 27 July. A demand notice for immediate payment was sent on 30 January 1990 for a total VAT debt to 31 October of £43,053·46. Again, there was no response.

[Mr. Richard Ryder]

The company premises were visited for the second time on Thursday 1 February by an officer of the Customs and Excise and a bailiff. A meeting took place at 10 am and lasted several hours.

Mr. Ueber, the managing director, and Mr. Besant, the company accountant, were interviewed and full payment was promised for Monday 5 February. This was accepted on condition that the debt would be secured by the levy of distress on various company assets. Further questioning of Mr. Ueber at the same meeting, however, revealed that the Inland Revenue and a number of trade creditors already held distraint orders in respect of various company assets. Still at the meeting, Customs spoke to the High Court sheriff's officer in Cardiff who informed it that warrants in excess of £100,000 had been issued to trade creditors.

Still at the meeting, the Inland Revenue confirmed on the telephone that it had instructed its bailiff to remove the assets under its distraint. Still at the meeting, with Mr. Ueber's permission, Customs spoke to a prospective financial backer in Australia who said that he would be unable to forward sufficient funds to pay the VAT debt by 5 February.

The company's bankers—still at the meeting—advised the company on the telephone that they would not advance more than £10,000 of the £43,053·46 Customs debt by 5 February. It was clear beyond doubt to Customs officials at the meeting that Mr. Ueber had no means of paying the debt by 5 February as he had claimed.

In view of the company's previous poor payment record, the officers considered that the Revenue was at risk and finished products, including goods bought in for resale, were removed. To ensure that manufacture could continue, raw materials, machinery and office equipment were not removed. When Customs returned to the premises on 2 February to supervise the continued removal of the goods, it was found to be locked and no employees were present. It was later established that Barclays bank had appointed an administrative receiver, under the terms of the debenture, on that date.

If an administrative receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy takes control of the business before the sale of the assets, Customs is prepared to accept an undertaking from the insolvency practitioner. Provided that he agrees to pay the VAT debt and levy costs from the sale of the goods, they are released into his charge to be sold with other distress assets. The debtor is entitled to request a professional valuation of distrained goods before sale. If the appraisal shows that the realistic value far exceeds the debt plus costs, some of the goods are restored to him. When the auctioned goods are liable to VAT, the auctioneer accounts for the tax on the sale direct to Customs.

After discussions between Customs and the receiver, it was agreed that no further goods would be removed. To ensure that the most advantageous price would be realised, those in Customs' possession were to be returned for sale together with the business. This was provisional upon the receiver paying the current VAT debt from the proceeds of the sale. On 17 May the receiver advised Customs that the company had been sold as a going concern and he took possession of the distrained goods on 7 June for supply to the new owner. This ensured a higher sale price than would have been obtained by a forced sale auction by Customs.

In view of the poor payment record of the company, Customs was justified in securing its debt by distraint procedure. It was obvious from discussion with the Australian backer and the reluctance of the bank to advance more than £10,000 that the full debt could not be paid by 5 February. The demise of the company was mainly due to its inability to meet the repayment requirements of the bank debenture and the subsequent appointment of the administrative receiver. The removal of finished goods by Customs would not have adversely affected the continued manufacturing potential of the company. The action of the bank, however, is an indication of the company's poor financial state and further supports the view that the actions of Customs officials were legitimate.

I have sought to outline the background from the Customs angle and I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for enabling me to do that. He asked about the possible amendment of the 1985 Act. A reduction in the preferential pay rate for VAT from one year to six months did not influence the actions of Customs in this case.

The hon. Gentleman was concerned that Swansea had not been flexible, but from what I have seen I do not think that that is so. The guidelines followed by the people at Swansea were correct. The hon. Gentleman said that the company was getting back on its feet. However, at the time of the crucial visit on 1 February, Customs officials did not think that that was the case. In any event, the staff were on, I think, a three-day week and no production was evident during that visit.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 19 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

HASMONEAN HIGH SCHOOL BILL *[Lords]*

Order for Second Reading read.

To be a read a Second time tomorrow.

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

Widows' Additional Pension

1. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many widows of service men killed in Northern Ireland have not received £40 of additional pension following the recent legislation.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Archie Hamilton): All widows of service men killed in Northern Ireland before 31 March 1973 should now be in receipt of the new tax-free special payment of £40 per week in addition to their war widows' pension. Widows of service men killed in Northern Ireland on or after 31 March 1973 do not receive the special payment, but are, of course, eligible for an attributable family pension under the armed forces pension scheme in addition to their war widows' pension.

Mr. Holt: I thank my hon. Friend for his answer. In my book, when the Government give an award of £40 to a lady who was widowed at the young age of 20, having been married for four months and who has now been a widow for 19 years, but then take away £28 of the award, because they are balancing the books, the Government's generosity is not to be applauded. Will the Government look again at that matter, bearing in mind the fact that there are only 34 such women in this country?

Mr. Hamilton: When my hon. Friend raised the matter in an intervention during the Army debate, I did not quite understand him and I apologise for that. When we legislated on the matter, the House meant that pre-1973 widows should all receive £40. I do not think that it was the intention of the House that certain women who had ex gratia payments paid between 1969 and 1973 should be in receipt of moneys above that.

Mr. William Ross: Does the Secretary of State recall from his own period in Northern Ireland just how emotive monetary compensation is to widows and members of the Ulster Defence Regiment who have suffered? Will he give an undertaking that he will properly compensate the 28 members of the UDR who were arrested for publicity purposes one Sunday morning during the Stevens inquiry? Will he not only compensate them for their loss because of moving house and so on, but ensure that such crazy action never happens again?

Mr. Hamilton: I do not know whether compensation has been considered in that case, because this question refers to war widows before and after 1973.

Mr. Viggers: While there are always other categories of people for whom hon. Members may wish to campaign, would not it be quite wrong for us not to pay tribute to the Government's generous support for widows, for example for pre-1950 groups and for those who are now benefiting from the increased payment that was recently announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State?

Mr. Hamilton: I thank my hon. Friend for his question. What has been done has been very much appreciated. The £40 tax-free payment has gone a long way towards removing the perceived injustice.

Radar Stations

2. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about radar stations in the United Kingdom.

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Alan Clark): In addition to questions tabled in this House and in another place, I have received representations from many right hon. and hon. Members and from members of the public.

Mr. Davies: Given that the proposed station at Brawdy covers 7 sq miles of Pembrokeshire national park and that 35 masts are proposed, half of which will be at least 135 ft high, is the Minister of State surprised that there is widespread vocal public opposition? Will the Minister confirm that that station was initially envisaged during the era of the Reagan cold war? Now that even this Government have recognised that the cold war has ended and have started cutting public expenditure, does he agree that it should be one of the first schemes to be scrapped?

Mr. Clark: Of course, the project is subject to the exigencies of the planning process, and my Department will adhere to them scrupulously. As for the ending of the cold war, this is an essentially non-provocative measure. It is a requirement to maintain the air defences of the United Kingdom at their peak efficiency at all times, and I regard this as an entirely passive and neutral measure.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: May I thank my hon. Friend for addressing 700 people at a public meeting in St. David's last month on this important subject? Has he considered whether alternatives to a ground-based over-the-horizon radar could be used, such as AWACS aircraft? Apart from the investigations of 166 MOD sites, what other locations have been considered?

Mr. Clark: The AWACS aircraft is an alternative means of getting the same cover, but it would mean that the majority of AWACS were deployed in one particular sector, instead of being free to be used in others. I fully accept that my hon. Friend has articulated the high level of public discontent about the proposal, but if, when the trial period ends, the radar has not been found successful, it will, of course, be removed.

Major Weapons

3. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what restrictions in planned provision of major weapons or weapons systems he expects to arrange during the next two years.

Mr. Alan Clark: We are examining options for change in the deployment and structure of our forces, which is likely to affect the balance of expenditure in the equipment programme; it is too early to say what that change might be.

Mr. Hardy: Does the Minister agree that the reductions that have already been decided or that are in preparation have serious implications for industry and employment? Have meetings, consultations or preparations already commenced or is all to be left either to market forces in the United Kingdom or to perhaps redoubled and less than wise efforts to increase defence sales to the third world?

Mr. Clark: I always welcome it when Opposition Members draw the attention of the House to the industrial consequences of changes in defence policy. I often wish that they had been more outspoken when their own party argued so irresponsibly for reductions in defence expenditure. We are in constant touch with industry on that subject and confer frequently on every aspect of our procurement programme.

Sir Antony Buck: Will my hon. Friend confirm that his major consideration in any revisions that he makes will be to ensure that our armed forces are the best equipped, not only in NATO, but throughout the western world—and the eastern world as well?

Mr. Clark: I entirely agree with my hon. and learned Friend, whose distinguished career as a Navy Minister was characterised by that preoccupation. We intend at all times to maintain the quality of the equipment that we provide for our forces and I emphasise that the changes that my right hon. Friend is contemplating in his options exercise are not resource-driven. They arise out of a general public expectation, plus an opportunity to restructure our forces.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: Will the Minister confirm that when he considers the possibility of change, he will not allow himseld to be dictated to by the Treasury, but will ensure that the principle that he employs is that of responding to the substantial political changes that have taken place behind what we used to call the iron curtain?

Mr. Clark: Of course, the restructuring process arises from an opportunity that itself is a function of the changes in central Europe, the disintegration of the Warsaw pact and other characteristics. As the hon. and learned Gentleman will appreciate, the changes and restructuring will take place in consultation with other Departments and Ministers, of whom my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is one.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: All of us recognise that, as the Minister responsible for procurement, my hon. Friend faces a difficult task. Nevertheless, in recognition of the changing circumstances, especially in Europe, may I offer him my appreciation—I am sure that this view is shared my hon. Members of all parties—of the prudent decision that he took yesterday to announce the cancellation of the order for further Tornados?

Mr. Clark: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's support. Plainly, there will be changes in our procurement programme to conform with the restructuring as it emerges. However, I should not wish the House to feel that those changes will be precipitate. Their effect will take some time to be felt. There is obviously a requirement that they should be carefully phased and take place in consultation with both industry and the forces.

Mr. O'Neill: On the last point, will the Minister of State confirm that this morning the Secretary of State expresed his unhappiness about the way in which the Tornado decision was taken? That was on the "Today" programme on the radio. Can the Minister say whether that anxiety was attributable to the Treasury or to the efforts of Minister of State for Defence Procurement?

Mr. Clark: Plainly, that is a question that should be addressed to my right hon. Friend. The hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity to do so at any time in the next 43 minutes.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my hon. Friend accept that it is a strange world in which we live? Over the past seven years the Opposition parties have urged Her Majesty's Government to cut defence expenditure. As soon as we obey and do what we think is in the best interests of this country, and cut defence expenditure, both Opposition parties start to whinge and whine about the effects on their constituents.

Mr. Clark: My hon. Friend is right. There is a curious paradox, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I observe with some amusement. I emphasise that we are not talking about cuts. The options exercise is devoted to restructuring our forces in the light of political changes. It might be that incidental to that, resources will be released, but it is not a resource-driven exercise.

Armed Forces (Restructuring)

4. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received on the restructuring of the armed forces; and whether he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Tom King): I have received several representations from hon. Members and from members of the public. I sought to set out in my speech yesterday the considerations that are guiding our work on "Options for Change".

Mr. Duffy: The Secretary of State will recall that during his speech yesterday anxieties were expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House about the way in which he is conducting the review. The need to proceed on an orderly and planned basis and to avoid arbitrary cuts was among the most polite recommendations that came from Conservative Members. Has he considered the impact of all that on morale in the services? One suspects that the professional heads of the services are kept at arm's length despite the Secretary of State's disclaimer last night. What steps is he taking to reassure the service men as well as their professional leaders?

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman raises a serious point, which worries me very much. We face a remarkable change in the circumstances in Europe. That provides an occasion for examining options for change. That is being done in what I hope is an orderly and sensible way within the

Ministry of Defence, by the service official staffs involved. The chiefs of staff are, of course, aware of what is happening. My colleagues and I recognise the earnest importance of letting all service men know what is proposed as soon as we are in a position to do so. We shall also inform the House and our allies in NATO as soon as possible. This is not an easy exercise. It is easy to make criticisms. We are attempting to approach the subject with the seriousness that it deserves.

Mr. Brazier: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that whatever new structure is created as a result of "Options for Change", one of the highest priorities will be to make it clear to service men in all three services and at all levels that the armed forces will remain an attractive career for men and women of high calibre and that issues such as overall remuneration, opportunities for house purchase, opportunities for families to find employment and education for service children will be high on the agenda?

Mr. King: My hon. Friend takes a close interest in those matters and I commend him for it. We are anxious to ensure that in any changes and adaptations that we make, we come out with a balanced force structure and that we take proper regard not merely of front-line conditions but of support arrangements and of the conditions under which service men, who continue to be needed and whose work will continue to be important, operate. We must also ensure that they have proper opportunities for accommodation, to which my hon. Friend attaches great importance.

BAOR (Nuclear Weapons)

5. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the safety of nuclear weapons assigned to the British Army of the Rhine.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We are satisfied with the safety of all our nuclear weapons, including those assigned for use by the British Army of the Rhine.

Ms. Ruddock: Will the Minister confirm, however, that serious defects have been found in the W79 artillery shell —I hope that he will confirm that that is deployed in Europe—as well as in the W88 and W69 warheads in the United States? A serious accident could occur simply if a warhead such as the W79 fell off the back of a lorry, which could result in a large spread of radiation. Is the Minister aware of the seriousness of the matter? Why have the Government been so secretive about it? Is it perhaps because the case for nuclear disarmament is now overwhelming?

Mr. Hamilton: The Government do not have to be secretive or open about that, as it is a matter of concern for the United States authorities—they are their warheads. I am sure that the hon. Lady realises that we make our own warheads and do not have American ones.

Mr. John Marshall: Will my hon. Friend confirm that there is still a huge imbalance in nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons in Europe? Does he agree that to disband our weapons, as the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) would like us to do, would be extremely irresponsible?

Mr. Hamilton: That is absolutely right. There is still an enormous superiority of nuclear weapons held by the other side, but that would not make any difference to members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament or many Opposition Members who have always been against nuclear weapons and have not appreciated the effects of and the advantages that we have gained from the nuclear deterrent.

HMS Invincible

6. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has made an assessment of the implications for public safety from the presence of HMS Invincible in British ports.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence would not allow Royal Navy vessels to operate or to make port visits if we considered it unsafe to do so.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Minister accept that it is no courtesy to the people of London to allow a nuclear-capable aircraft carrier to dock for a week's visit near the centre of our most densely populated city if the public cannot be guaranteed that there are no nuclear weapons on board? Can the Minister tell the House whether—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member has a right to express his views on this matter.

Mr. Hughes: Will the Minister tell the House whether there were nuclear weapons on board HMS Invincible last week when it was in Greenwich? If there were, will he give an undertaking that, in future, there will be no non-operational visits of nuclear warships to densely populated ports around the country?

Mr. Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman must be totally unrepresentative of his constituents in Southwark and Bermondsey if he is decrying the visit to the port of London of one of the finest ships in the Royal Navy. I happen to know that that visit was much appreciated by many people living in the area. I do not know what the hon. Gentleman is talking about with such a load of alarmist nonsense. We never confirm or deny whether there are nuclear weapons on ships and the hon. Gentleman should know that. We regularly practise safety routines regarding such things. If there were any nuclear weapons carried on our ships, we are happy that that would be safely done.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: Will my hon. Friend comment on the exhibitionist stupidity of the Greenpeace protestors in their small boats off Gravesend when the Invincible recently came up the Thames? Had those protestors been successful in diverting the course of that ship, considerable danger would have been caused to my constituents had it gone aground and blocked the channel. Does my hon. Friend agree that the fact that it did not do so is a credit to the seamanship of the Royal Navy and the river pilots?

Mr. Hamilton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I do not know what Greenpeace was trying to achieve, but it is absolutely true that it caused great danger by its activities. That could have resulted in serious accidents, which would have been extremely regrettable.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the Minister kindly answer the question: can he confirm or deny that nuclear missiles are on the Invincible? Does he agree that every time nuclear-armed vessels are stationed at a port, they pose a danger to the entire population? Should a fire break out on one of those ships, a nuclear dust cloud would be emitted, which could result in the deaths of millions of people throughout the country.

Mr. Hamilton: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman did not hear what I said earlier—we never confirm or deny that there are nuclear weapons on any of our ships. Safety routines and procedures are carried out at all the ports where such ships may go. Exercises that simulate accidents are regularly practised with local authorities. We are confident that it is unlikely that such an accident would occur, but, if there was one, we have the capability to deal with it.

Namibia

7. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution his Department made to the United Nations transition assistance group deployed to Namibia.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: British troops, drawn mainly from 30 Signal Regiment, provided communications support for the United Nations transition assistance group deployed to Namibia from March 1989 to April 1990. In addition, the British contingent assisted the UN High Commission for Refugees both in Namibia and Angola, and supplied communications for about half the election stations during the voting that took place in November. The skill and professionalism of those service men and women deployed has rightly been praised by the authorities concerned.

Mr. Hughes: I thank my hon. Friend for his answer. Will he confirm that that was only one of 12 peacekeeping activities undertaken by the British Army this year, and that every year it takes part in many admirable exercises concerned with keeping the peace in the world? Does he agree that it is strange that the British press does not seem to understand the enormous role played by the Army and that, as a result, the British public does not give the Army the credit that it deserves, simply because it does not get the coverage that its activities deserve?

Mr. Hamilton: There is a problem. We try to make sure that our chief of public relations makes the most of events as they happen. The problem is that many of them become routine activities and cease to be of great interest to the press. The Army is playing a valuable role and I know that it is much appreciated.

Environmental Protection

8. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department is taking to protect the environment.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Michael Neubert): My Department has an important role to play in the protection of the environment, and an account of our contribution is given in this year's "Statement on the Defence Estimates". My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has recently assigned to me responsibility for the oversight and promotion of good environmental practice, consistent with necessary military objectives.

Mr. King: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply. Does he agree that it must be the aim and objective of his Department to release as much surplus defence land in the United Kingdom as possible? What progress has been made since 1979 on achieving that?

Mr. Neubert: The Department has large holdings of land, but strictly for necessary military purposes. The extent of the training that is required and the range of modern weapons lead us to need more training land than we have, although we have no major prospects of purchase in the near future. I assure my hon. Friend that when that military need lapses, we dispose of the land in question. A recent example was Gruinard island, off the west coast of Scotland, which was taken over in the darkest days of the war for protection against the then threat. When it was no longer needed, it was decontaminated by the Ministry and restored to the heirs of the previous owners in good condition ready for raising sheep.

Dr. Thomas: Does the Minister accept that the continued use of national parks for military and defence purposes is contrary to the basic objectives of those parks, which are to conserve the environment and promote public access? For that reason, will the Department now withdraw its proposal to construct a radar station in the Pembroke coast national park; reopen the many acres of Dartmoor that are dangerous to the public because of live ammunition and cease its low-flying exercises over Cumbria and north Wales?

Mr. Neubert: No. We need to use national parks, and we work closely with the national parks authorities. Where there is a proven defence need for the nation and where there are no alternative sites, we are obliged to conduct some activities in national parks. But in the course of holding land and using land such as national parks, we conserve great tracts of the countryside that otherwise might not survive.

Mr. Key: Does my hon. Friend agree that were it not for the fact that the Ministry of Defence owns large tracts of our most precious countryside, managed by the excellent defence land agent, we should not be in possession of such ecologically valuable land today?

Mr. Neubert: My hon. Friend is absolutely right and, representing Salisbury plain, he has reason to know that that is an area of countryside that is protected, rather than the reverse, by the activities of the military. For example, there are no fewer than 1,700 ancient monuments on Salisbury plain, and operational restrictions are observed to ensure their continued preservation.

Mr. Boyes: Will the Minister assure the House, as the Labour party has, that the Government will not dump decommissioned nuclear submarines at sea? Because of the problems of monitoring and retrieval, it is an unacceptable option. Will the Minister reassure the people of this country that the Government will fully accept the London dumping convention that nuclear waste should not, in any circumstances, be dumped at sea?

Mr. Neubert: We retain the right to dump at sea, which is one of several options currently under review. Policy for

the decommissioning of nuclear submarines remains open at present, so I cannot give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that he seeks today.

Astra

9. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what occasions his Department met Astra representatives in the last three years.

10. **Mr. Litherland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what occasions his Department met Astra representatives in the last three years.

Mr. Alan Clark: Officials of my Department have met Astra representatives on a number of occasions in the past three years.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the Minister confirm that officials of his Department knew five months before the public revelations that a super gun for Iraq was being constructed? Does he accept that the main motive of his Ministry at present is to maintain trade and sales with Iraq in order to finance the re-equipment of that country's armed forces, despite Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Kurdish people in Iraq and its appalling human rights record? Does the Minister not believe that a proper relationship with the Government of Iraq would be no trade, no aid and no deals while the present repression continues against people in Iraq?

Mr. Clark: The hon. Gentleman is notorious for the company he keeps, so I am surprised that he should be so fastidious about who meets whom—*[Interruption.]* I know that the House will be irritated by this, but I fear that I have to say that, in the light of charges laid against individuals and in the light of the continuing investigation by Customs and Excise, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on those matters.

Mr. Litherland: The Minister gives no sign of shock or shame although he must have known that Astra executives informed British intelligence and the Ministry of Defence a long time before action was taken. Does not that smack of gross negligence? If there is anything to be fired, I hope that it will not be the gun, but the stupid, incompetent Ministers involved in this mess.

Mr. Clark: I am sorry, but I must refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer that I have already given.

Mr. Dickens: Will my hon. Friend explain why the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) who posed that question is so—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not sure that that is the Minister's responsibility.

Mr. Dickens: Why did the hon. Gentleman pose the question about the gun in Iraq when last week, when there was a bomb in Islington, he left the Chamber before the question and returned afterwards?

Mr. Clark *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that that has anything to do with the Minister.

Mr. Corbyn: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: This all takes time. What is the point of order?

Mr. Corbyn: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order for the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) to make statements that he knows to be untrue?

Mr. Speaker: The House and the hon. Gentleman know that we have freedom of speech in this Chamber. The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) must take responsibility for what he said.

Mr. Bell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The parliamentary record in *Hansard* will reflect the views of the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens). If his remarks were inaccurate, as my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has said that they were, he should be asked to withdraw them.

Mr. Speaker: Every hon. Member must take responsibility for what he says in this Chamber. What the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) said was a personal view, but it is not a matter of order.

Mr. Rogers: My question is quite separate from the big gun issue, so the Minister cannot plead sub judice in his answer.

What orders have been placed with Astra by International Military Services, a wholly-owned MOD subsidiary, for export to the middle east, and were those orders authorised by the Prime Minister's office?

Mr. Clark: Orders placed by my Department are commercially in confidence.

Dutch Defence Minister

11. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his Dutch counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

Mr. Tom King: I next expect to meet Mr. ter Beek when he visits the United Kingdom, at my invitation, in the autumn.

Mr. Michie: Will the Secretary of State confirm that at the NATO Defence Ministers meeting in Canada in May the Dutch proposed a unilateral withdrawal of all nuclear-tipped artillery shells and Britain opposed that? Will he further confirm that Germany and other central European nations will not have such weapons on their soil and that the Dutch are unlikely to have the strategic air-to-surface missile but that the British Government are falling over themselves to accept it?

Mr. King: No, Sir. At the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Canada to which the hon. Gentleman refers, we agreed on the need for an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional weapons in Europe—and the agreement was unanimous.

Mr. Butcher: When my right hon. Friend meets his Dutch counterparts, will he express his thanks to the Dutch authorities for their recent prompt action in making arrests? When he gives them our thanks for helping to preserve the lives of British service men abroad, will he also offer his full support to the necessity for proper co-ordination, functional and organisational, in attacking terrorism in mainland Europe, whether it comes from Northern Ireland or elsewhere?

Mr. King: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and I shall certainly do as he suggests. We owe a great deal not only to the Dutch, but to the French, Belgian, and German authorities—and the Irish as well—who, with us, are providing extremely effective co-operation against terrorism in Europe and wherever else it may occur. The recent arrests of other terrorist groups to which my hon. Friend may have been alluding were further demonstrations of our interest as democratic countries in standing together to fight terrorism.

Low Flying

12. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about low flying below 250 ft.

Mr. Neubert: It is not possible to identify such representations separately, but during May 1990 the Ministry of Defence received 41 inquiries and complaints about military low flying training from the three United Kingdom tactical training areas during periods when these were active.

Mr. Pike: Does the Minister accept that there has been a twofold increase in such flights since 1979, causing unnecessary accidents and distress? Will he now give an undertaking to accept the Select Committee recommendation to phase out such flights over two years and in the interim give special protection to schools and hospitals?

Mr. Neubert: The hon. Gentleman will know that it is the Government's practice to respond to Select Committee reports within two months, and we intend to do that in this respect. That means that our detailed response to the Committee's recommendations on low flying training will be made by the middle of July.

There was an increase in the amount of low flying before the introduction of modern aircraft, but the amount has stabilised and there is no reason for the hon. Gentleman's apprehension that such flying might be unsafe. The RAF's record in this respect is very creditable.

Sir Dudley Smith: Is my hon. Friend aware that the Western European Union assembly recently considered this matter in detail and concluded that the legitimate need for low flying training must always be balanced against safeguards for the good of the public down below? Does he agree that standards must be rigorously imposed so that pilots stick rigidly to their routes and never go below the permitted heights?

Mr. Neubert: We have no evidence to suggest that pilots breach the stringent regulations imposed for low flying training. However, we accept that it is necessary to minimise the impact of low flying on people on the ground. I certainly accept that there is a dilemma which constantly has to be resolved. We shall take into account all that has been said in this connection and respond next month to the report of the Select Committee, which itself recognised the need for low flying training to continue.

Mr. Hood: While welcoming the decision to try to save £600 million on defence and the cancellation of the new Tornados which were on order, may I suggest that the Minister saves a further few million pounds by stopping the foolish war games with low flying over the borders of Scotland? Such games are nonsense—children are wetting the bed because aircraft are flying over my constituency at 100 ft. That is a war game at its extreme.

Mr. Neubert: We are not engaged in war games but in essential military training which is necessary to qualify our pilots for the exacting task that they would have in war. I am sure that on behalf of his constituents the hon. Gentleman might take some account of the contribution made by those young pilots and navigators in this exacting role.

Troop Redeployment

14. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will include in any defence review the impact on local civilian communities of redeployment at home of troops from abroad, with regard to both garrisons and training areas.

Mr. Tom King: While the "Options for Change" exercise is initially concerned with the broad structure for the future, I acknowledge the importance of the aspects raised by my hon. Friend, which we will certainly have in mind.

Mr. Key: That answer will be of great comfort to my constituents. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that any reduction in the number of British troops overseas who are then deployed back home will not only mean more pressure on local authority services but is likely to be accompanied by losses in civilian Ministry of Defence employment? Will my right hon. Friend ensure that the greatest care is taken at local level to consult and plan ahead with local authorities?

Mr. King: My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to these problems, which he well understands because of the close interest of his constituency in this matter. At whatever stage we may need to raise such issues, we shall ensure that there is proper consultation with local authorities and other local bodies.

Mr. Tony Banks: The Government have conceded that there will be significant troop reductions in the next few years, but what studies are being carried out by the Department in terms of arms conversion? What schemes are being considered to ensure that skills currently in the armed services are made available to manufacturing industry where they are so desperately needed?

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman is so busy constructing some sort of social strategy for this that he seems unaware that some companies involved in the defence industry are already doing precisely that. A substantial number are developing alternative activities. The last thing that they need—and which only President Castro and the socialist party in this country would still support—is state planning, which can make no contribution to this exercise.

Mr. Raison: Is my right hon. Friend aware that if there is any question of bringing RAF personnel back from Germany it would be extremely popular in my constituency if RAF Halton could be kept open?

Mr. King: I fully recognise that as we approach the "Options for Change" exercise and whatever developments may come, while many people broadly support the opportunities for economies in some areas, nobody is very

keen for such economies to affect them. We shall be conscious of the interests of all hon. Members while the exercise goes on.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that we have just two more minutes for defence questions.

International Aerospace Fair

15. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has received any report on the international aerospace fair in Chile in March; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Thirteen British companies exhibited at the fair. In addition, two RAF Harrier aircraft and two Lynx helicopters participated.

Mr. Galloway: Is the Minister of State aware that there was much interest in that aerospace fair and that for at least one person, the journalist Jonathan Moyle, interest in it may well have proved fatal? Can the Minister tell the House whether the late Mr. Moyle, when he was in Chile during the week before his death, at any time visited the British embassy in Santiago and whether any officials there had any discussions with him?

Mr. Clark: No, I cannot tell the hon. Gentleman that, but I will refer his question to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I have no doubt that he will be in touch with the hon. Gentleman.

West German Defence Minister

16. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his West German counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

Mr. Tom King: I met Dr. Stoltenberg for discussions on a range of current defence issues at the nuclear planning group and defence planning committee meetings in May. On current plans, I next expect to meet him at NATO ministerial meetings later this year.

Mr. Campbell: Now that the two Germanies are to be reunited, does the Minister think that that country should be non-nuclear? If so, why does he keep pressing the Germans to have nuclear weapons on their soil?

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman may have forgotten the recent Anglo-German summit in London at which Chancellor Kohl, beside my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, made clear the commitment of the Federal Republic of Germany to an appropriate mix of conventional and nuclear weapons in Europe.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 June.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including one with the director general of the International Atomic Agency and another with the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh, Sudan, and Somalia. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with Mr. Attali, president-elect of the new European bank for reconstruction and development, which will have its headquarters in London.

Mr. Duffy: Did the Prime Minister note the biting comment in the Sunday quality press that the fast-revolving door through which ex-Cabinet Ministers are passing towards the boards of privatised industries that they themselves have set up has become a symbol of greed in high office? As that is an entirely new development for which discretion and restraint are simply not enough, as we saw last week, will the Prime Minister consider extending to ex-Ministers the same restrictions that apply to former civil servants?

The Prime Minister: There will be 15 months between the noble Lord Young leaving office and taking up his appointment. For civil servants, that period may be shorter. I agree with the Earl of Stockton who, when asked a similar question, said that

"it is desirable and beneficial to the country that men of considerable experience should be available, when they leave the Government, to the service of industry and commerce."—[*Official Report*, 20 November 1962; Vol. 667, c. 1000.]

I quoted last week what the noble Lord Wilson said in a similar vein.

Mr. Nelson: Has my right hon. Friend had an opportunity to reflect on the interview with the Leader of the Opposition on television—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question should relate to a matter for which the Prime Minister has responsibility.

Mr. Nelson: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that a Conservative Government will remain committed, even after the next general election, to reducing still further the direct burden of taxation on individuals, whereas the inevitable consequence of Labour policies, despite what the Leader of the Opposition says, will be to raise significantly the average burden of taxation on the British people?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I confirm that our policy on income tax rates remains to reduce the standard rate of income tax from 25p to 20p as and when it is prudent to do so.

Mr. Kinnock: What will the Prime Minister do now to stop inflation reaching 10 per cent?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman somehow seems to believe that reducing interest rates will cure inflation, but we shall maintain our policy, because the interest rate of 15 per cent. will succeed in bringing down inflation.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the Prime Minister recall telling me early last year that the Government were "proceeding" towards zero inflation? We have had 16 more months of her policy since then, but, rather than proceeding towards zero, inflation is proceeding towards double figures. Apart from trying to fix the figures, what is the Prime Minister going to do to get inflation down?

The Prime Minister: Does the right hon. Gentleman seriously maintain his position, and his ridiculous economics, by saying that to get inflation down one needs

to cut interest rates? [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] That would put it up to the rates that Labour Governments were used to having.

Mr. Kinnock: Is any economic policy more ridiculous than one that produces the lowest growth rate, the highest inflation rate and the worst balance of payments position in the major industrialised countries? If the right hon. Lady wants to talk about ridiculous economics, let her look at herself.

The Prime Minister: That policy also produces—and has for three years—the highest level of investment in industry that we have ever experienced, the highest standard of living and the highest standard of social services that this country has ever known, and the lowest levels of income tax in the post-war period.

Mr. Burns: Does my right hon. Friend share my anger about the misery, frustration and expense caused by squatters who occupy privately owned homes? Does she accept that, provided that no damage is done to securely locked houses, there is nothing that the police can do before a court order is obtained? Is it not time that the balance of the law was redressed to favour the innocent home owner, rather than the reprehensible activities of squatters?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend is aware, squatting that directly excludes a householder from his home is already a criminal offence. The police can act, and penalties are severe. However, squatting in residential property which does not cause the immediate threat of homelessness can be dealt with only through civil action. I agree with my hon. Friend that there appears to be a defect in the law, and I am looking into the matter further.

Global Warming

Q2. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will convene an international conference on global warming.

The Prime Minister: There have already been several such international conferences in the past year. International initiatives on climate change are dealt with primarily through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Its report will be considered carefully and fully at the second world climate conference in the autumn, which I hope to address.

Mr. Allen: The Prime Minister may talk green—she may even dress green—but there are the same old blue policies underneath. Will she admit what the people at home know—that her complacency about global warming, the depletion of the ozone layer, the running down of our environment and the degradation of our wildlife have all taken place under the present Government? Instead of bleating at the Dispatch Box, will she come forward with a practical plan of action for our environment, so that her last year in office is not as wasted in environmental terms as her first 11 years?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman should look up the record of the last Labour Government, who, after the directive of 1975 was issued by the Commission, did nothing about water or beaches. They did not even identify the problem, let alone clean up the beaches. We have cleaned up three quarters of our beaches, and have a programme to clean up the rest. We are also doing a great deal more with the rivers. We have the best record of river cleanliness in Europe—perhaps the hon. Gentleman has forgotten that. We also have a good record because we have called the ozone conference and set the targets, and there will be a further conference soon. Instead of making such remarks, the hon. Gentleman should examine the record. He will see that the last Labour Government did nothing but cut capital expenditure, and made the environment worse.

Mr. Rost: Will my right hon. Friend take another look at a number of reputable studies which show that Britain can not only stabilise its greenhouse gases but reduce them without any financial penalty or pain because greater efficiency in the production of energy means that we can achieve cost savings, higher productivity and a more competitive economy?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend is aware, yesterday I gave a certificate to a house which had very high energy efficiency and had led the way. It was the first house to secure that particular certificate. I agree with my hon. Friend that industry has already done a great deal to improve its energy efficiency as a way of keeping down costs and will do a good deal more. Particular companies have done a great deal of research, which will make them more energy efficient than ever before. Our target of getting back to 1990 levels by the year 2005 is a good one. It is the right time scale and has been confirmed by the chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Ms. Walley: Does the Prime Minister accept that her Government's projections for carbon dioxide emissions are a gross overestimate and misleading? Despite today's green mantle, is not she conning the British public about what she is doing on green issues? Will she give the House a commitment that she will make available for full public inspection detailed information about the Government's scientific reports on the level of emissions of carbon dioxide, which contribute to global warming?

The Prime Minister: I notice that the Labour party tried to sustain that argument the other day and was completely blown out of the water. The CBI totally agreed with our target, which was confirmed by Dr. Houghton who has the best available evidence. He said that the

"fifteen year period is an appropriate timescale to set . . . It represents a significant step towards reducing the rate of climate change during the next 15 years, by the end of which substantial improvements in the accurancy of the scientific assessment should be expected."

It is all based on sound science.

Mr. Squire: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that CFCs are a greenhouse gas far more damaging in equivalent weight than carbon dioxide, and that the steps that the Government have taken in beating the Montreal protocol target deserve praise even from the Opposition?

The Prime Minister: Yes. We have indeed done that, beating the Montreal protocol, and we hope to set new targets at the conference to be held next week. My hon. Friend is quite right that CFCs are a very damaging greenhouse gas, as is methane. Some people wish to take as their target not only the carbon dioxide emissions, but the CO_2 equivalent which takes into account CFCs and methane gas.

Engagements

Q3. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Michie: Why is the Prime Minister still insisting that the national health service is safe in her hands when there is chronic underfunding throughout the country? In Sheffield, more than £1 million underfunding has resulted in 108 beds being closed and plans to close two more hospitals. Surely the Prime Minister should have the courage to accept that it is better for her to lose face than for patients to lose their lives.

The Prime Minister: For the taxpayer, because of the rate of growth that we have enjoyed under the Conservative Government, to be able to increase the finance to the health service from £7 billion per year in 1979 to £29 billion per year is a great tribute to the growth that has occurred under this Government and to the way in which we have been able to divert quite a bit of that growth to improving the health service in a way that the Labour party could never have done.

Sir Robert McCrindle: Reverting to the earlier question, as some organisations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth seem dissatisfied with our progress on matters such as global warming and other environmental issues, does my right hon. Friend agree that the time has come for those organisations to be asked to cost their own, more ambitious proposals? Does she agree that we should all like a greener environment but that apparently not everyone is prepared to face the financial consequences?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is right. It costs money to make the environment much better, whether in electricity, in gas or in water. We should, of course, be able to improve and reduce carbon dioxide emissions if we had a greater amount of nuclear energy, but those who urge us to reduce the emissions further are often those who detest nuclear energy, or those from the Labour party who want to keep all the coal mines open and to generate all our electricity from coal.

Q4. **Mrs. Rosie Barnes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Barnes: In view of the reports in *The Independent* today about a rift between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health on the timing of the introduction of the community care reforms outlined in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, will the Prime Minister assure the House that if and when the reforms are introduced, their funding will be ring-fenced and that she will not seek to overturn the amendment passed to that effect in another place?

The Prime Minister: The Government set out their proposals in the White Paper and in the Bill, which has been extensively debated in both Houses. These are major changes in community care, but planning is going ahead well and it remains the Government's intention that the changes will get under way this coming year, as from April 1991. It is not universally accepted, by any means, that the funding should be by specific grant. Indeed, many local authorities prefer it to be in the ordinary aggregate Exchequer grant and not by specific grant.

Points of Order

3.30 pm

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Have you had an application from the Government to make a statement on the success of our co-ordination with the Italian police in Sardinia, especially as this House appears to have had two not very near misses from one of the British soccer hooligans in Sardinia?

Mr. Speaker: I have not had such an application.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has a ten-minute rule motion. However, I call him.

Mr. Corbyn: During defence questions, the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) chose to claim, wrongly, that I had left the Chamber before my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) raised a point of order last Monday and that I returned to the Chamber later. He was trying to suggest that by some means I was avoiding being here. I left the Chamber at 3.10 pm last Monday because I had another appointment to which to go. I then went to my constituency and did not return to the House for the whole day. In the circumstances, would you, Mr. Speaker, ask the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth to apologise for his attempt to mislead and misinform the House?

Mr. Speaker: I have already said that the hon. Gentleman must take responsibility for exciting interest in the reasons why hon. Members may leave the Chamber. Such questions, which make allegations, are not helpful to good relations in this Chamber. Does the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) want to say anything about that?

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) left the Chamber just before the announcement at 3.30 pm. I simply asked the Minister, therefore, a question of fact. You did not allow my question to be answered, Mr. Speaker, and I stand by what I said.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): In view of the fact that the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) has told an untruth and will not withdraw it, will you, Mr. Speaker, go through the proper procedure with him?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has already stated why he left the Chamber. It is not for me to interpret what was in the mind of the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth in drawing attention to it.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) clearly made an unparliamentary remark in relation to my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn). Without in any way challenging your ruling, Mr. Speaker, it must be appropriate to ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw his remark.

Mr. Speaker: I have already given the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth that opportunity. The hon. Member for Islington, North stated the reasons why he left the Chamber, and that should be good enough for the House.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. A problem to which I have drawn your attention on many occasions is the inconsistency in the way in which points of order can be raised. Historically, you have said when people have tried to raise points of order during Question Time that you will not accept them. Equally, when points of order have been raised immediately after questions and there is a ten-minute rule Bill, you have refused to take them. Why is it that Labour Members are allowed to raise points of order, whereas we are not?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) has a very short memory. He should read *Hansard.* In 1987 I gave a measured ruling—*[Interruption.]* I gave a full ruling on the timing of points of order. I draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to column 459 on 12 February. I suggest he should read it.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that you and the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) are aware that my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), throughout our responses to the horrifying explosion in my constituency a week ago, has given complete support to me in expressing the horror that we all feel about that explosion. It would be wrong for any hon. Member to suggest anything else.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think we have had enough of this. Let me repeat what I have already said on this matter. It does not help if questions of that kind, which cast aspersions on the motives of an hon. Member, are thrown accross the Chamber. It does not add anything to our debate. It does not go down well in the Chamber and I regret that it was done.

Mr. John P. Smith (Vale of Glamorgan): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I apologise, but this matter should be pursued. I was present when the remarks were made by the hon. Gentleman. He said that my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) did not simply leave the Chamber but that he left the Chamber and came back. That is not right.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is only taking time out of a very important debate, on which in any event I shall now have to place the 10-minute limit. It is frequently the same hon. Members who are not interested in taking part in debates who are trying to steal prime time. We have a very important debate today. I can add nothing to what I have said. The hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) has clearly stated why he left the Chamber. I say again that that should be good enough for the House.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I say, in as unsophisticated a way as possible, that it would appear to the House and anybody watching the proceedings that the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) lied.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) has put forward his interpretation of what he said, but I repeat that it adds nothing to the quality of our debate. I am equally sure that comments and aspersions of that kind do not go down well in anybody's constituency.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Oh, God. I suppose that it will be helpful. Come on.

Mr. Faulds: I am most grateful, Sir, that you should call for such aid when I appear. Most of us in this House deserve to be referred to as honourable gentlemen. Would not it be fitting if the hon. Member for Littleborough and wherever pretended to be one for three minutes?

Mr. Speaker: I have already made my views plain on that point.

Abolition of Deer Hunting

3.39 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to prohibit the hunting and killing of deer with dogs; and for connected purposes.

My purpose in introducing the Bill—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will hon. Members wishing to leave the Chamber please do so quietly?

Mr. Corbyn: I hope that those hon. Members who have left the Chamber already have not gone hunting as it is the close season.

The purpose of the Bill is to strengthen animal protection legislation. The need to do that arises because the Protection of Animals Act 1911 and the Protection of Animals (Scotland) Act 1912 excluded cruelty to wild animals. Because of that, blood sports have been able to continue ever since, although legislation has been introduced to prohibit the hunting of some wild animals, such as the otter, and to ban badger-baiting. The badger has been the subject of a Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), which seeks to protect the badger's habitat and environment.

The purpose of my Bill is simply to remove the legal nicety which, at the moment, allows the hunting and killing of deer with dogs, which I believe to be a wanton cruelty. The Bill would not prohibit the culling of deer to restrict the deer population and so to protect the deer's habitat, and it would not prohibit the shooting of deer, but it would prohibit the extremely cruel practice of hunting deer with dogs.

For the benefit of those who do not know much about the matter, I should explain that many people have written to hon. Members asking why we allow this barbarism to continue. Let me give some examples of what happens. The hunters observe deer as they graze in their normal habitat—on Exmoor or in the New forest, for example. They pick out a particular deer, stag or hind to be hunted later that day or on the following day. The animals are then pursued throughout the day by packs of hounds with people following them. The packs of hounds have more stamina than the deer and chase them to exhaustion point. The deer suffer the most appalling stress during the chase, sometimes running up to 25 miles in one day, and the chase can continue for as long as seven hours.

As it nears exhaustion, the deer may try to take refuge behind a gorse bush, in a tree-covered area or even in a river. But they will have been spotted by still more observers of the hunt. A new scent will be started, and the deer pursued once again. Once the deer are totally exhausted and on the point of collapse, they are supposed to be killed with the aid of a gun from the hunt, but often the hunt is so far behind that the person who is supposed to kill the deer with the gun is not available and the hounds tear the deer apart. It is barbarism of the first order.

There is nothing sporting about the practice and there is nothing in the great traditions of the countryside that can defend it. What is involved here is blood lust. That is why the practice is opposed by an overwhelming majority of people—not just by the general public but by many of those who live in the areas where hunting takes place. I grew up in an area where fox and otter hunting were rife. Those who engaged in these so-called sports claimed to

[Mr. Corbyn]

have the overwhelming support of the rural community. Their claim was not true when I was growing up any more than it is true today. It is claimed, too, that hunting is part of the great tradition of our countryside and should be protected. I cannot accept that such cruelty is one of our countryside traditions and I cannot accept that we should allow it to continue.

Pressure was brought to bear to ensure that the hunting of deer with dogs was abolished in Scotland, and the Deer (Scotland) Act 1959 prevented such hunting. Now only stalking and shooting are allowed in Scotland and they are at least humanely practised. But the appalling barbarism with which my Bill deals continues to exist in England —in the south and south-west particularly.

There is considerable support for my Bill. The last early-day motion on the abolition of deer hunting was signed by more than 200 hon. Members. Opinion polls show that 81 per cent. of the public support calls for the abolition of deer hunting and the protection of deer from such cruelty. Answers to the converse question, when asked by opinion polls, show that only 4 per cent. of the population support the continuation of deer hunting.

More to the point, perhaps, it is claimed that farmers and those who live in the Exmoor area and other areas in which deer hunting takes place support deer hunting. That is simply not the case. More than half of farmers in Exmoor disapprove of deer hunting, because they do not like the cruelty involved and because of the damage that it does to hedgerows, to fencing, to their land, to their crops and to other animals that are pursued by hounds in pursuit of deer. It is simply not true to say that there is overwhelming support for deer hunting.

It has been said to me that I have no right to speak on the subject because I represent an inner-urban constituency. My constituency has almost the smallest amount of open space of any constituency in the country. Many people in my constituency enjoy the opportunity of visiting the countryside. Perhaps many would enjoy living in the countryside. They have deep concern for the countryside and therefore consider it right that they should be able to express their opinions on that barbarism, just as people who live in rural areas or hon. Members who represent rural areas have every right to comment on what goes on in urban areas. They have just as much right as those who represent rural areas to comment on these matters.

There is a growing feeling around the country that something must be done about cruelty to animals. The banning of otter hunting was achieved after a tremendous campaign. I hope that my hon. Friend's Bill to protect badger setts, which goes on the back of legislation that was introduced by other hon. Members to protect badgers from badger-baiting and has been successful, is passed by the House.

This Bill is yet another step forward in making this country's legislation on animals slightly more humane and slightly more civilised. I believe that it has overwhelming support throughout the country. Hunting with dogs and the vile killing for bloodlust in the name of sport should not be allowed in this country. The House must represent the views of the vast majority of people throughout the country and pass this legislation to remove this so-called sport, which I believe to be an obscenity, from legal sanction in this country and to abolish it so that we may have fair legislation that guarantees the safety of animals and prohibits and outlaws the cruelty to animals that is part of so-called sport.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Mr. Harry Barnes, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Eric S. Heffer, Ms. Dawn Primarolo, Mr. Alan Meale, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Ron Davies, Mr. Doug Hoyle, Mr. Frank Cook, Mr. Brian Wilson and Mr. Dennis Canavan.

Abolition of Deer Hunting

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn accordingly presented a Bill to prohibit the hunting and killing of deer with dogs; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 22 June and to be printed. [Bill 163.]

Orders of the Day

Defence Estimates

[SECOND DAY'S DEBATE]

[The Defence Committee has reported on the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990 in its Eighth Report, House of Commons Paper 388 of Session 1989-90. The Fourth Report of the Committee on Reliability and Maintainability of Defence Equipment, House of Commons Paper 40, and its Seventh Report on Rapier Field Standard, C, House of Commons Paper 273, are also relevant.]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on amendment to Question [18 June]:

That this House approves the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990 contained in Cm. 1022.—*[Mr. Tom King.]*

Which amendment was, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'condemns the Government for its failure to take proper account of, and make constructive responses to, the new conditions created by the welcome emergence of the new democracies in Eastern and Central Europe and the prospective unification of Germany; calls upon the Government to play a positive rôle in the reassessment of the future of NATO strategies including flexible response, and to participate effectively and constructively in the processes of negotiated reduction of nuclear and conventional weapons; deplores the failure of the Government to undertake effective assessment of and preparation for the impact of the potential change in defence needs on defence-related industries and on Her Majesty's Forces, and the possible savings and alternative uses of money currently allocated to the defence budget; and calls upon the Government to participate actively in the development of a new and durable system of security from the Atlantic to the Urals.'—*[Mr. O'Neill.]*

Question again proposed, That the amendment be made.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, I must inform the House that, because of the number of applications to speak in the debate, I propose to put a 10-minute limit on speeches between 6 and 8 pm. I hope that hon. Members who are called before that time and afterwards will bear that limit in mind so that their colleagues may have an opportunity of making a contribution.

3.49 pm

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that during business questions last week I put to the Leader of the House the fact that in this defence debate the House should have before it the paper that has been prepared in the Ministry of Defence by the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. Those papers were more than alluded to in yesterday's debate. We cannot have a proper debate on defence, which is vital to the people of this country and to many workers in our constituencies, unless there is full disclosure of what is happening in the Ministry of Defence.

I apologise for being absent for yesterday's debate because I had to be in Scotland, but I have read in *Hansard* what the Secretary of State said and I understand that we will get the information in dribs and drabs. We are now approaching the summer recess. All the things that might happen, such as the possible cancellation of orders and the endangering of employment in many areas in our constituencies, could happen when the House will not have the opportunity of discussing them. We know that the papers are in the Ministry. Why will not the Minister come clean and make it clear when we shall get the papers and be able to have a proper debate on the issues?

Mr. Speaker: That is not a matter of order for me. As the hon. Gentleman correctly said, it is a matter for the Minister and perhaps the Minister will consider what has been said to him.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Does not "Erskine May" provide that where papers are referred to either by hon. Members or Ministers, they should be laid on the Table of the House for consultation by Members? That has certainly happened in the past when hon. Members have been required to produce papers. Should not that practice be followed in this instance?

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman consults "Erskine May" again, he will see that that is the practice when a Minister quotes from state papers. I understand that these are internal papers. When I was in the Chair yesterday, I did not hear any quotations from them.

3.51 pm

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Archie Hamilton): We had an interesting and lively debate yesterday, with many contributions. It was particularly fascinating for me to notice the wide gulf that is appearing between Opposition Members in their views on defence. We had contributions from the old troupers—I do not know whether they are now described as the "hard" or "soft" left—who proclaimed their unilateralist views. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) made it clear that he saw no role for nuclear weapons. I accept that that is consistent with the views that he has held for a long time. The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) sees no role for nuclear weapons—or for NATO either. He raised the old cliché, "Better dead than red." No one would accuse the right hon. Gentleman of believing himself better dead than red. Indeed, in the past he has never rated the Soviet threat as serious, in much the same way as he argues that it has now disappeared.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) is not in his place. He wants to see a 50 per cent. cut in the defence budget over the next five years and sees no role for the Rhine Army or, presumably, for NATO. I note that the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) is still demonstrating for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Yesterday, therefore, four out of the six Back-Bench Labour speeches came from unilateral disarmers who want our defence budget halved and our nuclear deterrent scrapped. I do not impugn their motives because they have consistently taken those views, which are shared by a substantial number in the parliamentary Labour party, several of whom are vocal on the Front Bench below the Gangway. Are we talking, therefore, about half or three quarters of the parliamentary Labour party holding such views? That raises another interesting question of where it leaves official Labour policy. The answer is, in the hands of the other part of the Labour party, which is not too concerned about principles or convictions. It is what one might call the "Mandelson wing" of the party. It believes that presentation is all and that thorny issues such as

[Mr. Archie Hamilton]

defence need to be carefully massaged—say one thing and mean another. Those hon. Members are the window-dressers of the Labour party.

I refer to Labour's most recent publication, "Looking to the Future", in which plenty of consideration is given to pumping taxpayers' money into the defence industries to enable them to diversify from making defence equipment —as though they themselves had no idea how to manufacture new products.

But what of Britain's nuclear deterrent? I expect that those hon. Members would say, "Ah, that was in the previous document, 'Meet the Challenge: Make the Change', which appeared last year." I suppose that they would claim that it is not worthy of repetition. However, as much of what was in the 1989 document was repeated in this year's publication, why was the future of the nuclear deterrent left out? It was too embarrassing, I suspect.

"Meet the Challenge: Make the the Change" refers to the early decommissioning of first Polaris, then Trident. I accept that it is proposed to do so through negotiations, but there will be no problem in persuading the Soviet Union to agree to negotiate away our deterrent in the early days of a Labour Government, if we have one. The result would be that we should have no nuclear weapons and the Soviet Union would be left with thousands. Many other countries will conceivably have nuclear capabilities, too. It is not quite unilateral disarmament, but the effect is the same. I suspect that that is why the soft left will go along with it.

Mr. Cryer: Does the Minister use the same arguments with the 140 non-nuclear nations who have signed the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty? Under that treaty they have pledged themselves not to manufacture or deploy nuclear weapons. Is not the agreement underlying that treaty that the tiny handful of nuclear states will get rid of their nuclear weapons, provided that the non-nuclear states abide by the treaty? Why does not the Minister get rid of Trident instead of maintaining his stupid, warmongering attitude?

Mr. Hamilton: Because, as the hon. Gentleman knows, although there are 140 signatories to the non-proliferation treaty, it is not watertight. Several other nations have their own nuclear capability. The hon. Gentleman's policy advocates that we should have no nuclear weapons whatever while other countries in the third world have them. How does the hon. Gentleman explain that to the British public? How does he explain that he wants us to be in a vulnerable position in which we could be blackmailed by Libya because it has a nuclear capability and we have none?

The window dressers and Labour Front-Bench spokesmen remain pretty coy about what other plans they have for defence policy. Yesterday, whenever we thought that we saw an illuminating chink of light, it disappeared again quickly. The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) referred to the American argument that United States troops in Europe need the nuclear umbrella. He quoted, "No nukes, no troops." At that point my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) intervened to ask whether Labour would keep open bases for United States nuclear-capable aircraft in Britain. That, said the hon. Gentleman, would depend on the circumstances. But what has happened to the Labour commitment to close United States bases in Britain? Has it been abandoned? Or is it Labour policy to negotiate away the deterrent and then hide under the United States nuclear umbrella? There is not much morality in that, but the window dressing section of the Labour party is not long on morality.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): The Minister gloats about our possession of nuclear weapons. I recognise that several countries have nuclear weapons which should not have them and that that presents problems. However, every single argument that the Minister uses is used by Gaddafi and the ruler of Iraq. They argue the same case in the context of the middle east conflict. Will the Minister acknowledge that as far as possible the international community should take steps to reduce the number of countries that possess nuclear weapons? Does the Minister really believe that the argument that he and his colleagues use—that we should be proud of our nuclear weapons and that we should have as many as possible—should also be used by all the Gaddafis and Husseins? They could claim that they have as much right to have nuclear weapons as anyone else.

Mr. Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman gets me wrong. I do not gloat that we have nuclear weapons. I gloat about the position of the Labour party. It has a defence policy which is a pathetic fudge and is not supported by a large percentage of the parliamentary party. On the non-proliferation treaty, clearly it is desirable that other countries should not have nuclear weapons. However, despite the nuclear non-profileration treaty, such countries are developing a nuclear capability. That is a reality with which we shall have to deal. Whether it is desirable is immaterial. The unilateral policy advocated by the Labour party is a dangerous policy which will leave us with no nuclear weapons when many other nations have them. That is the reality, whether it is desirable or not.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): The Minister states that he is gloating over the possession of a Labour party defence policy. Surely he realises that everyone's defence policy is totally out of date. The circumstances have moved so swiftly and so far that the Government, the Labour party, the United States, NATO and the Warsaw pact are out of date. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman should gloat over that so that we can get on to the defence estimates.

Mr. Hamilton: The quandary of the Labour party is clearly illustrated by the fact that it cannot even agree on an amendment to the debate—there are two amendments on the Order Paper that say totally different things.

Within the next couple of years we shall have a general election and the country will ask what the Labour party stand for on defence policy. Therefore, it is important to explore that issue to see where it takes us. At the moment the Labour party has two defence policies that advocate dramatically different things, and it is only right that we should say so.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan got himself in a bit of a muddle about whether Labour felt that the regimental system was worth retaining. This is a matter of great concern to the British Army and I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the Government believe in the regimental system and are convinced that it must be

maintained for the esprit de corps that it brings to our front-line battalions. Regiments may have to be disbanded or amalgamated, but the regimental system will go on.

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): The Minister did not understand what I said yesterday, but that is not surprising as there are many defence matters which he does not understand that a child of five could grasp. Is he in favour of the retention of the regimental system with fewer regiments? If so, which ones does he envisage disappearing?

Mr. Hamilton: I would not have suggested that the hon. Gentleman was in a muddle without carefully reading the *Official Report* of yesterday's proceedings.

The hon. Gentleman certainly insinuated that we might have to look again at the regimental system. We will retain that system, but with fewer units, which is accepted in "Options for Change". Obviously we are unable to spell out now which units will remain. As the debate proceeded I was glad that we were able to clear the hon. Gentleman's mind. This is a contentious issue and if one talks airy-fairy about whether the regimental system should be reviewed people see the spectre of the Army suddenly being amalgamated into one enormous corps. I find that that does not go down terribly well with the armed forces.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State spoke yesterday about the hopeful prospects that have been opened up by the momentous changes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. He also set out the new uncertainties that we face. Those have increased as the old order has crumbled beneath the tide of democracy that now extends across the continent, no longer stopping at the Elbe. Our excitement at the opportunities for remodelling the European security environment must not blind us to the real dangers associated with the instability of a transitional period. The recent violence in Romania is a sobering reminder of the tensions that remain just beneath the surface in eastern Europe.

In his speech yesterday my right hon. Friend referred to the work that has been going on in the Ministry of Defence on options for change. This work has been carried out against the background of a threat in Europe that is receding both in terms of capability and intention. The Warsaw pact has ceased to be an effective military grouping, although the Soviet Union, its most powerful member, retains a massive military capability, both conventional and nuclear. However, that capability will be greatly constrained if, as seems likely, we see the withdrawal of all 500,000 Soviet troops from eastern Europe in the next few years. At the same time, we should see reductions in the enormous Soviet superiority in equipment, such as tanks and artillery, through the conventional forces in Europe agreement that we hope will be signed by the end of this year.

In the light of those changing circumstances, it is clearly right that consideration is given to restructuring our force levels and Ministers, working with their key service and civilian advisers on defence policy and the defence programmes, are doing that.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I have a practical question which is of concern to many service men. In the light of the probable redeployment of some British units in the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Kingdom, has the Ministry of Defence called a halt to the programme of disposing of married quarters? Is not it a fact that since 1979, about 7,000 houses have been sold? Does the Minister agree that if British troops are to be returned from Germany, they and their families deserve to be adequately housed?

Mr. Hamilton: I appreciate the point that the hon. Gentleman makes about married quarters, but we still have a policy to sell them. All the policies will be looked at again in view of the proposals coming forward and the effect that they will have on logistic matters such as married quarters.

The House will recognise that changes in direction in defence matters cannot be brought about overnight. The time scale of procurement decisions and the sheer scale of the enterprise mean that we must start now to plan possible future directions against the historic changes under way in Europe. We must take account of the changes that have taken place, those clearly in prospect —such as CFE—but not yet secured, and a range of possible developments in the future, not just the most optimistic or, for that matter, the worst cases.

We must ensure that our future contribution fits in with those of our allies, within a pattern of a revised NATO strategy, operational concept and force structures which have yet to be established. Inevitably it takes time to work through those issues.

It is, of course, essential that we are guided in those considerations by a realistic appraisal of the future political scene in Europe, including likely arms control developments. In parallel, however, we must also keep in sight the short-term financial pressures on defence, alluded to by my right hon. Friend yesterday. It would be folly indeed if measures taken to balance the books in the short term took no account of the wider picture.

As my right hon. Friend said yesterday, we recognise that we have a responsibility to ensure that those most affected in the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence are informed as soon as possible of any proposals. All three services recognise that there must be change in our defence structures. They understand that "Options for Change" is likely to affect all of them and realise that much must be done to plan the way forward. They are impatient to get on with the job.

Of course, we recognise that events may not pan out exactly as we all hope and expect. Whatever the future holds, the House can be assured that we will continue to keep our defences properly and prudently aligned with the security needs of the nation.

Mr. Douglas: Am I correct in assuming that we are talking not about clear aims and objectives but about the Government trying to move ahead, incremental step by step, to see where they can go, and that they are trying to reconcile what is happening in the world with Treasury constraints? There are no clear objectives and there is no great option for change. This is a case of making it up as we go along.

Mr. Hamilton: I regret that the hon. Gentleman puts that interpretation on my remarks because that is not what I have been saying. The threat, in terms of capability and intention, is receding. We know, for instance, that under the current two-plus-four negotiations the whole future of Soviet troops in eastern Germany is being considered. We can assume—we must plan on certain assumptions—that at some stage those troops, about 380,000 of them, will withdraw from eastern Germany. The implications are

[Mr. Hamilton]

that shortly after the Poles will ask for Soviet troops to be withdrawn. So within that time scale—remembering that the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian troops in those two countries are due to go next year—we can assume that the nearest Soviet troops to western boundaries will be in the Ukraine and the western military districts of the Soviet Union.

I am spelling out how the capability of the Soviet Union is changing in terms of the threat to us. At the same time, we can see that intentions in the Soviet Union have also changed, though we must be slightly more wary about that, because intentions could change back again should the political leadership in the Soviet Union change.

Substantial changes are taking place in the capability of the Soviets to inflict damage on the west and, in the light of those changes, it is right, as my right hon. Friend said yesterday, to examine the strength of the Rhine Army, RAF Germany and so on and to start to reorganise the displacement of forces to recognise those future realities. Clearly, as we move into that period—towards the end of the decade—it will be difficult to say at the same time that we want increased funding on defence. The reality will probably be that the money will not be forthcoming and, as my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement said during questions earlier, savings may occur as a result of our planned restructuring.

Dr. Godman: In the light of the dramatically changing circumstances that the Minister of State is outlining, is it his Department's intention to call a halt to the policy of seeking to acquire an additional 50,000 acres of land for military training?

Mr. Hamilton: The figure of 50,000 acres is not in my mind. We have always made it clear that our existing training areas such as Salisbury plain are not large enough for our purposes, and have not been for years. Therefore, if possible, it would be satisfactory to add to such training areas. We acquire farms on the borders of areas such as Salisbury plain when opportunities arise and I should like to keep that option open. We do not have enough training areas for what we are now doing and the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) would be the first to recognise that, as weaponry becomes more sophisticated and ranges increase, we need more space for exercising, not less. Therefore, I cannot give him that undertaking.

I make no apology for the Ministry of Defence buying land. We have as many sites of special scientific interest as anybody else in this country, other than the national parks. We are tremendous preservers and conservers of nature, flora and fauna, and have done nothing but good in the areas that we own.

The Government consider that NATO has a vital role in Europe and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. NATO was first brought together as a defensive alliance of western nations to resist the threat of Soviet military might. As long as the Soviet Union remains a military super-power with enormous conventional and nuclear capability, that remains the key role of the alliance. The development of Europeanwide co-operative structures—such as the CSCE—complement NATO's role and are not a replacement for it. The right hon. Member for Chesterfield raised that issue yesterday. Of course, we fully appreciate the importance of taking account of the Soviet Union's legitimate security concerns. We understand the historical considerations that colour its thinking on the German issue. Indeed, for that very reason the prospect of a united Germany in NATO is one which the Soviets should, in my view, welcome. Therefore, in any restructuring of British defence forces, a significant contribution to NATO generally and British Forces Germany in particular, must remain.

The central role of nuclear deterrence will also remain. The United Kingdom's strategic deterrent makes an important contribution to alliance security and is the ultimate guarantee of our security—an insurance policy against unwelcome developments in the future. Trident will allow us to maintain a credible strategic nuclear deterrent well into the next century at a relatively modest cost and we remain entirely convinced of the need for it. Although there is clearly a diminishing need for nuclear systems of the shortest range, NATO will continue to review both the quantitative and qualitative requirements for its sub-strategic forces, which will need to offer greater flexibility and longer range. The need to ensure that the basing of nuclear weapons is widespread among NATO nations will also remain an important demonstration of the commitment of alliance members to collective defence and the need to share roles, risks and burdens, as well as the advantages of nuclear deterrence. This burden-sharing is, of course, also important because of the need to offer reassurance to our American allies. The vital importance of a continued United States presence in Europe adds particular weight to that.

The Labour party discussed, in its recent document, the demise of flexible response, although I am never clear what it would put in its place. Perhaps it sees a return to a tripwire strategy as preferable. Let there be no doubt that NATO remains firmly committed to the central concepts underlying flexible response as the best means of maintaining effective prevention of war, which will be essential so long as the Soviet Union retains its awesome military potential.

At the same time, post-war history shows that while we retain effective alliance deterrence, conflict is more likely to erupt in other parts of the world, rather than in Europe, and the possibility remains of the United Kingdom's interests out of area being threatened. Therefore, it is important that forces be retained which can contribute to security in other parts of the world. Such forces can, of course, play a key role in peace keeping, as we have shown time and again in our support for the United Nations. As we reshape our contribution to NATO we need to provide forces with sufficient flexibility to contribute to out-of-area operations, should they prove necessary.

I should like now to deal with the services' commitments in Northern Ireland. In my speech during the Army debate two weeks ago I spoke about security and our anti-terrorist operations in support of the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Northern Ireland. Since then the IRA has callously murdered a former RUC reservist and his wife and planted a bomb at the headquarters of the Honourable Artillery Company—a bomb which injured a number of civilians. The IRA has also blown up a former home of my noble Friend Lord McAlpine and a building at an Army training area in Hameln, West Germany—fortunately without loss of life. Thanks to the vigilance of a local farmer, important arrests have been made in Belgium and Holland. That serves to emphasise, as I have

often said, that the involvement and support of ordinary people in the community in the fight against terrorism will lead to the IRA's ultimate and inevitable defeat.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): It may have been a slip of the tongue, but I think I heard the Minister say that the IRA had blown up the house of Lord McAlpine. In the press that was attributed to animal liberation groups, not to the IRA.

Mr. Hamilton: No; as I understand it, Lord McAlpine runs a zoo, so that would be a strange thing for an animal rights group to do. He was always on a list of the IRA—

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Tom King): The IRA claimed it.

Mr. Hamilton: As my right hon. Friend says, the IRA claimed the attack.

The protection of our service and civilian personnel and of defence establishments against terrorist attack remains our highest priority. As I said during the Army debate, an additional £126 million was provided last year to fund a major package of security enhancements, here and on the continent. The implementation of those security enhancements is continuing, and we are looking at ways to extend security to cover all areas where people may be vulnerable to terrorist attack. I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), who raised this matter yesterday, that all items of operational urgency and significance, including security measures, are exempt from the temporary period of spending restraint.

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): On security, is the Minister aware of the deep concern in the Kintyre area of Argyll, where I understand that Ministry of Defence police are to be withdrawn from the NATO oil depot? As there is increasing traffic—it is welcome—between Kintyre and Northern Ireland, I should be interested to know whether the Minister agrees that that would be a retrograde step, since I believe that the MOD police are to be replaced by private security arrangements.

Mr. Hamilton: I cannot comment on that case, but I know that in general terms we have to review all our security commitments. Although people find that Ministry of Defence police are the most satisfactory for them, those police are also the most expensive way of providing security. I suspect that budgetary considerations may have been taken into account in this case because we are interested in getting the best value for money from the defence budget—but I shall write to the hon. Lady about this.

Mr. Winnick: I thank the Minister for giving way to me a second time. Does he accept that those of us who believe that the Birmingham Six are not guilty of the charges against them—I doubt whether any hon. Member thinks that they are guilty—believe nevertheless that those who have carried out crimes against humanity, such as the IRA has, should be brought to justice? Merely because we believe, as some of us have for some time, that certain people in prison are not guilty as charged does not alter our conviction that recent IRA crimes—the soldier who was murdered recently not far from my constituency, the Army major in Germany, and so on—are crimes against humanity, and that those responsible for them should be brought to justice as quickly as possible.

Mr. Hamilton: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that intervention. I know that the whole House condemns those atrocities. I do not think that the hon. Gentleman would expect me to comment on the Birmingham Six, although I know that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has looked at the case, I think more than once, and does not consider that it should be reopened.

As I said, it is important that ordinary people, and in particular the local population who live around military bases, are involved in our efforts to protect the service men who live and work there. Last night my hon. Friend the Member for Wimbledon (Dr. Goodson-Wickes) suggested the establishment of neighbourhood watch schemes. I assure him that we are studying all options with the relevant civil authorities and intend to announce our conclusions shortly.

We shall continue to use a mix of resources to provide guards for MOD establishments. These include service personnel, Ministry of Defence police, in-house MOD guards and commercial guarding companies. We are examining the creation of a Ministry of Defence guard force. All those options, including commercial guarding companies, where they can demonstrate that they can provide an effective service, must be available to meet the terrorist threat.

I should like to move on to mention the scope of the armed forces' task in Northern Ireland which is, of course, their largest peacetime operational commitment.

The Army's 10 regular battalions in Northern Ireland are currently split into five resident and five roulement battalions. Maintaining this force level requires thorough support and planning. So far this year two resident battalions have already been replaced—one by another resident battalion and the other by a roulement battalion. Each roulement posting requires three battalions per year as the six-month long tours are not timed to the calendar year. Throughout 1990 approximately 20 units will undertake training in preparation for duties in the Province. In addition, there is always a battalion on standby which, if necessary, could deploy at short notice to Northern Ireland, or elsewhere.

The extra cost of the service commitment in Northern Ireland is estimated at about £200 million in this financial year. Both Regular and full-time Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers work long hours—more than 60 hours a week on average. Even the average part-timer contributes about 22 hours a week. The UDR's nine battalions provide an indispensable element of the Army's support to the RUC. UDR soldiers are under constant stress because of the danger of murder, both on and off duty. Almost 200 have been murdered since 1970 and almost 50 ex-members have been killed. The full-time element of the UDR has been increasing which is a reflection of their importance within the Army. We will continue to improve the professionalism and training of the UDR permanent cadre soldier.

We do not often see the statistics about punishment shootings in Northern Ireland. Since 1973 there have been 494 loyalist and 972 republican punishment shootings, making a total of 1,466 people in Northern Ireland who have been shot through the knee-caps and sometimes in the elbows and thighs as well. That is an example of the horrific way in which these extreme organisations carry on in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for those extremely moving statistics. Will he join

[Mr. Keith Speed]

the American ambassador in condemning the mayor of New York for what appears to be happening there in glorifying terrorists?

Mr. Hamilton: Some unfortunate remarks have been made in the United States by people who do not in any way understand the situation in the Province. They are seeking to pander to a thoroughly ignorant public in New York and some of the remarks made are thoroughly regrettable.

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence said yesterday, we owe a great debt to our service men and women, whose courage, dedication and fortitude are demonstrated so vividly and, sadly, so frequently as they help to meet the services' commitments in combating terrorism.

Much has changed in the world, and much is yet to change. We now face a set of circumstances almost unthinkable 12 months ago and certainly not predicted then. We are presented with opportunities to transform the political landscape of Europe from one deformed by confrontation and division to one where democratic freedoms can flourish in a stable security environment. We shall achieve this transformation only if we keep firmly in sight the present realities of the world and are not blinded by visions of utopias just round the corner. We need to keep in check Eurocentric tendencies. There is a wider world. The United Kingdom is part of it and our armed forces and defence activities can help to make it a safer place. The "Statement on the Defence Estimates" sets out our approach to these matters and describes our management of the services and defence resources. I commend it to the House.

4.24 pm

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): First, I take up the theme on which the Minister of State ended and pay tribute to our service men and women for their work in the past year, often in most dangerous circumstances, and, in particular, those who have to serve in Northern Ireland. In addition, as the Secretary of State did this morning, I too praise the co-operation of those European countries which sought to apprehend the cowardly murderers who were obviously well entrenched in Europe. It is an achievement to have such co-operation. I only hope that none of the countries concerned will do as other countries do on occasion and prevent the extradition of those murderers so that they may receive their just deserts.

Unfortunately, I missed the beginning of the Secretary of State's speech yesterday, but I caught his statement that the newspaper report about the Minister of State for Defence Procurement's paper, which was referred to earlier today, was true, that it was not secret, that he had seen it and that he had sent it to the Prime Minister as long ago as before Christmas. But what he did not say yesterday was whether he agreed with its contents. Like many of my hon. Friends, I found it remarkable that the Secretary of State found it necessary to deny that there was a rift between him and his Minister of State. However, for the sake of the country, Opposition Members are pleased that they are jolly pals again, even to the extent that today the Minister of State for the Armed Forces duplicated the Secretary of State's speech yesterday.

The Secretary of State spent a long time yesterday analysing political developments—rather badly I should say, particularly in his distortion of what happened at the end of the first world war, his reference to the 10-year rule and his clumsy attempt to blame the Labour party for the decisions of successive Tory Governments. After his long analysis of events in eastern Europe and the geo-political factors that face us at present which has been reiterated today, he stressed the fact that the Soviets are a huge continuing threat and are re-arming at a frightening pace. If they are true, the statistics that he trotted out yesterday were frightening, and he says that he receives intelligence reports, so I presume that they are.

But what is the Government's response to the huge, continuing and increasing threat that is developing from the Soviets? They are cutting back because, as the Secretary of State said in another part of his speech, peace has broken out and there is room to cut back. The Secretary of State made a pathetic and illogical speech. He talked about people riding horses, but he is riding more than two horses on this occasion.

The truth slipped out this morning when the Secretary of State was interviewed on the "Today" programme. He acknowledged that the reason for the present cuts was not what he suggested yesterday and not what the Minister of State for the Armed Forces suggested today—a measured and orderly response to geo-political factors—but the inflation that the Government have created and its impact on the defence estimates.

The Secretary of State said—it is in *Hansard*—that he could not get any extra money from the Treasury and he had to live within his cash limits. That is why the cuts are taking place. The Government must cut back, not because they are constructing an orderly response to changes in eastern Europe, but because they have been told to create a peace profit in order to fund the poll tax.

The Minister of State talked today about a cold and measured response, but yesterday the Secretary of State said that he has already set in train some short-term changes which have largely been decided and that announcements will be made as appropriate, including some procurement changes that were to be announced by the Minister of State for Defence Procurement yesterday evening.

When I asked the Secretary of State later what short-term changes had already been decided, his response was rather rude, so we thought that we would wait for the Minister of State for Defence Procurement to reply. However, he contributed only three lines about procurement changes. If all those changes have been made, I would expect the Secretary of State to think it appropriate to announce them in the House—or will some of the decisions be delayed until the recess, when there cannot be any parliamentary criticism of the Government's actions?

The Secretary of State was less than truthful with the House yesterday. As usual, it took the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence—the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates)—to put his finger on the issue. He said:

> "Arbitrary cash cuts and deliberate attrition by inflation make prudent management of the defence budget next to impossible."

So much for the Secretary of State's claim that the cuts are a reasoned and rational development.

I was amused yesterday by the Secretary of State's reply to the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg), who asked whether the suppliers would receive their money for the work that they had carried out. He responded by saying that the computer at the Ministry of Defence had broken down, and that therefore the suppliers could not be paid. I thought that that was the usual Government response to social security claimants; I never thought that it would be a response to suppliers. *[Interruption.]* If the Secretary of State does not agree, he should read yesterday's *Hansard.*

Late in yesterday's debate there was a relatively casual reference to the axing of Tornadoes. The Minister of State for Defence Procurement said:

"At present, I cannot foresee a place for additional Tornado aircraft in the programme; I have therefore decided not to authorise further work on that order."—[*Official Report*, 18 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 709 and 771.]

There has been much speculation on that issue today. Perhaps in his reply the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement will elaborate on the matter and tell the House what is going on. Does it mean the axing of 31 or 33 aircraft in the eighth batch? Will the remaining 10 —according to the defence estimates, 43 have been ordered —still be ordered? When will the promised £600 million saving be made? Does the approximate delivery rate of 10 Tornadoes a year mean that the savings will be made over three, four or five years? If 10 are already under construction, when will the savings show up?

I have examined the estimates for a budget line on the matter. Perhaps the Minister can tell us tonight what will happen to the Tornadoes: he owes that to the workers at British Aerospace, if not to the management. The management said today that it wanted to discuss the cancellation with the Ministry of Defence, although yesterday the Minister of State for Defence Procurement said that his Department had been consulting British Aerospace on the changes. A slight difference of opinion is emerging.

The mystery that remains is where the immediate £300 million in cuts that the Secretary of State mentioned will be made. How will he guarantee the 3 per cent. savings in this financial year to which he referred? They are not covered by the cutback in the Tornadoes, so where will they be made? We can only assume that the savings will result from the existing moratorium on contracts, civilian recruitment, reductions in planned operations and, I presume, the computer breaking down at convenient times. I look forward to hearing some answers from the Minister this evening.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): The hon. Gentleman mentioned the Tornado order. No doubt he will be aware that that order is important in central and north Lancashire and that the security of jobs there is tied up with the future of the European fighter aircraft. Many Conservative Members are concerned that that project should continue and that Germany should endorse it and continue to develop it as that will benefit British industry and British jobs.

Mr. Rogers: Obviously that question should be directed to the Government and not to me. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will make that point if he catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understand that yesterday the Minister of State said that the agreement had been signed and that the programme was going ahead. Had the hon. Gentleman been here yesterday, he would have heard that.

Two significant things have happened in the past week or so. The first was the speech by the Minister of State for Defence Procurement to the Royal Aeronautical Society, which fortunately I missed.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Has the hon. Gentleman read it?

Mr. Rogers: Yes. It was a speech for which the Minister was attacked by his officials, especially over his pleas for simpler and cheaper weapons and his suggestion that the A310 airbus could be adapted for use as a medium-range bomber.

I know that the Minister has a primitive streak and a desire for the simpler things in life such as servants and antique cars, but I wonder whether he was really serious. He said recently—I think that it was in the debate on the Army—that there was no point in being ironic in this place, but his irony and laid-back approach to arms procurement have raised the wrong hackles this time. It has been suggested that the Minister has a radical approach to defence matters, which would obviously bring him into conflict with the more rural and pedestrian Secretary of State. It seems to me that in some of the things he has said he has mistaken lunacy for free thinking and freaking off for parallel thought. However, I agree with his simpler and cheaper approach to defence procurement. I suggest that he starts at home by sorting out the Procurement Executive.

The second significant event that has occurred in the past couple of weeks was the publication of another substantial report by the Defence Select Committee. Yet again the Select Committee is highly critical of the Government. That is not unusual. It deals with the non-procurement of the Rapier Field Service C—a short-range, low-level air defence guided weapon system. It outlines the sad and sorry saga surrounding the essential fact that Rapier is £300 million over cost and three years behind schedule in coming into service.

The report's criticisms of the Government seem rather muted in tone considering the confessions of witnesses as a result of acute questioning by the Chairman and members of the Select Committee, particularly the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas). The inability to assess the technical risks before full development seems to be at the heart of the problem. Although there was a two-year feasibility study followed by a three-and-a-half year definition study, costing in total more than £18 million, prior to the development phase, it seems that no one except the British taxpayer is picking up the tab. The prime contractor, British Aerospace, has tried to pass on some of the blame to the sub-contractors, Plessey, Marconi and Ferranti—not insignificant companies. They in turn wash their hands of any of the blame. That means that the supervision of the contract by the Ministry of Defence leaves much to be desired.

I was rather taken aback by the arrogance of the replies in the Select Committee report by the assistant under-secretary of state (ordnance) to the Chairman and to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West, who pressed him critically on the issue. Some of the statements in the report are strange. One statement, for example, reads:

"British Aerospace did not have any incentive to keep the costs to a minimum".

[Mr. Rogers]

Does that mean that efficiency or pride in its work were not incentives? Does that mean that the British Aerospace management is so bad that it cannot control costs to a proper level in the production process? Does it mean that British Aerospace can control costs, but that it is overcharging to make excess profits? If that is the case, it means that the supervision by the Ministry of Defence and by the Procurement Executive is deficient and negligent, and that they are guilty of far more than the count of slack control which was mentioned in the report. That could be the case, as the report goes on to say:

"development work was not monitored against milestones", but payments were simply made

"on the basis of work completed rather than demonstration of achievement".

Although the programme has been relaunched, matters have gone from bad to worse. The inclusion of £115 million for British Aerospace as a "risk contingency" is another mind-bending decision. Perhaps the Minister can explain it. The Chairman of the Select Committee, the Conservative hon. Member for Hampshire, East, described it as "a sweetener" for British Aerospace. It is one of a long line of those. However, I still cannot understand why such a gratuitous amount was paid to a company that was already contracted to do a job on what was virtually a cost-plus basis.

The report shows incompetence and inefficiency in the Ministry of Defence and in the Procurement Executive on a scale that would land any local authority manager in gaol. The £300 million cost overrun on Rapier is a scandal that requres an immediate Government reaction. The Crichel Down scandal reinforced the principle that a Minister is responsible for the actions of his Department. Sir William Dugdale, who was the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries at the time, resigned over that incident. He was a man of honour.

The Ferranti affair resulted in the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery), who is here with us this afternoon and who was then the Minister of Aviation, refusing to resign because he argued—perhaps properly—that mistakes could be made over contracts at the edge of known technology and that the Minister, therefore, was not necessarily responsible. However, much to his credit, the right hon. Gentleman instituted an inquiry into the Ferranti affair which resulted in a repayment of £4·25 million by Ferranti for overcosting, and that was a significant sum at the time.

Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, the then Home Secretary, said:

"The position of the civil servant is that he is wholly and directly responsible to his Minister. It is worth stating again that he holds his office 'at pleasure' and can be dismissed at any time by the Minister."

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for warning me that he would refer to this old story. There is nothing that requires concealment. The contract with Ferranti was made long before I was Minister. Ferranti made a substantial profit on a cost-plus basis. Mr. Basil de Ferranti, who had been my Under-Secretary, and his brother, who was then chairman, discussed the matter. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and I discussed the matter with Mr. de Ferranti. Ferranti agreed that it had made an excessive profit and, as the hon. Gentleman says, it repaid £4 million, which it did not have to do under any legal consideration. I should have thought that the return of £4 million was rather better than my resignation would have been.

Mr. Rogers: I did not mention the story as a criticism of the right hon. Gentleman. However, the rather casual way in which he describes the events is not quite borne out by the facts. A committee was set up under Sir John Laing to investigate the matter. The investigation was carried out not on a casual, old-school-tie basis, but as a more formal inquiry.

Mr. Amery: I have not had time to check the documents. However, I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that the inquiry was subsequent to the decision.

Mr. Rogers: I shall bow to the right hon. Gentleman's version as he was involved in that particular scandal, although he was not responsible for it. [HON. MEMBERS: "Withdraw."] It was a scandal. The scandal was in overcharging, not in the conduct of the Minister and I have not said that as a criticism of the right hon. Member for Pavilion, as the record will show. If Conservative Members believe that ripping off the British taxpayer is not a scandal, they have a very different standard of morality from ours.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces talked at length about morality today. However, what has he and his Secretary of State done about the Rapier contract? They will not even do what the right hon. Member for Pavilion did—instigate an inquiry. They have kept their heads down and they have shut their mouths. The whole circus carries on performing. *[Interruption.]* The Minister of State for Defence Procurement finds it amusing that we should be ripped off for £300 million. He really does not care because the friends of the Tory party in big business will benefit. They probably went to the same school as half the Conservative Members. There has been no expression of regret about the rip-off and no acknowledgement of blame. No one has been chastised and no one has been sacked. The Minister will obviously not resign, but he should at least have the guts and gumption to sack the head of the Procurement Executive—a Tory placeman who has presided over "many costs" in time overruns, over much inefficiency and over much poor performance.

That man was brought in by the Government to sort out arms procurement, to introduce efficiency through competition and to reorganise procurement procedure. The Secretary of State is mumbling and seems to be asking my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) whether he agrees. My hon. Friend certainly condemns the rip-offs and the number of slippages in arms procurement. He condemns the hugely expensive overruns and the continual reports from the Select Committee on Defence about poor reliability and maintainability. The Secretary of State is squirming. Is he going to get up now and resign?

Mr. Tom King: The hon. Gentleman is speaking from the Opposition Front Bench, so I assume that his attack on Sir Peter Levene, who is not here to defend himself, is made with the authority of his hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) and that it is the Labour party's policy to criticise a public servant in that way. The hon. Gentleman also knows perfectly well that the contract to which he has referred was placed a considerable time before Sir Peter Levene reorganised part

of the system of contracts. That point should be put clearly on the record. I was under the impression that Labour Members on the Select Committee also believed that Sir Peter Levene had made a considerable contribution to the procurement process. The hon. Gentleman has now made Labour's view clear. He has made a scurrilous attack, and I hope that he will make it outside the House.

Mr. Rogers: The right hon. Gentleman protests a little too much. He knows that he presides over a shambles. He knows that he is getting ripped off by the defence industry. He forgets that, although there was a five-and-a-half-year feasibility and definition study, which cost £80 million before 1983, the development side was placed in 1983. In 1986, long after Sir Peter Levene joined the Procurement Executive, the whole contract was renegotiated. The Secretary of State does not know the facts. He should withdraw what he has said, unless he is quite happy. That is typical of this Government. They have been criticised in a report by a Select Committee that is dominated by Conservative Members, yet all the Secretary of State can do is to blame me for making a "scurrilous attack". Why does he not criticise the Select Committee?

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): It is a little harsh for a Labour Front-Bench spokesman to castigate the Government for insufficiently adhering to fixed-price contracts as milestones when these are management tools that have been introduced by the Government due to the abysmal lack of control over these matters by previous Governments. Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the extent to which the minutes of this debate will be read by foreign arms exporters across Europe and be used against Rapier —a very good British product that has sold well abroad, with competitive tendering?

Mr. Rogers: The hon. Member does not know his facts. He has not read the report. He has talked about the Rapier systems being a good product. They do not even work. The systems have not been integrated. The hon. Gentleman ought to check his facts. He talks about this Government's glorious record. Is he aware that 24 projects have exceeded the initial cost estimates and that another 25 projects are subject to time slippage? Defence procurement is in an utter shambles. Sir Peter Levene, despite being brought in specially to correct this has not done so.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Did my hon. Friend hear the in-depth and searching questions that the Prime Minister endured on the Jimmy Young programme when she castigated overspending by local authorities? Would my hon. Friend care to contrast the situation in local authorities with that in the Ministry of Defence and the overspending on all these projects? What does he think that the Prime Minister should be saying about the gross overspending on Ministry of Defence projects?

Mr. Rogers: As I have inferred, Ministers and civil servants seem to be outside any criticism. If there is positive criticism, the Secretary of State says it is scurrilous. It is not. I have heard Ministers castigate Labour and Conservative councillors and local authority managers who are not here to defend themselves. It is a shabby trick that the Secretary of State should make such a statement. I am pleased to see that I have offended the Secretary of State. That was one of my ambitions in life.

Land use in some areas is receiving a great deal of criticism, especially in south-west Wales and St. Davids airfield in Pembrokeshire regarding the proposed installation of "over the horizon" American radar. People in this area, and in Wales as a whole, view the proposition with horror.

The scale of the radar structure is huge, consisting of 120ft high posts, with masts and wires over a mile long. The location is in the beautiful Pembrokeshire national park. The structure is highly intrusive and will have a substantial effect on tourism. It will be visible from the popular coastal footpath and for many miles inland. It will be damaging to the environment. The construction is seen locally as an intrusion and is regarded as an insult because of its presence near St. Davids cathedral, the church of the patron saint of Wales, and in an area where there are many ancient religious sites.

Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): Will the hon. Gentleman give a categorical assurance on behalf of the Labour Opposition that the scheme would not go ahead if he were the Minister?

Mr. Rogers: Yes. We would stop the work and conduct the proper survey that has been promised by the Government. A promise was made but has not been fulfilled. The Minister of State for Defence Procurement has met himself coming backwards.

In a letter to me dated 6 June, he stated:

"we are currently at the beginning of the decision-making process, not the end."

He was not telling the whole truth. Another paragraph stated:

"I have concluded that the only suitable location for the transmitter is the MOD owned site at St. Davids airfield".

A thorough and proper review of this proposition would be made, regardless of the scoffing remarks of Conservative Members.

Mr. Cecil Franks (Barrow and Furness): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Rogers: No.

Defence exports is a matter only casually alluded to in the estimates. The estimates say:

"Continuing success in the defence exports field does not imply any relaxation of the strict controls needed to prevent weapons or other sensitive equipment falling into the wrong hands."

That is right, but many weapons and sensitive equipment fall into the wrong hands.

Iraq, for example, is not a country known for its commitment to human rights. Certainly it is embargoed for receipt of such goods. How much has gone, directly or indirectly, to Iraq through Jordan? The estimates say that the MOD works closely with other Government Departments. The MOD, through the Defence Export Services Organisation and IMS—a wholly-owned subsidiary—has been active in this area and closely involved with the Midland bank and the Export Credits Guarantee Department, directly and indirectly through Jordan. Subventions from the Ministry of Defence budget have been used to allow the Midland Montagu bank to offer preferential interest rates to Jordan for the purchase of arms and ammunition. What is the total amount involved?

Under the Jordanian defence packages agreement of 1986 and 1987, £350 million worth of credit was extended to Jordan. In his reply to me dated 2 May, the Minister stated that virtually all the credit has been committed to contracts on behalf of the Jordan armed forces. The

[Mr. Rogers]

contracts, valued at £150 million, were traced to military supplies to Jordan. What of the remaining £200 million? Where have those military supplies gone?

International Military Supplies is a commercial company, wholly owned by the MOD. Are contracts placed by it included in the list on page 15 in Volume 2 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates? If not, where is its trading disclosed? The Minister stated that the Department has used Astra Holdings over the past few years. From where can this information be obtained?

Serious charges of corruption were laid against senior management of IMS to the previous Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement, the hon. Member for Hove (Mr. Sainsbury). What action was taken, and will the findings be published?

Astra Holdings is involved in the arms business, particularly on the explosives side. The major shareholder is 3i—Investors in Industry—a company chaired by Sir John Cuckney, an ex-director of Midland bank and chief executive of Westland.

Astra purchased PBR, which is a Belgian explosives company and was also involved with the late Dr. Gerald Bull of Big Gun fame. PBR's specialty is shipping explosives to Iraq via Meulebeke airbase on Belgian C130 transports and it is also believed to act as an extra-territorial supplier for IMS—the MOD. But is it also true—as I have been given to understand—that IMS has been involved with South African arms shipments—particularly the shipment last year of 3,000 20 ft containers, transhipped through the Jordanian port of Aqaba to Iraq—and also with the assembly of South African missile components at Wimborne in Dorset, permission for which was given by the British Government?

What is significant in all these deals is the part played by the Prime Minister in her "batting for Britain" role. Last year I attended a defence study group at which Sir Peter Levene, Lord Trefgarne and Lord Chalfont, who chaired the meeting, eulogised the role of the Prime Minister as being central to the Saudi-Jordan arms deal and also to the deal made with Malaysia. Quite what was the Prime Minister's role in all this? Is she party to the sanctions-busting and arms smuggling and to the supply of weapons to Iraq?

When I asked the Prime Minister whether her office had authorised the preferential rates accorded to Jordan for the purchase of arms and ammunition under the Jordan defence package, she replied that it was a matter of commercial confidence. What is commercially confidential about it? The amount and rate may be confidential, but the authorisation itself is not, and the Secretary of State's office said that it did not authorise it anyway. Who authorised the preferential rate for the deal?

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): My hon. Friend is making an interesting point, but Ministers seem to be nodding off. I hope that they will answer my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is boring.

Mr. Cohen: The Minister says that it is boring, but I hope that he will answer my hon. Friend's question in his reply.

Mr. Rogers: In the Army debate some time ago, I drew the attention of the House to the very bad state of much of our service accommodation. The backlog of maintenance and essential and unavoidable repairs to service accommodation stood at £360 million at 1 April this year. That is an appalling state of affairs. The Minister of State for the Armed Forces appears to find it humorous. He probably agrees with the Chairman of the Select Committee that British soldiers perform better if they live in appalling conditions. If so, his attitude is, in turn, pretty appalling. If local authorities behaved in that way—worthy of the worst landlords in Great Britain—there would be a great hue and cry. Ministers are doing nothing, and, in the meantime, our service men and their families have to suffer appalling conditions. Three hundred and sixty million pounds is the sum required for essential and unavoidable repairs to bring the accommodation up to date.

The Government have been sadly deficient in both the operation and management of our defence and this year's glossy estimates hide a tale of incompetence and mismanagement. That is why we ask the House to support our amendment.

5.3 pm

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): A few months ago we had a momentous debate on the registration of dogs. The House was full and there was hardly anywhere to sit. Today we are discussing the more day-to-day problem of the defence of our people and of the western world. The speech that we have just heard from the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) explains why there has been rather less interest in this debate than there should have been.

I am indebted to Mr. Speaker for reminding me of the pregnant statement made by Mr. Sun Tsu in a famous treatise on strategy several centuries ago. The Chinese general wrote:

"Supreme excellence lies not in winning battles easily. Supreme excellence lies in winning wars without any battles."

By that test, we have done quite well in the west and in the Atlantic alliance. It is true that there have been battles in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Angola, but broadly speaking we have won the third world war without the sacrifices of life and treasure that were exacted in the previous two world wars.

We must ask ourselves what is the explanation for that. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the explanation lies simply in the invention and development of nuclear weapons. I do not think that a confrontation between the conventional forces of east and west would have been possible for a 40-year period without one side or the other bringing matters to a head and without a war which would probably have been even more terrible than the previous two. The burden would probably have fallen most heavily on the democracies, which would have found it more difficult to sustain the necessary expenditure. Without nuclear forces, we should probably have had a bloody third world war.

The lesson is clear. Whatever else we do—whatever other defence dispositions my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his advisers decide upon—we must maintain the British nuclear deterrent. Hitherto, and in the great confrontation which I hope is now ending, we have relied above all on the American deterrent. But we may not always be able to rely on that. We are living in a world in

which proliferation has not been stopped but continues apace. The secret of the weapon is out of the bottle. More and more countries will develop it and some are exploring other means such as chemical warfare. It is essential to the safety of our country that we maintain the minimum credible deterrent, which is Trident.

We may also have to think of a responsibility to Europe as a whole for the maintenance of deterrence, and I hope that we shall work in close co-operation with our French friends who also have a nuclear force. That is not to suggest—I shall come to this in a moment—any separation from our American allies, who are cardinal in the defence structure ahead. Thinking in purely European terms, however, we must accept that we have our own deterrent for our own national defence. We may need Anglo-French co-operation for the defence of Europe and a European-American deterrent for the safety of the world.

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State pointed out yesterday, the threat of Soviet aggression is receding, but there are still half a million Soviet troops in the heart of Europe. As my right hon. Friend pointed out, the Soviets are still producing modern weapons on a large scale and they are still supporting their surrogates in Afghanistan, Angola and, even now, in Ethiopia—with weapons and with moral support. Even if the Soviets withdrew into the Slav heartlands, abandoning the non-Slav republics, they would still represent a formidable military force.

We have won the war, but we have still to win the peace. Threats can arise quickly. Even Sir Winston Churchill did not fully appreciate the German danger until 1936—only three years before the war started. Modern weapons and trained men cannot be improvised. That is a lesson that we learned even in days when training and production were easier—in 1914 and 1939.

What should be our peace aims? International disarmament must be agreed before we can disarm, but it must also be achieved. We want to see the Soviet withdrawal from the heart of Europe. That will take time. We want to see a European defence structure in place that will include the united Germany. We want to see a long-term American commitment to the security of Europe. All those things will take time. Therefore, the peace dividend of which we speak and which we seek—my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement issued a small interim dividend last night—will take time.

What is most necessary is a change in our overall attitude to the strategic problem. For 40 years we related our defence requirement to the Soviet threat. We shall now have to relate it to our responsibilities. When we were the heart of the Commonwealth, we built and maintained a vast Navy—until the 1930s, it was the largest in the world—to meet any contingency and to meet any particular threat. Now the Commonwealth is no longer the centre of our destiny and Europe has taken its place.

Europe has world-wide interests—in Africa and in the middle east, and in oil and minerals. I shall not detain the House by expanding on the Islamic threat which has been filling our Sunday newspapers beyond saying that interested hon. Members should read again chapter 50 of Gibbon's "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and see how quickly threats can develop. Europe must now face the issue of defence and produce a collective European structure enabling us to protect the vast economic and financial interests that we are putting together in the European Community. Not to do so would be irresponsible. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his colleagues will have to discuss the form that that security will take with their counterparts on the continent. I do not wish to go into detail, but our all-volunteer forces are particularly suited to out-of-area operations.

At present NATO is the only game in town, and we are quite right to insist on all-German membership of NATO. However, we must look ahead and recognise—it is the Government's business to deal with matters day by day, but it is our business to look ahead—that NATO has its weaknesses. It does not include France and Spain, which are members of the alliance but not of the military structure. We cannot defend Europe without France, or indefinitely maintain communications with the United States without Spain. There is the problem of German public opinion. Today the majority seem to favour membership of NATO, but the official opposition in Germany is rather divided on the issue.

There is also the problem that NATO has geographical limitations which, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister suggested, do not really apply to the future world to which we are looking. Also, America is not part of the European Community. While I trust that we shall always stand together, the Americans may not always see eye to eye with us, as they have not always done in the past. There is a need to build a European defence structure. At the risk of repetition, I remind the House that I have always believed that the Western European Union might provide such a framework. After all, the Western European Union is the foundation of the European Community—much more than the treaty of Rome.

Had Britain not committed itself to provide armed forces—ground and air—on the continent of Europe, the French Parliament would never have voted and approved the rearmament of Germany, and I am not at all sure whether the German Parliament would approve rearming Germany either.

The WEU is the matrix of the European Community. Everything that has followed, such as the treaty of Rome, has come afterwards. That is important for a special reason. I hope that, in the long term, we can develop a European patriotism, but that is some way off. However, the presence of British and French forces in other countries in Europe, including Germany, will be fundamental to the security of Europe. The Germans could not demand the withdrawal of French and British forces from Germany without repudiating the European Community. That does not mean that we cannot diminish or reduce forces there, but equally I see no reason why we should not have German forces in France, Britain or Spain. We must combine defence if we are to make a reality of the European community.

I stress that I am not suggesting for a moment that we separate from our friends in the United States. I wish to see a global alliance of Europe and the United States. I stress the word "global". In this country, we still tend to think of the Americans as the policemen of the world, but they no longer see themselves in that light. There are enormous claims on their resources, and their resources are not quite what they were. If we want to hold them in Europe and if we want to maintain their commitment, we shall have to give as well as get. Mr. Attlee and his Government understood that point very well—that is why he sent substantial forces to fight in Korea, side by side with the Americans when he thought that the destiny of the

[Mr. Julian Amery]

Commonwealth was at issue. Today the issue is not the destiny of the Commonwealth, but the destiny of Europe. If we want American safeguards for Europe we should be prepared to help them outside Europe—outside the NATO area, perhaps in Africa, the middle east or even in the Pacific.

Mr. Tony Banks: I have much sympathy with what the right hon. Gentleman is saying. Will he give more details about his concept of Europe? He referred to an alliance between Europe and the United States, but how extended into the present east of Europe is the Europe about which the right hon. Gentleman is talking? For example, would it eventually include the Soviet Union as well?

Mr. Amery: I shall refer to the hon. Gentleman's last point in a moment. Of course, the European Community is the foundation of what I am talking about, but then there are those who seek association with it—for example, the European Free Trade Association countries. Then, I hope, the emerging democracies of eastern Europe will also join with us, and they should be encouraged to seek membership of the Council of Europe.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) asked about the Soviet Union. We are dealing here with a vast entity. The Soviet Union or Russia—I am not sure what name we give it today—stretches to the Pacific and to the borders of China. This is a different world and its future is wrapped in mystery, as is the future of China. I do not think that I should try to define in detail—it would be foolish to do so—what our relationship with it should be. However, I am sure that if we want a good relationship, we must first build a European structure and a global alliance with the United States.

5.18 pm

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): Hon. Members will have listened to the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) with great interest. He brings a tremendous breadth of experience to such debates. As the right hon. Gentleman was developing his last point about the new security structures in which Europe will enjoy parity with the United States, I found myself wondering whether the framework is not already present in the Atlantic alliance. The right hon. Gentleman inferred that there is an onus on Europe to develop a pillar and to take on obligations that will perhaps considerably relieve the United States. That is certainly an objective to which I warm, but it can be achieved only if we retain NATO. Despite the current developments in eastern Europe, we should regard NATO as being simply in a mid-life crisis and we should now be exploring how to achieve a renewal of life for it.

Mr. Amery: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's understanding of what I said. The alliance is, of course, fundamental, but the question is whether the existing structure is what we need or whether it should be reformed in various ways to include France and Spain or perhaps to go outside the current area. That is what I was trying to suggest.

Mr. Duffy: I am in entire sympathy with the right hon. Gentleman and, possibly, almost in agreement with him. Many of the factors that have determined western security policy over the past 45 years are, as we know, undergoing fundamental change. The collapse of communist rule in eastern Europe has weakened many of the longstanding assumptions about the order of European security. The Warsaw pact, as an effective military alliance, is already fading into the past. Some people in the west have even expressed doubts about NATO's continued usefulness.

The Soviet threat may be non-existent, but Soviet military power remains. Thus, prudence should be the rule of the alliance's reaction to events in eastern Europe. The dissolution of the Soviet empire is one thing, but the dissolution of the Soviet Union is another. What if glasnost or openness continues to encourage dissent, protest, turmoil and disruption much faster than perestroika or restructuring can cure the practical, political, economic, ethnic and sectarian problems that Mr. Gorbachev faces? What if centrifugal forces spin out of control? If Mr. Gorbachev fails, who will control the Soviet Union's still awesome military power, and those military weapons, and to what purpose?

The need for NATO's continued existence is now accepted not only by its members, but by the new eastern European Governments, as I know from personal contact and from visits to all of them, including the Soviet Union. Indeed, even the Soviet political leadership appears to realise that its security is closely bound up with a cohesive western security system.

It was most interesting a week ago today to listen to the Prime Minister's statement about her visit to the Soviet Union and her account of her meeting with Defence Minister Yazov and the chiefs of staff. A year ago I sat in on a North Atlantic Assembly delegation—which, incidentally, I led—which included not only hon. Members of all parties, but three United States senators and leading parliamentarians from all the member nations. It became a stormy meeting, especially when at least one of Marshal Yazov's generals, quite out of turn and to the obvious embarrassment of the Defence Minister, insisted on shouting at one of the United States senators. Following that two and a half hour meeting, the speculation over lunch was how long that general would have lasted had any of us been in Marshal Yazov's position as Defence Minister. That shows just how far things have changed in just one year in the Soviet Union alone. Some of us are in regular contact with the Soviet Union and can otherwise receive reports—we can all read about what is happening there—and we know that tremendous changes are taking place, some of them perhaps unnervingly fast.

NATO's role—current and future—transcends merely countering the Soviet threat. In the Gorbachev or post-Gorbachev era, NATO still has four major missions: to prevent world peace from being endangered by a renewal of Europe's civil wars; to establish structures that will ensure the efficacy of the CFE agreements; to establish two-pillar institutions that will permit the NATO Governments to procure affordable armaments while equitably and efficiently sharing both the benefits and the burdens of NATO's defences; and—this next point recalls the profound observations of the right hon. Member for Pavilion—to resume building the Atlantic community that President John F. Kennedy and others foresaw nearly three decades ago. Those four goals of defence, stability, arms control and the building of new, positive security and

political structures, should provide a large enough agenda for anyone seeking a renewed and meaningful political role for the North Atlantic alliance.

In a press conference in Paris on 29 March, the Foreign Secretary referred to the creation of

"policies, doctrines and structures of the new NATO".

I am sure that all hon. Members will agree that, in doctrinal terms, there is clearly a need to reinterpret the strategies of flexible response and forward defence. It is not enough for hon. Members, including some of my hon. Friends, simply to dismiss those strategies as irrelevant because of the changes that are now taking place. Not a bit—the changes do not mean that those issues need not be addressed, because they do. The strategies must certainly be changed, but they must first be reinterpreted. Perhaps the crux of the matter before the House is that, until we have done that, what restructuring of our armed forces can any of us seriously consider?

The change in warning time is the only significant fundamental change that has occurred in so far as it affects tonight's debate. Given that change in warning time, I have no doubt that flexible response, which is quite capable of evolutionary change, as well as forward defence, which is essentially a mobile defence and is also capable of change, will be modified. Thinking of central Europe alone, we must remember that we still have flanks—and some of us have always regarded them as the most vulnerable sectors. As I said, flexible response, forward defence and the size of NATO will all have to be modified.

I am equally confident that "first use" and the role and future of short-range nuclear forces are under current consideration. I am sorry that the Secretary of State is no longer in his place because I should have liked to have been a little more specific, but his colleagues know that MC114/3, which is General John Galvin's basic doctrine and terms of reference, can be adjusted in its essential "force-generation" role, such as mobilisation and deployment, and similar dynamics.

In her speech to NATO Foreign Ministers in Scotland two weeks ago, the Prime Minister rightly dwelt on those strategy questions when she asked:

"Does forward defence in the central region still make sense in these circumstances? Or should we think more in terms of defence in depth and greater reliance on mobility, flexibility and reserves?"

She said that it would be prudent for NATO countries to retain a capacity to carry out multiple roles, with more flexible and versatile forces. The House will probably agree with the Prime Minister's thinking on that, yet we look in vain for answers to those questions in the pages of the annual defence White Paper. Although we understand why they are not there, only those answers will ultimately determine the size and shape of Britain's armed services, and not merely the forces that we station in Europe.

Last night's announcement about a reduced Tornado programme was inevitable, was it not, given the unexpected rise in inflation which has brought about a real value cut of about 3 per cent., and continues a trend that began in 1985?

The Government denied for some time that they were engaged in a fundamental defence review. Then it became known that the Prime Minister was chairing a full-scale Cabinet investigation into scope for defence cuts, entitled "Options for Change". The obvious remit for the inquiry is to determine the main general changes which are evident and which the Government expect for the United Kingdom armed forces in this area of diminishing threat. The assessment will be in terms of, first, roles and resources priorities; secondly, procurement patterns; thirdly, recruitment, retention and training of soldiers; and, fourthly, additional tasks such as those which may arise out of verification agreed through CFE.

The inquiry poses other questions of a largely strategic nature that must be addressed first by not only the Ministry of Defence, but hon. Members who are present, if they wish to understand what recommended changes may eventually be announced from the Government Front Bench, we hope before the recess. Assuming that a CFE agreement is signed this year, how soon, for example, should a second round of negotiations begin? Or are events in eastern Europe making the Vienna negotiations irrelevant? What type of framework of participation should attend CFE 2 and what should be the agenda? Has the collapse of communism in eastern Europe, with the attendant reduction in Soviet forces and the impending unification of Germany, cast any doubt in Ministry of Defence planning circles about the continued military and political efficacy of forward defence as a NATO defence imperative? What are the minimum operating requirements of forward defence?

Is the Ministry of Defence doing serious analytical work on alternative defence concepts for NATO, premised on defence dominance and a structural inability to attack on the part of both alliances? If so, what are the implications for future national defence procurement programmes, such as the multiple-launch rocket system?

Are follow-on forces attack concepts still valid? For how long will they be valid? What will be the future determinants to guide such concepts? Will the CFE1 accord make a military integrated structure more or less important? Will the integration include United States forces? How can French forces be included? Should the NATO command structure be changed, and in what direction? Is Lance modernisation dead? What role do short-range nuclear forces play in operational terms?

Without awaiting the findings of the "Options for Change" inquiry, the Government should take four steps. First, they should reassure the services and engage them as much as possible in the inquiry. They should not be kept at arm's length, as it is believed that the Government are doing now. They should be involved in the inquiry at a professional level. Secondly, the Government should point out that reductions in the central European theatre cannot be equated with cuts in major strategic programmes. The European fighter aircraft, the Apache attack helicopter for the Army and the Navy's continuing need for surface warships are all requirements that cannot easily be ditched because, if ditched, they cannot easily be revived.

Thirdly, for all Mr. Gorbachev's perestroika, the Soviet Union added substantially to its armed strength last year. It added 1,700 tanks, 400 ballistic missiles, 600 fighters and 10 submarines. As I said, all that has changed so far is that the short-warning threat has been removed. Soviet forces may be becoming smaller but they are almost certainly becoming better.

Fourthly, the Government should admit the limitations of the peace dividend, given the public expectation, and they should scrupulously avoid seeking to make electoral capital out of it. Fifthly, NATO should retain its present membership and remain primarily a security organisations, although it should undertake an increased political role. It will be essential for stability in Europe that

[Mr. Duffy]

Germany remains a full member of NATO and that the alliance continues to be transatlantic based. But NATO will need to adapt, taking on new roles to reflect changing circumstances. Examples of such roles may include the lengthy and complicated implementation of CFE reductions and accompanying verification measures, the adaptation of our strategy and operational concepts to accommodate a unified Germany, and consultations on the management of east-west relations, the future arms control agenda and the possible future role for CSCE.

The alliance will also be compelled to consider security questions out of area, for example, in the middle east where missile proliferation continues. I agree with the right hon. Member for Pavilion who, in his closing words, said that the alliance will almost certainly have to pay increased attention to the worldwide management of peace.

5.35 pm

Mr. Keith Speed (Ashford): I congratulate the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) on his speech. I agreed with almost every word, as I did with the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery). They both made thoughtful speeches, to which I hope the Minister listened carefully.

This debate is timely because we all hope that fundamental reassessments of our defence plans and priorities are taking place. But even this week events in Romania, IRA terrorism on the continent and in the United Kingdom, and Colonel Gaddafi's speech about nuclear weapons in Libya remind us that the world is still an uncertain and dangerous place. The security of our nation and, indeed, of the west demands substantial resources to safeguard it.

I hope that the review of the armed forces taking place in the Ministry of Defence and about which we have heard so much will have a long hard look at reshaping the forces for the changing threats that lie ahead. Undoubtedly, that will mean increased emphasis on some sections of the armed forces and reduced emphasis on others. I hope that that will be in keeping with the radically changing position in central and eastern Europe.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion and my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) have referred to the European security structure. The Western European Union could play an emphasised and substantial role in the developments that lie ahead. The Council of Europe could also play a role, embracing as it does 23 countries stretching from Turkey to Iceland and Finland to Spain, with the Soviet Union, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland as observer states. No doubt other countries from eastern Europe will join those countries as observers. Unlike the CSCE, both the Council of Europe and the Western European Union have parliamentary accountability. I hope that we do not create new and expensive bureaucratic bodies and structures but will adapt existing structures that are accountable to our domestic Parliaments throughout Europe and are more cost effective.

Looking ahead to possible threats to our national security, we must accept that there are still many problems in the Soviet Union. The threat may be much reduced, but no one—the hon. Member for Attercliffe referred to this—can be sure that if there were a total economic breakdown, or if Mr. Gorbachev's position were undermined, there would not be strong military action by the generals or others. When countries go through a revolution, whether economic, political or ethnic—the Soviet Union is undergoing all three—disturbing and strange reactions can take place.

Yesterday, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State reminded us that the Soviet Union still has substantial superiority in arms and that the CFE treaty has not yet been signed. Arms production continues. The hon. Member for Attercliffe reminded us that there has been substantial production of weapons in the past 12 months. Any unilateral disarmament in anticipation of CFE and the other arms treaties would be a dangerous gamble.

It is important to consider the threat out of areas, notably in the middle east. It may come from Islamic fundamentalism, but may also appear in many other parts of the world—not least the blackmail that could be exercised by some third world countries which have nuclear weapons or the capacity to make them. We must also remember the threat posed by domestic and international terrorism—no country, airline or people is immune from that.

An important responsibility is the protection of our national vital resources and trade routes, and the protection of our trading partners in different parts of the world and of those few Commonwealth countries for which we still have external defence responsibilities. We must also protect the minerals and oil in our exclusive economic zone. Those important matters should be taken into account when considering the future. I hope that the Government and their advisers are considering the radical reshaping of our forces which will be necessary to meet those threats and responsibilities.

Let me put my two-penn'orth in the crystal ball. It is inevitable that there will be a substantial reduction in troops and aircraft on the central front of Germany. I also hope that the support facilities will be reduced as they are extremely expensive to our defence budget and our balance of payments. Undoubtedly the cut in the Tornado order is not the happiest thing for the aircraft industry or many others, but it is the forerunner of other necessary cuts. I envisage that the older jets such as Phantom and Jaguar will be phased out while the Tornado continues in operation. Many tanks will also be decommissioned in central Germany—they will go anyway as a result of the CFE agreement. America, France, Germany, Italy and Britain will require fewer tanks and it is a pity that we cannot get our act together to develop a NATO tank. Fewer tanks will mean that the unit cost of each one, be it Challenger 2 or Leopard 2, will increase. If we had a uniform tank, the production costs could be shared among the countries and cost could be kept down. But that is not possible as chauvinism reigns supreme in that regard.

There must be a more European approach to the troops who will remain on the continent and I hope that we shall have some multinational forces. I foresee a German, Belgian, United Kingdom force operating at a divisional level in northern Germany. I know that there are problems with language, communications equipment and interoperability, but the Franco-German brigade, which was launched in Stuttgart, has shown us the opportunities available as well as the problems. I was privileged to attend the inauguration of that brigade a year ago. At a higher divisional level there is great scope for economy, but in the first instance the real advantages of such a multinational

force would be political, not least following the unification of Germany. We should latch ourselves properly on to Europe, albeit at a lower level than at present.

The hon. Member for Attercliffe referred to the need for greater flexibility and manoeuvrability in our forces; that is paramount. I was greatly impressed by the French Force d'Action Rapide, whose key element is its manoeuvrability as it has light armoured vehicles, helicopters and air mobility. It is nearly 60,000 strong so we are not talking about a lightweight unit. We must follow those lines and create self-contained logistical support. The 24 Air Mobile Brigade at Catterick is a good foundation on which to build. That brigade, together with light infantry forces, should be expanded to give us the flexibility in Europe that we need. In that way our armed forces in Europe would have the added advantage, in common with the Force d'Action Rapide, of being used out of area at short notice.

With fewer troops stationed in a changed Europe and with the CFE treaty in force, there will be less need for resources to be committed to reinforcement and re-supply from north America. It is still important to retain that capability—not least to act as a deterrent to any adventure that might start in eastern Europe. The demand for fewer resources will, I believe, lead to fewer frigates being necessary. If the Soviet navy starts to reduce its forces as a result of economics rather than treaties, I envisage that our SSN hunter-killer submarines could be reduced in due course. That would not, of course, affect our strategic deterrent in the Trident force.

Maritime operations could be expanded in one significant area—a maritime equivalent of the Force d'Action Rapide. The Royal Marines should have an amphibious capability that can be used in an outside area. That means that we must reach a decision on landing platform docks Fearless and Intrepid. In 1986, I was a member of the Defence Select Committee and I was told that a decision would be reached within the following 12 months, but still no decision has been made. In that regard we should operate with the Dutch with whom the Royal Marines already work on the northern flank. They have common requirements for similar ships and they, too, have had to defer a decision because of resources. For heaven's sake, we should get our act together. The Hague and London are separated by a 40-minute flight. We should plan something together on a European basis so that we have maritime and amphibious flexibility. It is desperately needed and we have an excellent foundation on which to build with Whiskey company and the Royal Marine Commandos.

In the next few years, the Army, Air Force and Royal Navy will be subject to meaningful reductions in their capabilities. Eventually that will save money and foreign exchange, but it will take a great deal of time. In the meantime, we must expand certain areas, such as intelligence. I make no apology for mentioning intelligence as the Intelligence Corps is based in my constituency. Its anti-terrorism role in Northern Ireland and throughout the world is magnificent. The men and women wearing the green lanyard of the Intelligence Corps have a key part to play in the future.

I agree with the hon. Member for Attercliffe that once the CFE agreement and other treaties are in place an important function will be verification. I hope that that will be carried out by European satellite and by teams working on the ground. We should work with our European and north American partners. An important component of that will be airborne early warning, and I believe that the AWACS will be fairly busy in the next few years, although perhaps their role will be different from that originally envisaged.

In the future a great deal could be done for our reserve forces once the regular forces are reduced and redeployed. The reserves would provide a cost-effective way in which the Army, Navy and Air Force could retain their latent capability should we get something wrong. Investment in our reserve forces will mean that at home and in Europe we have the capability quickly to expand our regular forces. We must ensure that the reserve forces are well trained and use similar equipment, aircraft, ships, fighters, vehicles or artillery to their regular counterparts.

There has been much talk about the peace dividend, but it is right not to raise public expectation. All parties in the House have a responsibility to that end. The dividend will come in due course, but only as a result of imaginative changes in our defence programmes and procedures and as a result of the continuation of the enormous changes in central and eastern Europe.

Welcome and dramatic though those changes are, they have happened basically for three reasons. The first, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion pointed out, has been the nuclear deterrent since 1945. Secondly, our free and democratic system, while by no means perfect, is infinitely better than Marxist socialism, which is crumbling all over eastern Europe. Thirdly, the alliance under NATO has stood firm through thick and thin and, as part of that alliance, the continuing connection between north America and Europe is, was and always will be absolutely critical.

5.50 pm

Mr. John Cartwright (Woolwich): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed), who brings great expertise to the debate. I particularly support what he said about the role of the Western European Union and the Council of Europe in the changing European scene.

Those who have had the opportunity of talking to members of the newly elected Parliaments in the eastern European countries feel that they are facing problems about which they have no experience and that they desperately need the strength of western European parliamentary democracy around them. They need to feel that they are not being left on their own. The Council of Europe can do an important job in providing such solidarity for those newly emerging democracies.

I strongly support those who say that decisions about the future of Britain's armed forces must be set within the NATO framework. We should resist any temptation to hark back to some great imperialist past. We are a European nation, we are part of the European Community and we are part of the Atlantic alliance. That must shape our military planning.

That implies that I do not accept the argument that the dramatic collapse of the Warsaw treaty organisation means that NATO can be allowed to slide into an ineffective position or somehow be subsumed into an all-embracing CSCE process.

NATO is not the mirror image of the Warsaw pact. NATO was set up as a voluntary association of free nations sharing the same democratic values. The Warsaw treaty organisation, by contrast, was established to serve

[Mr. John Cartwright]

Soviet interests. Its membership was not voluntary but was of a conscript nature. It is salutary to remember that the only time the Warsaw pact fired shots in anger was against its own members in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

There is a powerful case for a new security framework covering the whole of Europe and involving the United States and the USSR. It is needed to reassure those who are concerned about the new balance of power on the continent of Europe. It will be needed to deal with the risk of regional, ethnic or nationalist unrest spilling over into more serious conflicts.

I accept that the CSCE process provides the best framework for developing that sort of new security system, but that is likely to take a considerable time to establish and to become effective and credible. It would be foolish for us to talk of its replacing NATO, even in the longer term.

There is a difference between a system of common security and a system of common defence. Common security necessarily brings together states with different and sometimes conflicting interests. Consider the examples of the League of Nations and the United Nations. It is not always easy in such situations to establish the unified political will that is needed to deal with difficult problems.

Common defence, on the other hand, brings together free nations with shared interests which they combine together to protect. Most of us would accept that NATO has been the most successful such alliance in modern history, and it will be needed for the foreseeable future, even within an institutionalised CSCE framework.

NATO must change to take account of the totally different Europe that is now emerging. I see it as a two-stage process. First, we must make short-term adjustments to take account of the present period of change, which we hope is merely a transition to a more stable situation. During that transitional stage we do not want to take unnecessary risks. We should not gamble with our security, but we can start planning for the second stage in the process. We can start a more thorough and radical review of NATO's military strategy which will be needed if all the changes that we hope for become reality.

It is possible that by the mid-1990s we shall have seen the end of the Warsaw treaty organisation as a military alliance. We might also have seen the total withdrawal of Soviet forces from eastern Europe and the full implementation at least of the first CFE agreement. By then we may be seeing a continuing democratic process in political and economic reform in the nations of eastern Europe.

If we achieve those objectives, we shall need a different sort of NATO with a different strategy. That process of change will, we hope, start at the July summit meeting. It will lead to major changes—of style, objective and strategy—but certain fundamental elements must remain in the new NATO strategy.

First, for as far ahead as we can see, we shall need the presence of a militarily significant number of United States and Canadian forces on the continent of Europe, though at much lower levels than the numbers present today. Secondly, we shall need a united Germany as a full member of NATO with, of course, special arrangements being made for the territory of the GDR. Thirdly, NATO must retain a deterrent force based on an appropriate mix of conventional and nuclear weapons. Fourthly, we need to retain a fully integrated military structure. Fifthly, and in many ways most importantly, we must maintain the original founding principle that an attack on one member of the alliance is an attack on all.

NATO has always been a defensive alliance. It has been there to prevent aggression. The challenge to NATO now is to demonstrate that we can prepare to do more than just prevent war. We must show that NATO can be just as determined in building the peace. That underlines the point made frequently in the debate that NATO must now develop a more political stance, rather than being a purely military alliance. In fact, NATO has never been just a military alliance. At the time of the 1949 treaty, even in those early days emphasis was being laid on political and economic co-operation between the members of the alliance. While it is difficult to envisage any of the regional problems in Europe with which we are concerned demanding a NATO military response, it is easy to see the need for a concerted NATO political response to the uncertainties of the new Europe.

Although responsibility for the economic problems of the newly emerging eastern European nations will fall primarily on the EEC, there is a north American dimension in assisting those nations and solving those problems, and NATO is the main vehicle for the involvement of the United States and Canada in Europe.

NATO will play a more political role in terms of the arms control negotiations which we wish to see continuing and in the verification of that network of treaties which will guarantee the stability and security that we want to achieve at much lower levels of military forces.

In looking at the implications of all this change for the size and shape of Britain's own forces, it is clear that the first step to be taken is to determine what our forces are for, and whether the objectives are for NATO or purely national. Final decisions on that first question cannot be taken until we know the outcome of the NATO review.

However, it is clear that there is a wide measure of agreement in the House about certain general principles which will shape the sort of forces that we shall have in the next couple of decades. We are generally agreed that we want smaller forces which are more mobile and flexible, and capable of swift reaction, rather than large-scale stationed forces capable of fighting old-fashioned wars.

We also recognise that, for the first time in 200 years or so, the bulk of those forces are likely to be stationed in the United Kingdom. The conventional forces in Europe talks and the the implications of German reunification will inevitably reduce the size of our forces stationed in Germany. With regard to our out-of-area commitments, Hong Kong will be gone by 1997 and it is hard to see commitments such as Belize and the Falklands being maintained even at their present reduced levels. We must face the fact that the bulk of our forces will be stationed in this country.

It is easy to produce scenarios of unrest in various parts of Europe leading to local or regional conflicts, but it is hard to imagine that any of those favoured scenarios will inevitably involve the deployment of United Kingdom forces. It is unlikely, for example, that British forces will be deployed in a peace-keeping role between the Armenians and the Azeris, and the unlikelihood of British troops being needed on the continent of Europe will be a major factor in our force planning.

It is also becoming much more accepted that in the new environment it will be even more difficult to attract the sort of high quality recruits we shall need into much smaller forces with a more limited career structure. The Secretary of State is therefore absolutely correct to argue that, whatever the peace dividend may be, some part of it must be ploughed back into improving the conditions of our armed forces and the quality of life of our service men and women. If we are to have highly qualified, well trained and well equipped armed forces, with well motivated service men and women, we must accept that we cannot achieve that on the cheap.

I also challenge the assumption that we can depend on reservists to fill the gaps in our professional forces. The new environment will make it as difficult to attract reservists as regular service men. The fact that the Territorial Army is already 15,000 short of its 1990 target of 91,000 illustrates that. The Select Committee report states that 80 per cent. of regular army reservists attended no training in the last nine months of 1989. In an environment in which security is no longer at such a high premium, it will be as difficult to attract people into the reserves as into the regular forces.

I agree with those who have said in the debate that, despite all the changes in the Soviet Union, the USSR will retain a massive nuclear arsenal as far ahead as we can see. Even if the Soviet Union were to break up, which is a strong possibility, the Russian federation would presumably have the benefit of those nuclear weapons. Some of us are no more attracted by the possibility of Russian nationalism than by the threat of Soviet communism.

In this uncertain and dangerous world, it is simply prudent common sense for Britain to retain a minimum nuclear deterrent which is effective and credible. It is therefore absolutely essential for us to retain the concept of four Trident submarines. We can reduce the number of missiles per submarine and vary the number of warheads per missile to take account of future progress in nuclear arms control, but it is absolutely essential to maintain four submarines.

I welcome the prospect of a negotiated removal of land-based, short-range nuclear weapons and nuclear artillery. However, I accept the case for retaining a limited number of sub-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe. I believe that the tactical air-to-surface missile is the most effective system for that role. Therefore, it makes sense to deploy a limited number of those systems on NATO aircraft based in Europe.

Since 1984, the Soviet Union has deployed a growing number of AS15 long-range air-launched cruise missiles, which have a range of between 1,600 and 3,000 km and carry a 250 kilotonne warhead. When such systems exist, it seems ridiculous for NATO not to maintain the ability to deploy a similar, less threatening system of its own.

I also accept the point that has been made several times in this debate about the risk of nuclear proliferation and the number of third world nations obtaining, or trying to obtain, a nuclear and chemical weapons capability allied to ballistic missiles. In that dangerous situation, it is not credible to reply simply on strategic nuclear weapons. We must have a number of sub-strategic systems to take account of such a threat.

In conclusion, I think that we all accept that we face an extraordinary opportunity. As the Minister of State for the Armed Forces said, the propects opening up before us were unthinkable even a year ago. We must grasp the chance that we are now being given and think imaginatively. I strongly endorse the words of the United States Secretary of State, James Baker, in his evidence to the Senate foreign relations committee on 12 June. He said:

> "We want to build a peace defined not just by the absence of war from the Baltic to the Adriatic, but by a community of democratic values that extends from the Atlantic to the Urals."

That should be NATO's objective, in which Britain must play its full part.

6.7 pm

Mr. Julian Critchley (Aldershot): The hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) and I once wrote a book together. He provided the jargon and I provided the jokes. Sadly, it did not sell and was not made into a film. It might have helped to swell the profits of Mr. Robert Maxwell. It might be said that the spectre of being remaindered at Waterloo station looms over the hon. Gentleman and me.

The Government are undertaking the first defence review since the halcyon days of the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey)—*[Interruption.]* That was a different defence review, to which I shall return later. This one is called "Options for Change". It has been fathered by the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. Its midwives meet regularly, under the eye of Mr. Richard Mottram, and we must wish their labours well. I wrote a profile of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement that should have appeared in last Sunday's edition of the *Observer*. In fact, it is going into next Sunday's edition of the *Observer*. There are no secrets between the Minister of State and me.

For the past 40 years Britain has done far more than its fair share in defence terms. We should now cut back, but only in a way that enhances our influence, especially in Europe, and helps to contribute to our joint security.

I fear that some of my hon. Friends may find it hard to come to terms with the absence of an enemy. For the first time since the 1860s, Britain lacks an external enemy. The Soviet Union seems to be reverting to Mother Russia—I hope not to imperial Russia. The Warsaw pact lies in ruins. The French and Germans are more than our allies; they are our partners. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism threatens the stability of the near and middle east, but it is not, as such, an enemy of this country. We have little to fear from the Argentinians over the Falklands and, thank God, nothing whatever to fear from Iceland. Unless we go about the world looking for trouble, we should enjoy a long period of real peace.

We must resist the temptation to return to the priorities of the Victorian age. I suspect that there are some members of our great party who might wish to return to those priorities. Europe should not go to the bottom of the list and the prospect of some adventure across the seas be raised to the top. What out-of-area—that is, out of Europe—responsibilities we have we share with our European and American allies. We should not reduce the Rhine Army so far and so fast as to limit our influence in the European Community. Our status in Europe has been largely determined by the size of our military contribution—certainly not by our rhetoric—to the common defence. Many Americans will now go home and a too sizeable reduction in the Rhine Army on our part might leave France and Germany as the major actors on the European scene.

[Mr. Julian Critchley]

Military and political consequences flow from a European priority in defence matters. The first is that it is necessary to keep on the continent of Europe at least a division—a cadre that can easily be reinforced from this country. The second military consequence of the European priority is that the use of nuclear weapons against any targets in Europe, east or west, will be unthinkable.

The political consequences flow from these two military consequences. Should we consider a United Kingdom contribution to a European army? I should like to think so, but the agnosticism of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in all matters pertaining to European unity will remain for some time at least a stumbling block—but a European army, the dream of the 1950s, will be on the agenda in the 1990s.

Lastly, what are the implications for nuclear weapons? Adequate deterrence against the Soviet Union or Russia can be maintained by sea and air-launched cruise missiles. We should hold on to our strategic nuclear national force and build a fourth Trident submarine. But whether or not shorter-range missiles are stationed in Germany must depend on the wishes of the Germans themselves. We must accept whatever decision they reach. We must not lecture our allies from the sidelines.

As we debate on this second day of the defence estimates, the rotary clubs of the low countries are carefully re-enacting the battle of Waterloo. We would not wish the Ministry of Defence—the only building in London designed by Albert Speer—to be shrouded in the smoke of conflict, and we must not permit the Minister of State for Defence Procurement to meet his Waterloo.

6.13 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I am overwhelmed at being called now, Mr. Speaker, because I am so used to seeing the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) on panel programmes that I fully expected my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) to be called next. It is a pleasure to hear the hon. Gentleman because he makes telling points that are always worth re-reading, and I am sure that I shall be re-reading them in newspaper articles in the coming weeks.

Yesterday the Secretary of State—echoed today by the Minister of State for the Armed Forces—sneered at the debate going on in the Labour party about defence policy. I found that depressing but predictable, coming as it did from the authoritarian Conservative party. Robust, open debate is not something for which Tories care very much. Why should not the Labour party have a robust open debate in what has been left of democracy in this country by the right hon. Member for Finchley (Mrs. Thatcher)? Yet when we hold such debates we get sneers and cheap party-political jibes from Conservative Members.

There is also a debate of sorts going on in the Government, based largely on rumours, leaks and innuendos. Ministers go off into their corners and give briefings to their favourite journalists. The *Observer* headline on Sunday ran:

"Service chiefs in storm over defence cuts".

The same page carried an admirable picture of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. I have no reason to disbelieve the report—there are too many direct quotations for it to be entirely the meanderings of a drunken journalist.

It seems that the Minister of State has some difficulties in his Department, as has the Secretary of State—they seem to be pitted against each other. I suggest that they discuss among themselves who has set them up for this, as I suspect that it may well have been the Prime Minister, deep in her bunker in Downing street.

I have some time for the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. He has a fight on his hands. He has said that he is looking for substantial reductions in arms expenditure—I heard him say that in a good interview on the Radio 4 programme "Today" a week or so ago. Judging by the quotations in the article that I have mentioned, it is clear that he is not very popular at the Ministry of Defence, so I suggest that he does not go walking around the building late at night on his own.

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement is going for things that we support. He said in the Radio 4 interview that there was something called a peace dividend which made substantial cuts possible. He also said rather touchingly yesterday—I seem to have been the first casualty of the defence review by failing to get into the debate—that he had missed a contribution from me. He is missing it again today, so it must be deliberate on his part. He also said that I had done critical damage to his career by the praise that I had heaped on him during the Air Force debate. Actually, it was an Army debate—the changes these days are so rapid that I am not surprised that he became confused.

I intend to heap still more praise on the Minister's head. He has my total support, although I appreciate that that is not worth a great deal. Given the fight with defence chiefs that the Minister has on his hands, having my support is rather like declaring war simultaneously on the Soviet Union and the United States of America, only to discover that one's only ally is San Marino. But the Minister is still welcome to my support, and I hope that he will wear it as lightly as he can.

As I said, the Minister of State spoke in the interview of a peace dividend. That is what the people of this country want, and it has seeped into the consciousness of enough people to bring great pressure to bear on the Government. The Prime Minister recognises it by trying to get the Minister of State to create enough flexibility of manoeuvre for her to be able to deliver some of the goodies of which she has deprived the people of this country for so long—and to deliver them just before calling a general election.

We want the peace dividend. The people of Newham want it desperately. It will mean that we can do something about the £21 billion defence expenditure, using it for schools, homes and transport—the areas of social expenditure so desperately in need of it.

I heard the Prime Minister talking to Jimmy Young, who was asking her those searing questions of his. I am not surprised that he happens to be her favourite political interviewer. She was very angry about local authorities overspending. When did she ever talk about the overspending on all the defence contracts for which the Minister of State for Defence Procurement is responsible and which Sir Peter Levene has been brought in to deal with? My hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) made a good point about that.

There is more than a whiff of hypocrisy from the Prime Minister when she talks about overspending councils

because local authorities have been given more and more responsibilities and have had more and more funds taken away from them by the Government. Those authorities are doing the important things that are needed in our society. We need to arm ourselves not with the weapons of death and destruction but with knowledge and skills because they can best defend a united country. That would give us a country in which there is greater equality of opportunity and in which social service provisions would be spread in a way that matches Britain's desperate needs. When reductions in arms expenditure are mentioned some Conservative Members, and also some of my hon. Friends, defend constituency interests in the way that the hon. Member for Aldershot has done. *[Interruption.]* I thought that the hon. Gentleman would enter a plea on behalf of his constituents, but if I have got that wrong I apologise to him.

No one in the Opposition wants to see indiscriminate cuts affecting our defence industries and our armed forces. Cuts should not be made in an unplanned and indiscriminate fashion. That was why at Question Time I asked the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department was doing about arms conversion work. I did not ask about what firms were doing, but about what studies the Ministry of Defence has carried out because the Ministry will ultimately be responsible for cuts in arms expenditure. The Minister dismissed my question, saying that it was being done outside and that I was concerned only about a central, planned economy. I am in favour of planning which makes sure that decisions made in one Ministry do not have all sorts of repercussions throughout the country.

What is the Ministry of Defence doing about arms conversion to make sure that members of our armed forces who might be declared redundant and who find themselves on the dole do not have to wait around like so many industrial workers who have been pitched out of their jobs as a result of the Government's economic ineptitude? The Government have a responsibility to the armed services to make sure that there is work that people can take up.

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement said something that I have never heard from a Conservative Member in all my time in the House—which goes back only to 1983 but seems much longer. The Minister said that there was a correlation between economic success and low defence expenditure. The Opposition have always said that, but it is the first time that I have heard it said by a Conservative Member, and especially by a Minister. I applaud the Minister again for his honesty and economic intelligence. He deserves more support than he seems to be getting from his own side. In the meantime, for what it is worth, we will give him some support.

6.22 pm

Mr. Cecil Franks (Barrow and Furness): It is entertaining and sometimes instructive to listen to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). Later in my speech I shall deal with some of his comments, but initially I should like to concentrate on the need for Britain to have an independent nuclear deterrent. There has been a deafening silence from Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen on that subject. Yesterday they contributed 54 minutes to the debate and did not make a single reference, favourable or unfavourable, to the nuclear deterrent policy. In today's debate, we heard a meandering speech from the Opposition Front Bench that was totally lacking in substance and again made no such reference.

It is incomprehensible that in a two-day debate on the defence estimates and national defence policy the official Opposition party which would seek to form a Government cannot bring itself even to refer to the nuclear deterrent. The hon. Member for Newham, North-West made a fair comment when he said that he and, as he would have us believe, his colleagues wished to have a robust debate. How can there be a robust debate when, as a matter of policy, the Opposition choose to remain silent on such a central feature of our defence policy?

The arguments for a fourth Trident submarine have been well rehearsed. Nothing has changed and the arguments remain exactly the same as they were 30 or 40 years ago when the Polaris programme was introduced and the submarines first commissioned. It is worth reminding the House that the French, who have their own independent nuclear capability, have a fleet of six submarines and the French are by no means bad judges.

Although Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen will not comment on the independent nuclear deterrent, at least yesterday a former Labour Minister of State spoke about it, and his words echo mine. He said:

"It is absolutely essential that we keep a minimum of four submarines."

In a telling comment, he said:

"I do not believe that the British people would agree to a nuclear deterrent that could be activated at only a fortnight's notice."—[*Official Report*, 18 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 731.]

In a nutshell, that is the essence of the nuclear deterrent and of our need for the fourth submarine.

Ironically one of the matters that was not touched on, except briefly by the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright), is that as the so-called peace dividend becomes a reality, and it should, the need for the nuclear deterrent becomes that much greater. As we prepare to take the first risks on the ground with conventional forces, the nuclear deterrent, which has kept the peace in Europe for the past 45 years, must remain.

The difficulty about having a robust debate is that we just do not know Labour's policy. If we believe the Labour party, it intends to cancel the fourth submarine and to negotiate away our existing capability in return for precious little. That would mean that ultimately we would have no independent deterrent of any kind while the Soviet Union would retain a large part of its enormous nuclear arsenal.

Whose is the authentic voice of the Opposition? I have posed that question before in the House. Is it that of the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert) or of the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy), or is it the voice of those whom the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) referred to yesterday as being on the "exotic fringes of the Labour party?" Perhaps I could remind the House of those who form that fringe. There is the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot), a former leader of the Labour party, and the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), a would-be contestant for the leadership. There are the hon. Members for Newham, North-West, for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) and for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone). I could continue the list, but those were the Opposition Members who spoke in yesterday's debate and in essence their speeches were totally against the nuclear deterrent in any

[Mr. Cecil Franks]

shape or form. We do not know whether the hon. Member for Clackmannan is the authentic voice of the Labour party because he chose to remain silent on the issue. I hope that whichever Opposition Member replies to the debate he will make some reference to the nuclear deterrent.

The cancellation of the fourth Trident submarine would, in defence terms, be a disaster. But in economic terms it would be an utter disaster for my constituency. It would destroy the local economy. Nationally, 27,000 jobs depend on the nuclear deterrent, and in the shipyards thousands of people would lose their jobs overnight. It is a cruel deception for Opposition spokesmen to say when they visit the shipyards every two or three years that they will cancel the Trident submarines and switch to building surface vessels or more conventional submarines as though that could happen overnight.

When the Opposition defence spokesman visits Barrow and Furness and tells the people in the shipyards there that they need not worry because the Labour party will cancel the fourth submarine on a Saturday morning and on a Monday morning they will all be building new submarines or new surface vessels, let him explain how, with a snap of the fingers, all the design work can be done, all the materials can be ordered and all the negotiations carried out with the Ministry of Defence. The reality is that the Opposition's policies mean utter disaster for my constituency.

Only three or four years ago the Opposition told us that the cost of Trident had risen to £13 billion. When the hon. Member for Clackmannan became the Opposition's defence spokesman, he gave a figure of £14 billion. The figure given in the estimates is £9·38 billion. This is the fourth successive year in which the cost of the programme has been reduced. It represents a mere 3 per cent. of the defence budget for the next 20 years. It is probably the most cost-effective weapon that Britain has ever had for preserving the peace.

I close by picking up a previous comment. NATO has surely been the most successful defensive alliance in history. It has preserved the peace without ever having to fire a single shot. I am proud that my constituency has been able to play its part and make a contribution to the preservation of peace for so many years.

6.32 pm

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): It is a pleasure to speak in today's debate. Like other hon. Members, I noted from the front page of the *Observer* on Sunday that the service chiefs do not have confidence in the Ministers at the Ministry of Defence, and in that they are two short steps behind the British public.

If Ministers are organising a debate with political overtones, I congratulate them. Defence, like all other aspects of Government, requires political decision-making. However, I am sceptical about that. That is not because the Minister of State wants a peace dividend—far from it. This is another exercise in saving money to save the Government's neck on the poll tax. The Government have to find money in any way possible before the next election, and all Departments are included.

Like other hon. Members, I warn the Government that in paragraph 2.6 of its latest report the Select Committee on Defence said:

> "It is essential that any changes in defence expenditure reflect a planned and orderly process of matching commitments and resources."

Service personnel and everyone else are owed that. Ministers should go about their review on that basis, not simply to save a few bob to save their necks at the general election.

The White Paper fails to appreciate the scale of the changes and the challenges involved. I was unable to be present yesterday, but I saw from *Hansard* that hon. Members said that we should have another White Paper in the autumn to reflect the prevailing situation. I heartily endorse such comments.

At the weekend I was reading a book by Robert McNamara, a former American Defence Secretary, entitled "Out of the Cold". I recommend it to the Secretary of State and his Ministers. He referred to a time in June 1963, which is relevant to today, when President Kennedy delivered an address at the American university in Washington DC when he said:

> "History teaches that enmities between nations, as between individuals, do not last forever. However fixed our likes and dislikes may seem, the tide of time and events will often bring surprising changes in the relations between nations and neighbors. . .We are both"—

east and west—

> "devoting massive sums of money to weapons that could be better devoted to combating ignorance, poverty and disease. We are both caught up in a vicious and dangerous cycle in which suspicion on one side breeds suspicion on the other and new weapons beget counterweapons. . .We must, therefore, persevere in the search for peace in the hope that constructive changes within the Communist bloc might bring within reach solutions which now seem beyond us. We must conduct our affairs in such a way that it becomes in the Communists' interest to agree on a genuine peace."

Six weeks later, on 25 July 1963, the United States, the Soviet Union and Britain signed the limited test ban treaty and agreed not to test nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, under water or in space. That historic speech by the President of America set the climate for change and for progress in the arms race. We are at the same stage today. Such a climate could be set by the Secretary of State for Defence and the Government. But instead we get the same old rhetoric, chewed up, and we get the sort of abuse—that is all that I can call it—that we heard from the Minister of State at the Dispatch Box today. At a time of great historic change the Minister can do no more than abuse the Labour party. The defence estimates are the Government's responsibility, but they have done nothing to create a climate for change.

There may be a similarity between the Government's approach and that of President Reagan in 1980-88. During those eight years, $2·4 trillion was spent on defence. Notwithstanding the comments of three or four former Secretaries for Defence, including McNamara, McGeorge Bundy and others, President Reagan decided to go ahead and spend that massive sum. What did he do? Some may say that he brought the cold war to an end. Why? Because he brought the Russians to their knees. It took a leader such as Gorbachev to say, "Wait a minute. Where are we going from here? Can we afford to go further?" When Gorbachev witnessed his people in poverty and despair he said that enough was enough. That is where President Reagan and the other cold war warriors have got us to today.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): Will the hon. Gentleman respond to the comment of my right hon. Friend the

Secretary of State for Defence yesterday when he pointed out to the House that one new nuclear submarine was being launched every six weeks in the Soviet Union and two aircraft, six tanks and one missile are produced every day?

Mr. McFall: I do not want to take up too much time by replying to the hon. Gentleman; I am told that he has only just come into the Chamber.

I remember the evidence that was given many months ago to the United States Senate concerning increased expenditure in the Soviet Union. Five months later, the CIA admitted that that information was wrong and that Soviet military expenditure was decreasing. We are talking about a climate for change; perhaps if the hon. Gentleman listens he will learn something.

In the Soviet Union in the 1960s the growth rate was 6 per cent.; in the 1970s it was 4 per cent.; in the early 1980s, it was 2 per cent. However, in the last few years it has been stagnant. I understand that next year economic Ministers in the Soviet Union are budgeting for famine in some areas. Do the hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) and his hon. Friends think that the Soviet Union is genuine in its attempts to demilitarise and reduce its expenditure budget? If not, they are out of step with public opinion, as most people believe that the Soviet Union is making genuine attempts—President Gorbachev has certainly done so. The Prime Minister says that Gorbachev is genuine, but one is entitled to ask whether the Prime Minister is genuine.

In "Perestroika," Gorbachev spoke of a society in crisis. In Paul Kennedy's book "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers", his thesis was that, as the security commitments and economic strengths of the great powers move out of balance, those powers fall into decline. We must recognise that that is what is happening in the Soviet Union today, and adopt a magnanimous and generous approach. Although it is difficult to conceive of new patterns of relations, there is no doubt that the old threat structure is gone. Hardliners such as Richard Perle can now go to the Senate's armed services committee and say that there is no longer such a thing as the Warsaw pact.

As a member of the Defence Select Committee, I was in Vienna at the conventional forces in Europe talks only a month ago. We spoke to representatives of the eastern European countries—from the Warsaw pact. After speaking to them, I am in no doubt that there is no such thing as concerted action from the Warsaw pact countries. East Germany is the strongest force in those countries. It once had a standing army of 170,000, but that has now been reduced to 70,000, and it is witnessing daily desertions.

If, as some Conservative Members have suggested, a hardline authority could depose President Gorbachev, where does that leave us? In March 1990, the director of the CIA told the Senate's armed services committee that there was little chance that the Soviet hegemony would be restored in eastern Europe. It would be preoccupied with its own internal problems.

In his opening remarks, the Minister of State for the Armed Forces said that much had changed, but much was yet to change. What is yet to change is the Government's attitude. I hope that we can look forward to a Defence White Paper in the autumn that will show that their attitude has changed, and that they have caught up with reality.

6.43 pm

Sir Michael Marshall (Arundel): I am glad to follow the hon. Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall), who I know takes a keen interest in these matters in the Select Committee on Defence.

I wish not only to recognise the opportunities that the defence review provides, but to turn to the problems—and, hopefully, some of the solutions—that we can explore. I have a background and an interest in industry and I take this opportunity to remind the House of my long-standing interest in British Aerospace. With the convergence of civil and military matters, further opportunities are being opened up for companies with which I am associated, if only on the fringe. Those companies are listed in the Register of Members' Interests.

Clearly, the British Aerospace decision on Tornadoes overshadowed yesterday's speeches. It is unnecessary for me to produce further arguments today—the existing arguments speak for themselves, and the problem relating to jobs at Wharton is plain. I do not speak only for British Aerospace—the problem goes far wider. As my hon. Friends will recognise, avionics manufacturers all over the country will now face severe difficulties. For instance, the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) was right to point out yesterday that the decision on Challenger 2 had important long-term implications for Leeds and Newcastle. I wonder how much my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces can tell us—his reply may have been foreshadowed by the Secretary of State—about the thinking process that must be involved in further decisions. Many hon. Members will no doubt pursue points of detail because of their various constituency interests.

One of the most obvious needs is the need to reflect the current inflation position. I pay tribute to the Defence Select Committee—on which I had the privilege to serve for five years—for rightly putting that in a context that causes continuing concern. The Secretary of State was right to emphasise in his opening remarks that there should be no turning on or off of the defence tap. The 10 to 15-year cycle for high technology equipment is, I think, well understood by all hon. Members participating in the debate. I express my appreciation to my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement for what I took to be reaffirmation of the long-term future of the European fighter aircraft, both in his comments in the House and in his talk to the Royal Aeronautical Society.

We should remind ourselves of the substantial level of research and development commitment throughout the defence industrial structure. That has an impact on jobs, training and, above all, education. British Aerospace, for example, is recruiting 1,000 graduates a year. Much of that is predicated on what has previously been seen as a long-term, relatively stable programme of defence commitment. All hon. Members must recognise the challenges presented to British Aerospace, and to other companies seeking to diversify. Huge investments are involved—for example, £500 million in the Honda-Rover partnership. There are cumulative pressures, not only on defence, but in other areas, which could have a vital effect on the country's largest exporter.

There will also be an effect on British service personnel and those working within the Ministry of Defence. I pay tribute, as others have done, to the great dedication of those who serve us, and who embark on their careers

[Sir Michael Marshall]

assuming that they have a long-term future. A defence review means uncertainty and worry about their own long-term plans.

Will my hon. Friend the Minister and his Department bend their collective mind to the privatisation of a whole range of services currently carried out within the armed services and the Ministry of Defence? I remind my hon. Friend of the contacts that I have had in the past as the chairman of the information technology committee, and draw a comparison with the Defence Department in the United States, which contracts out substantial amounts of in-service activity within military units. The reaction from within the traditional structure of the Ministry of Defence has not been encouraging and there has been a tendency to use security as an excuse for not pursuing further developments. I hope that Ministers will give serious thought to that as the American experience shows that contracting out brings greater flexibility. A substantial defence establishment creates special difficulties in the process of change. Nimrod and other long-term procurement programmes often experience difficulties because they seem to become locked in to reinforcing their own failures. That could be tackled if much of the procurement process was contracted out. I therefore ask Ministers to be bold and imaginative.

We must examine the political dimensions in the context of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's links with parliamentarians from the Soviet Union, and from central and eastern Europe. Many of my right hon. and hon. Friends have been involved in that process in recent weeks. Some of our thinking on these matters was perhaps brought to a head at the IPU conference on disarmament held in Bonn last month, which was attended by the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill). I am bound to say, if it does not embarrass him unduly, that he gave a sparkling performance which was in some contrast to the inhibitions that he feels when he gets back home. He was ably supported by my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce) who acted as rapporteur. Many important considerations were discussed at that conference, at which 61 countries were represented.

My overwhelming impression was how much the issue with which we are now concerned has become a common problem throughout the European family. One of the highlights of that gathering was hearing the views of Colonel General Chervov, the head of the directorate of Soviet chiefs of staff, and Mr. Novozhilov, the deputy on the Supreme Soviet committee who also happens to be head of Ilyushin aircraft, who made the same point about the time lag of decades in the so-called peace dividend and said that they would need to think about the manpower implications for the Russian forces in East Germany and throughout Russia, the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

I urge all right hon. and hon. Members to take every opportunity to seek international agreement in trying to resolve those problems. I highlight only the confidence and security building measures such as the opening up of military budgets to wider scrutiny. I emphasise the real opportunity that verification provides, with converging civil and military technology, to use space activities through the European Space Agency and through our own expertise in remote sensing at RAE Farnborough to bring together shared information, technology and job creation.

I urge my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, when he speaks to the parliamentary space committee tomorrow on defence aspects of space, to bend his mind seriously to those problems. I know that there are difficulties about resolution, but there are ways ahead.

That brings me to my final suggestion for international agreement on military redeployment. We should examine the way which we can use our military for international disaster relief activities. I remind the House that this is the United Nations decade of international disaster relief. The estimates before us remind us of the work done by our own military in relation to the storms in Britain earlier this year and the activities that our forces have undertaken overseas in many challenging situations. I do not in any way sell those achievements short, but with the perennial problems of flooding in Bangladesh and the famines in vast drought-affected areas of Africa, surely the coming together of international military resources, communications, transport and medical supply provide a real chance for us to share that knowledge and expertise. If we can begin to work in that direction—a conference in London on 13 July will seek to take the matter further, and many right hon. and hon. Members are involved—we can look for genuine peace dividends from which we can all benefit.

6.52 pm

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): I have now been in the House for seven years, and in that time I have listened to most of the defence debates and taken part in at least half of them. From that standpoint I must express my regret that I missed yesterday's debate. I tried to make up for that involuntary absence by reading the *Official Report* today.

My second regret is what I have heard this afternoon. I regret that we are wasting an opportunity and that so much time should have been frittered away on old, partisan, party political bickering among hon. Members on both sides of the House, but principally from the Government, who cannot find the old hacking horses that they have used in previous debates. It was quite pathetic to hear it today in technicolour, panoramic and melodramatic form from the Minister of State for the Armed Forces. The Minister displayed the degree to which the Government are bereft of any insight into the current situation.

As I tried to point out to the Minister, circumstances have changed so dramatically and rapidly in the 12 months that no one anywhere knows exactly where we stand. We would be spending our time better trying to collect our wisdom and analysing collectively, not only in the interests of our nation and in the European interests, but in the broader interest of humanity, how best to resolve the situation. The current instability gives us an opportunity that we should be seizing with both hands. We have the opportunity to extend the hand of assistance, which I have mentioned on more than one occasion. I referred to it on the occasion when I spoke from the Dispatch Box. If we do not extend the hand of support and help to Mikhail Gorbachev, we must take the consequences that must follow that denial.

My time is limited, so I shall confine myself to two aspects of our present stance. The Minister made a sideways and somewhat disparaging reference to the Labour party's references to flexible response. Let me explain the situation as I see it as a humble Back-Bench

Labour Member. What is a flexible response? For those who are uninitiated in the jargon of NATO, "flexible response" is a euphemism for fighting a conventional war for about five days and then, finding oneself losing, claiming the right to nuke the attacker. In other words, we can say to an aggressor, "If you are beating us with conventional weapons, we can nuke you." Of course I do not mean you, Mr. Speaker: I mean the Soviet bloc.

How has flexible response changed in the past 12 months? We have had negotiations on reductions in conventional weaponry. The agreed levels of conventional arms established ceilings that we could not reach, so we do not have to make any reductions. If we had met all our NATO commitments to the full, we should now be in a position of great strength. We are in a measurably stronger position now than we have been in the past. According to current assessments, we could withstand conventional attack for much longer than five days, so why do we need a flexible response?

I recently had the privilege of visiting the United States and attending talks with representatives of their Defence Department, their Foreign Affairs Department and their National Security Council. It appears that the United States no longer believes that "flexible response" means what it meant in the past. It was stated by those agencies and by the think tank known as the Rand Corporation that the United States will have to find another definition of "flexible response". Possibly they will retain the same expression but work out a different definition. They are already thinking along lines that are not yet being considered by our own Government, as appeared from the Minister's speech today.

I want now to move from the questions that surround that flexible response and what the Government may have in mind, remembering that they will shortly be meeting senior American representatives, and to go on to the concept of first use. Behind the flexible response there has always been NATO's position that, despite commitments from the Soviet bloc that it would not engage in the first use of nuclear weapons, we reserve the right, in answer to conventional, biochemical or chemical supremacy or to nuclear attack, to choose the time to use our nuclear weapons.

I see that the Minister is listening carefully and I thank him for that. I want to point out to him the danger of holding on to the first use concept. At this time, above all, for us to retain the concept of first use in the prospect of any kind of supremacy, whether biological, conventional or chemical, opens the door—and other speakers have said this, but I want to emphasise it—for any international headbanger to justify the possession of nuclear weapons. We should be creating a climate in which—to use an Americanism which I do not like but which is commonly used—we burn down nuclear stockpiles, provide a reason for the non-possession of nuclear weapons and remove any kind of justifiable excuse on which anyone may seize to persuade an electorate that their country should acquire nuclear weapons in the future.

At a time when the Soviet bloc, which has always been held up as a great threat, is gladly, willingly and, in some instances, unilaterally throwing its weapons away at a rate of knots and reducing its nuclear stockpile at a speed that is positively dazzling, how can the Government justify to the British electorate considering increasing our nuclear weaponry and improving the means of delivery? How can the British electorate understand that and, which is more important, how can the electorates of the nations that are our allies on the continent accept that when we enter the present round of disarmament? I shall be looking for the answers to those questions in the Minister's winding-up speech tonight.

7.2 pm

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): It was 50 years ago yesterday in this place that Winston Churchill, referring to Adolf Hitler, said:

> "If we are to stand up to him all Europe may be free, and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands".—[*Official Report*, 18 June 1940; Vol. 362, c. 60.]

That was a famous speech by Winston Churchill and it has some relevance to our debate today on these important defence estimates. In many respects, we have been standing up to the Soviet bear for the past 40 years.

For the first time in a generation, we are beginning to see the peace dividend. That dividend is the reduction in tension, which has been brought about not by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, but by the tough stand taken by successive Conservative Governments in Britain and by the NATO alliance. That dividend has been achieved despite the unremitting hostility of the Labour party to all this Government's tough policies. I make no apology to the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) in saying that. There is a difference of view between the Government and the Opposition and it is important that such differences are thrashed out.

Yesterday the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) was frank enough to admit that the attractiveness of past calls for defence cuts may have been exaggerated and that the Opposition's posture then was unsustainable. However, he seemed to say, "Don't worry, chaps. It is a sustainable posture now." The Labour party has continually resisted the tough measures that have brought about the peace dividend.

It can reasonably be said that investment by the countries of the NATO alliance in the defence of those countries has led to the "broad, sunlit" conditions that are beginning to be experienced in Europe. That is an exciting prospect. I rejoice wholeheartedly in the rejection of socialism everywhere in Europe, except in Bulgaria and on the Opposition Benches. However, it is important that we are not lulled into a false sense of security.

Throughout my lifetime I have lived with one certainty —the certainty of the iron curtain. To the left was good—that was us—and on the other side were the baddies—the communists. That balance of terror and that certainty have, in many respects, kept the peace in Europe for the past 40 years. As a child, I lived in Germany and I lived nearer the iron curtain than, I suspect, most hon. Members have done. I spent eight years in Germany and I was there as a child when the Berlin wall was built. I shall never forget the building of that wall, nor the dramatic division between our two systems which the wall exemplified. Equally, its destruction exemplified the removal in part of the tyranny that has been exercised over the peoples of eastern Europe for the past 45 years.

I welcome the collapse of the communist system, but we are undoubtedly moving into uncertain times. The balance of terror, which undoubtedly caused tension, nevertheless kept the peace. We are now moving into a period of great uncertainty. The hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) hit the nail on the head when he referred to the myriad changes taking place and the dangers that they

[Mr. Gerald Howarth]

represent. We need think only of events in Romania and the collapse of the Soviet empire. The real question is how long-standing are the changes now taking place in eastern Europe. I do not believe that we can yet determine what the pattern of eastern Europe will be, let alone how long Mr. Gorbachev will last and whether he will be replaced by Mr. Yeltsin or someone else. Ultimately, it is capabilities and not intentions that count.

As we know, the capabilities of the Soviet Union are substantially greater than ours. Their main battle tanks outnumber ours by 49,500 to 24,000—twice as many. It has 42,500 artillery pieces against 18,000 in NATO. It has 11,600 combat aircraft against 6,000. There are 4 million in the armed forces in the Warsaw pact countries and 3 million in NATO. Those are the facts of the capabilities. The hon. Member for Stockton, North is entitled to feel a certain degree of euphoria, which is felt by all of us in the nation, about the changes taking place. However, in the face of the evidence of the capabilities, we are simply not in a position to beat all our swords into ploughshares. As Lieutenant General Horst Jungkurth, the Luftwaffe chief of staff, has said:

"Even after the force reductions, the Soviet Union will remain the strongest military power in Europe."

Forty per cent. of all expenditure on defence goes on procurement. I welcome the decision to proceed with the EH101 Merlin with the Rolls-Royce RTM322 engine. That is excellent news not only for that company, but for the prospects for anti-submarine warfare operations. I hope that consideration will be given to looking at the versatile air mobile variant for the battlefield.

On the European fighter aircraft, we need a new replacement aircraft for the aging F4J Phantoms and for the Jaguars. There are a number of reasons why the European fighter aircraft should go ahead. First, we would be building on a most successful collaboration with our European partners, notably the Tornado. Secondly, Soviet capabilities warrant our adoption of the EFA. The SU27 and the Mig 29 have taken the west by surprise by their sophistication and their capabilities. That point was made by a number of Opposition Members.

The Soviet Union has much more sophisticated kit than hitherto. It is vital, if taxpayers' money is to be spent on the defence of the realm, to make sure that we do not play at it but that we provide our services with the appropriate equipment to meet the threat. The EFA meets that requirement. In the strategic sense, in this of all years—the 50th anniversary of the battle of Britain—we must not forget the lesson of the importance of air superiority. The EFA will serve that purpose.

Many hon. Members have paid tribute to the many and various roles which service personnel perform while defending our nation, this Parliament, free speech, all our institutions and everything that we stand for, but nobody has yet paid tribute to British industry. I pay tribute to those who build the equipment that provides the wherewithal to enable our forces to defend us and to ensure that we enjoy the peace. The defence estimates are presented in an admirable form; they can be easily understood not just by aficionados of military matters but by the general public. They illustrate the enormous success of British industry.

Military imports amounted to £672 million last year compared with exports of £2,408 million. The nation can take pride in British manufacturing industry's proud record. The efforts of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister are to be commended.

There is a window at the Rolls-Royce factory in Derby that is an admirable illustration of the point. It is dedicated to the battle of Britain pilots who turned the work of our hands into the salvation of our country. The performance of British industry has done that in the past 40 years.

I conclude——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. Regrettably, the hon. Gentleman has had his time. He must bring his speech to a close.

7.13 pm

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): It is not my intention to follow the line taken by the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth). I was most intrigued by the remarks of the hon. Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks). He wanted a vigorous debate but he did not stay long enough to participate in it. I intended to take up some of the points that he made on the strategic deterrent.

There is a maternity hospital in my constituency. It is not very often that male Members of Parliament visit such establishments, but I had the opportunity to do so last week. I reflected on the great advances that have been made in medical science, yet it is still a struggle for a baby to be born. That has to be contrasted with all the effort and energy that is devoted to killing human beings.

We cannot anticipate what will happen tomorrow, or even today. The hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) summed it up by saying that as we have lost an enemy we are now struggling to find a role for all the military equipment that we have marshalled over the years in anticipation of the monolithic structure of the Warsaw pact breaking through in central Europe and NATO having to deploy inadequate conventional forces, resulting in our acceptance of the doctrine of flexible response, so characteristically described by the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook). That threat no longer exists.

With hindsight, we can analyse the reasons why this is happening. We do not hear a great deal about the strategic defence initiative, or about Chernobyl. One of the most significant features in President Gorbachev's altered attitude is the fact that acres and acres of the Soviet union's soil are still unusable. Scotland and Wales also have acres and acres of soil that are still unusable. President Gorbachev saw the futility of embarking on a nuclear war that could not be won. That was a breakthrough in Soviet mentality—no longer the arrogance of, "We will bury you", because a nuclear war would kill us all.

Competition in arms procurement and arms producion between the United States and the Soviet Union has ceased; if not reversed, it has certainly been halted. That is significant because those two super-powers have realised the stupidity of continuing to compete and produce weaponry so preposterous in its magnitude as to annihilate the whole human race.

I am not being nasty when I challenge the Ministry of Defence to explain what is meant by "Options for Change". The Minister of State for the Armed Forces explained the background to his thinking which seems to be that the Warsaw pact is disintegrating. There are real prospects of no role for CFE. Should we deploy

short-range nuclear weapons and not give them up? Some think that air-launched nuclear missiles should no longer be deployed in Germany. We want to keep NATO in place for stability, but it will be a different NATO with a political, not necessarily a military, thrust.

The one certainty, it is argued, is that we must remain a strategic nuclear power. I cannot grasp that. The argument is that Britain must remain a strategic nuclear power because we have unique responsibilities in the world. Many hon. Members have made that point, but I fail to grasp it. I accepted, perhaps naively or wrongly, up to Polaris that we should continue to be a nuclear power because it was there and would be difficult to get rid of. When I stood as a Labour candidate in the election campaign I said that we should decommission Polaris. We now have a unique opportunity to say that enough is enough, because the first Trident will not be commissioned and in service until the mid-1990s, or late 1994. We do not know the exact terminology—perhaps the Minister will make it clearer in his reply—but we know that President Bush has said, "Whatever you do, do not say anything in your discussions with the Soviet Union about our 'commitment' to provide the D5 missiles because we do not want that muddying the waters." It is extremely doubtful whether, in the context of strategic arms reductions, the United States would feel obliged to continue the Polaris-type arrangements and agreements and to give the United Kingdom D5s—either to use in future discussions or at all.

That would pose a particular problem for an incoming Labour Government. I am not now privy to the Labour party's defence proposals; the House may be surprised to learn that I was never really privy to them. But, as I understand the Labour party's policy, it is proposed that we should have only three Trident-type boats, despite the view expressed yesterday by the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert) that four was the minimum. But the Labour party, in its wisdom, now says that we should have three. In mid-1994—perhaps at the end of 1993—the boats will be sailed over and the Labour Government will say to the United States Government, "Please can we now have 16 D5s?" The Labour party thinks that the United States will give us those D5s for use in the negotiations. That is an absurd proposition, and it will not hold water.

I have a constituency interest in the matter. I welcome the great breakthrough—perhaps not as great as all that—that the proposal to establish a defence diversification agency represents. I do not know what the blazes that means in terms of the new-found supply-side socialist economics of the Labour party; perhaps someone will tell me. But I welcome the thought process, and I will tell the Government why: the market does not apply in the procurement of defence equipment. The Government call defence equipment into being because of their strategic tactical requirements. They cannot then say, "Let the market solve the problem" when they cancel orders or hold up repayments. That cannot be done, and it certainly cannot be done in the dockyards. It could not be done at Vickers, which is essentially a one-product yard. If anyone—even Lord Chalfont—thinks that they are going to build frigates and destroyers at Vickers, he must be stoned out of his tiny head because the overheads would kill it. They might be built at Cammell's, although I do not have time to go into the details.

The Government cannot stand back from this one. Whatever emerges from "Options for Change", those who have been praised by the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood—or Cannock and British industry—are entitled to know what the Government propose to do to support them, particularly in Scotland. What discussions will they have with Scottish Enterprise? I do not think very much of that organisation, but it is a Government organisation. In Fife, in particular, where we depend heavily on the defence industry, it is essential that the Government should not stand back and say, "Let the market solve the problem." That will not be good enough. If they say that, all hell will be let loose. We have a fight on for Ravenscraig just now. And what a fight the Government will have on their hands if they stand back and let the dockyards and other defence-related industries in Fife go to the wall because of their incompetence.

7.23 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): It is always interesting to follow the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas). No one doubts that he has always had a view on defence matters different from that of many of his Front-Bench colleagues—a view that has often been more realistic than the views of his Front-Bench team.

I found the earlier comments about the peace dividend extremely interesting. To my generation, the peace dividend meant not having wars. In 1945, we were determined that never again should there be a war in Europe. That is, and has been, the peace dividend that has resulted from action taken by successive Governments and by NATO.

The changes in Europe and the USSR, and instability in the middle east and elsewhere, present dangers, new challenges and opportunities. No doubt advice on how to deal with the new circumstances will be coming to the Government from all quarters. I shall refer briefly to only one of the many pieces of advice that I have read recently. It appeared in one of the national daily newspapers and was written by a distinguished former serving officer, Lord Carver. He referred to an old chestnut of his, saying that the Air Force was a temporary development in the evolution of war capability and equipment. In this year of the 50th anniversary of the battle of Britain, we must be glad indeed of that temporary development. I trust that the old chestnut will be treated with interest, as in the past, and ignored.

The House will know of my interest in this matter, which I must now declare: I am still a serving officer in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. It will not surprise the House, therefore, to learn that I propose to spend much of my time talking about Air Force matters.

Low flying is, and will remain, a matter of considerable interest to Ministers. Let me put my position on the line. I support the need for low flying. Royal Air Force pilots must never be asked to go into operational conditions in which they are not equipped to deal with enemy radar and to get beneath it and the surface-to-air missile capability.

The changes in eastern Europe have presented us with a new opportunity. The warning time has now increased, although I would not like to say whether it is now four, five or six weeks. Is it not now time to consider how long it would take pilots to progress from 500 ft, if that was the height at which they were carrying out their sorties, down to the operational level required for action? In my view, we

[Mr. Bill Walker]

should keep a small number of squadrons at low-level capability all the time, as they might have to be deployed at 48 hours' notice. But the remainder of the Royal Air Force now needs to have an adaptable capability. I wonder how many weeks it would take to train down from 500 ft to the operational levels that would be required. I say that as a former member of the sixth squadron, which was the first of the tank-busting Royal Air Force squadrons.

Mr. Douglas: Were you?

Mr. Walker: Yes. I served in sixth squadron many years ago—no doubt before the hon. Gentleman had an interest in these matters.

Let me deal now with the subject of search and rescue. The replacement of the Wessex helicopters is now overdue and I hope that they will soon be replaced with Sea Kings, particularly at RAF Leuchars, the station that serves my constituency. We are most grateful for the splendid job that the station does year in, year out. I was pleased to hear what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said yesterday about United Kingdom air defence. In the final analysis, if we cannot defend the skies over these islands, these islands cannot be defended. That is why the European fighter aircraft will become increasingly important and why I was pleased by the statement made yesterday about EFA.

I come now to a subject that has meant much to me for most of my adult life, the reserve and auxiliary forces. I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), the inspector-general of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, is not with us because his interest in this and mine have coincided for many years. The reserve forces should be manned by individuals who have volunteered, but all those engaged in regular engagements should, as a matter of course, have included in their commitments a commitment to volunteer reserve and reserve forces activity until retirement age. Many people to whom I have spoken would be delighted to carry out those duties. That is particularly true of many former fast jet pilots who are now flying with airlines.

I now refer to the need for an out-of-area capability. We will need an air mobile force that is linked with amphibious forces which can intervene with great mobility and adequate fire power to be able to concentrate on areas in which the unexpected happens. Whatever may be said, most incidents occur unexpectedly. The most recent that we can think of is the Falklands incident.

Hon. Members properly spend much time talking about equipment, yet our most valuable asset must be the people. The Royal Air Force has always recruited from all socio-economic groups. The ability to do the job was what mattered. With demographic changes and competition for suitable candidates, the regular reserve and the auxiliary air force will find themselves increasingly competing. That will make air cadets become more important. An in-depth review of the future role of the air cadets is now required. The Taylor report of about 30 years ago is no longer relevant.

My hon. Friend will be aware of problems in recruiting and retaining Royal Air Force RO staff at headquarters air cadets, which are very much under strength. The present regional structure of the air cadets and the need to justify the appointment of regional commandants must also be examined. Relations between air cadets and volunteer and auxiliary units, together with the responsibility and functions of the Air Cadet Council, should be examined in depth. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister of State will say whether my fears about the future of the flying scholarship scheme are well founded.

There is much more that I would have wished to say but could not because of the time limit on speeches. I have concentrated narrowly on matters in which I have direct responsibility in my duties as a volunteer reserve officer, and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister of State will understand that.

7.31 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): With one or two depressing exceptions, mainly on the Conservative side of the House, the theme of the debate has been one of turning swords into ploughshares. I fear that I am bucking the trend, having left my former Front Bench agriculture position to take up a place on the Defence Select Committee. However, I welcome this opportunity to make some comments on the estimates and on the future options for defence at this turning point in European and global history.

I have the incalculable personal privilege of being a member of what is probably the first generation of Scots ever to have been spared the horror of going to war. I am grateful for that, and I want my sons, and children throughout the world, to enjoy the benefits of peace and stability.

Some people say that the 40 years of stability are entirely attributable to nuclear deterrence. It has certainly been a factor. There has also been a perverse form of stability in inherent super-power confrontation. An iron curtain can pose fewer risks than a broken fence. I have already indicated that I have never been in uniform, but there is more than enough military tradition in my family and in my constituency for me to appreciate the value and importance of the armed forces and the regimental structure to which reference has been made. I hope that we have learnt enough from history to understand the importance of being prepared to meet threats. Perhaps the most recent example of the high price of ill-considered defence cuts is the saga of the Falklands invasion.

The question today is how best to adjust our defence priorities to maintain effective security in Europe and elsewhere while releasing as much as possible of the defence budget for alternative investment in our society and our economy. We should pursue that principle nationally and internationally. Indeed, that must be the key issue of the decade. If we get it right we shall achieve a great deal, but if we get it wrong we could set the scene for another era of conflict in the future. In that sense, our deliberations are crucial.

As a simple Scottish farmer turned politician, with the limited authority of just two weeks on the Defence Select Committee, I shall not have the effrontery to make specific proposals for changes in defence strategies and budgets, but I shall demand a properly informed public debate involving all those who should be consulted before major decisions are made. Clearly, a Government defence review is under way, but I do not think that the current Mutt and Jeff act between the Secretary of State and the Minister of

State for Defence Procurement should be regarded as a proper way of conducting such a review. We need a proper review to be conducted in public.

I have read yesterday's debate and today's newspapers, and I see that the Minister of State has cancelled an order for 33 Tornadoes worth £600 million. That may be a good idea—it will certainly cause much rejoicing in my constituency because it will lead to a small reduction in low flying training—but it was not a considered decision. It is just another example of the shopping basket economics with which we have become familiar under the present Administration—if the wage packet is smaller than expected, one can do without light bulbs or mouse traps this week, but if one goes on like that all year one will end up in total darkness or overrun by rodents. That is no way to run a household, let alone manage the defence of the nation. The Select Committee on Defence has clearly said that

> "Nothing could be more foolish. It is essential that any changes in defence expenditure reflect a planned and orderly process of matching commitments and resources. Arbitrary cash cuts, and deliberate attrition by inflation make prudent management of the defence budget next to impossible."

The Government should heed that consideration.

By all means let us consider whether we need new aircraft or tanks, whether we can scale down the Rhine army, or even whether we can extricate ourselves from the Trident situation, but let us make such decisions in the course of a genuine national and international defence review. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which includes all 35 European and north Atlantic countries, is an ideal framework within which to work towards that objective. We must take account of the consequences for the forces of changes in policies, rehousing members of the forces who may be demobilised, and finding alternative jobs for service men.

As a Lothian Member of Parliament with constituents who work for Ferranti—a further 550 job losses were announced yesterday—I make a strong plea for part of the savings made by defence cuts to be specifically earmarked for a diversification programme to help high-tech companies to develop new products and markets. I was pleased to hear the Minister of State give an assurance today that the EFA programme is safe at this stage.

As we approach the options for future defence plans, we must recognise the actual prospects for peace and conflict in future. Thank God the threat of super-power confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw pact has virtually disappeared. I say, "Thank God," but perhaps it would be more appropriate to thank Mr. Gorbachev. There are certainly no thanks to the British Prime Minister, who has been rattling sabres and modernising nuclear weapons while other Governments have striven to reduce risks and threats. But every silver lining has a cloud, and the collapse of Soviet central authority is creating a vacuum with new risks of regional strife.

Those of us who remember our lessons at school about the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the "sick man of Europe" will recall that just such a power vacuum in the Balkans set the scene for the first world war and that places such as Moldavia and Serbia, which are again figuring in the headlines, featured very prominently in that mayhem. There are still festering racial and national problems in eastern Europe, and it would be wise for any European security framework to include a capacity to contain such problems. We in this country have experience of that kind with our role in Northern Ireland. There is also Europe's southern flank and the interface with the middle east. Finally, we must remember Britain's wider residual responsibilities in other parts of the world, and our ability to support the United Nations and to render assistance after natural disasters.

Those are the areas on which we should concentrate our military attention beyond our own shores in the foreseeable future. It is difficult to imagine what possible role a Trident force could have in any of the scenarios that I have described. Although I accept that nuclear weapons cannot be uninvented, I take Enoch Powell's view that British nuclear weapons have about as much deterrent credibility as a threat of national suicide. We would be wise to take advantage of the new circumstances prevailing in Europe and in the world to achieve a genuine multilateral reduction in nuclear weapons—which is now genuinely feasible, thank goodness.

We have unprecedented opportunities to reduce the risk of conflict and to take advantage of substantial savings, but there will still be an important role for well-trained, well-equipped, highly flexible and highly mobile land, sea and air forces, committed to co-operating with our European neighbours. Those should be the objectives of the defence review. I hope that we can establish a consensus in our country to achieve those objectives.

7.40 pm

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): Before referring to the defence estimates, I should like to say a few words about the decision not to proceed with the eighth batch of Tornado. Obviously, that has significance for the north-west, but it also has great significance for the future of the whole Tornado programme. Production will end in another two or three years unless more orders are placed either by our Government or by other states. That point needs to be made because otherwise there will be a gap between the end of Tornado production and the build-up of European fighter aircraft production.

I regret that decision, not only because of its effect on jobs in Lancashire, but because I am not clear why the decision was made. Was it to reduce pressure on the defence budget this year? As I understand it, the aircraft that would have been ordered would not have been part of this year's defence budget, but would largely have been paid for in the future. Is it part of a much more long-term plan to reduce the number of combat aircraft available to the Air Force? Was the decision taken after full consultation and agreement with the Air Force board? I should especially like to know what commitment the original batch of aircraft was ordered to meet because the cancellation suggests that that commitment is no longer necessary. I should be grateful if my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State could mention some of those points when he replies to the debate or write to me later about them.

Having said that, I am pleased to note that at the same time as that decision was announced last night, it was made clear that the Government are still firmly committed to the European fighter aircraft. That commitment is vital if we are to maintain our present level of technology in that area of aviation. I wish—and still hope—that Opposition Members, and especially the official spokesmen of the

[Mr. Keith Mans]

Labour party, would fully commit the Labour party to the EFA programme because of its effect on our technological base in Lancashire.

Many hon. Members have referred to the change in the political climate since our previous debate on the defence estimates and many hon. Members have referred to cashing in the peace dividend. All that I would say is that we should not cash in that dividend prematurely. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made it clear that the Soviet Union still has a vast array of weaponry and, if anything, the technology of that weaponry has increased from a year or two ago. It would be a mistake if we cashed in the peace dividend now before we have achieved the force reductions in both NATO and the Warsaw pact which will mean that we can all live in security with lower arms expenditure.

Although I believe that it would be wrong to cash in the peace dividend now, it is none the less worth planning for that future. In so doing, we must first have a clear idea of the threat that we shall be facing in 10 or 15 years—if there is a threat. We also need to know our country's commitment in terms of military hardware. Following that discussion of commitments, we must consider the size of our armed forces and the levels and types of equipment. I believe that the consideration must be made in that order, not the other way round. It is wrong to cut weapons procurement before deciding on the commitments of one's armed services because one may have to scramble around, after cutting the weapons systems, to try to ascertain how one's present weapons and service men could best meet the commitments foisted on them. Again and again during the past 30 years, decisions on defence expenditure have been taken that way round instead of ensuring that we get our commitments right and follow that up with the necessary troop and equipment levels.

In that respect, the Tornado decision is very much a borderline one as it appears to put procurement decisions before those on commitment. However, it is important that we consider methods of reducing defence expenditure quickly other than cutting future procurement programmes. We could consider reducing the numbers of existing aircraft so that we can continue to use the Tornado in the foreseeable future. Instead of cutting the eighth batch of Tornado aircraft, it might have been better to cut the Buccaneer force and to use Tornado in that role, or to replace the air reconnaissance variant of Jaguar. That would also have the advantage of simplifying the structure of the Air Force round fewer aircraft, rather than round a multiplicity of types. When there are only a few of each type of aircraft, a multiplicity of types leads to increased maintenance, servicing, manning and training costs. Any reorganisation of the three services should look at simplifying equipment levels because fewer types should mean considerable financial savings.

We now have a unique opportunity to look closely at the organisation of our armed services—it is possibly our only such opportunity for the next 20 or 30 years. In considering our new commitments, we should also consider our command structure and question whether we need the present number of people in it. Indeed, I would go a bit further: I believe that it would be worth looking at the rank structure of the three services. With the reduced numbers available to us in the future, is it really necessary that the services are confined to a rank structure that has existed since just before the first world war? Perhaps we should opt for a simpler and more flexible structure, given that our future defence needs must be flexible.

We should also look more closely at ways of contracting out a little more of the hardware. Instead of buying all the equipment, there may be circumstances in which leasing could prove a more cost-effective way of running our armed services.

When we complete the review we shall have fewer service men. I hope that as a result of the way in which the review is carried out and the armed services are organised, those fewer service men will have modern up-to-date equipment and will not be left to man obsolete, old or antiquated equipment. In that respect it is even more important to take the route that I described simply because service men are going through difficult times generally and their future is uncertain. People in any organisation that is reducing in size want to know what their prospects are. It is vital for morale that we make certain that our armed services, even with smaller numbers of service men, have up-to-date equipment to fulfil the tasks for which we need them.

7.50 pm

Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): The hon. Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) showed that there is support even among Conservative Members for a thorough-going defence review. His comments on procurement policy should be taken up by the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman. I wish to consider the issue as a whole and the need for us as Europeans to consider how we can redeploy our resources to create a more secure Europe for the future. I also wish to speak briefly on one issue of deployment which I like to call the "over-the-hill" radar station to be located in Pembrokeshire.

Europe is spending £450 billion per year on the so-called defence industries. Clearly, in these new times, we must seek to change the way in which we deploy our resources. The problem with debates such as this is that so often, as the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) said, hon. Members begin their speeches by saying that changes are taking place but then rehearse the same old arguments.

The new context of political and military change in Europe requires new political, military and security thinking. In particular, we must move towards a way of thinking that demilitarises defence and leads us on to arguments about genuine security. We have a clear example of that before our very eyes. Within the European Community we now have a political structure in which states are integrated which were adversaries only a little earlier this century. No one believes any longer that we should solve inter-state conflicts in Europe by military means. We must think of a mechanism whereby we have a different conception of the relationship between the old blocs that used to divide Europe. We must demilitarise that relationship and create genuine security between previous members of the Warsaw pact and present members of NATO.

The old NATO argument was that the Warsaw pact had overwhelming conventional superiority, particularly in the central region of Europe. Now, with the changes that have taken place in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, we could argue that the western side of the

central region has superiority. Therefore, as we move towards conventional forces reduction agreements in Europe, we must consider how we can move rapidly beyond that to further reductions and particularly to the reduction of short-range nuclear weapons on mainland Europe.

The new framework of the security community should be the CSCE. Even leading members of NATO such as the author of the NATO Harmel report have suggested ways in which we can adapt the CSCE process to make it a successor process to that of NATO.

It saddens me to hear hon. Members, particularly Conservative Members, regurgitate the old arguments for a NATO alliance which predate the changes of the past year. On this Bench we would argue for a way of taking the positive aspects of the European Community and NATO experience together into a strengthened European framework which would provide for genuine common security. That must include the Soviet Union. If not, we should have extended the equivalent of a NATO alliance to the very borders of the Soviet Union—or at least the current borders. Clearly that would be unacceptable to the Soviet Union. We need a broad, flexible framework. It should provide a flexible response—not in military terms—to the new security situation.

That leads me on to the detailed, local point that I wish to make. The attention of the House has already been drawn today to the proposed installation of a new radar station at St. Davids. I draw that again to the attention of the House because it is perhaps the last example of the old thinking. Through the great courtesy of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, I have just received a copy of a memorandum of understanding of 28 April 1988. It was signed by the United States Government and the United Kingdom Government—the only Government whom St. Davids has, to date.

The fact that the document was signed two years ago shows clearly that the proposal for the radar station which includes the erection of a row half a mile long of 35 masts up to 135 ft. high in St. Davids belongs to the cold war period. It is not part of the forward thinking that we should now apply. I wish to ask several specific questions to which the Minister may respond either now or later in writing.

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement flew into St. Davids for a public meeting. On 16 May, the *Western Telegraph*, a reliable newspaper, reported that he gave the assurance:

"The Government will not use Crown immunity to force through the controversial 'over the horizon' radar project for St. Davids Airfield if the planning procedures go against the scheme."

At Question Time today the Minister referred to the "exigencies" of the planning process. I should like him to repeat on the record in the House that there will be no attempt to override the planning process if it turns out that the planning authority, the Pembrokeshire coast national park, decides to reject the formal planning clearance notification and the environmental impact assessment report, which may be negative about the proposal. Will that be the end of the story? I shall wait to hear a response on that. Perhaps it will be clearer than the response that I obtained from the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman about whether the project would be cancelled if the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) became Minister of State for Defence Procurement.

There are strong environmental, political and military objections to the proposed radar station. I was struck by the statement made this afternoon by the Minister of State for Defence Procurement that the deployment was entirely defensive. Yet the military jargon of annex I of the memorandum of understanding refers to the trials and to "targets of opportunity". Clearly the intention of the radar would be to observe movements of ships, aircraft and other vessels in the Norwegian area of the northern Atlantic.

Although the Minister denied that the deployment will have any offensive capability, it must be seen in the context of the other two similar stations which are being deployed by the United States military. Radar stations are not part of NATO's activities. We are always grateful that it is possible to obtain information from the United States Congress that we cannot obtain easily here. The committee on appropriations of the House of Representatives held discussions on the issue. The record prepared for it shows that the radar station is not included in an approved category of NATO expenditure. It is not expected that it will become eligible, so there will be no NATO funding. But there will be 90 per cent. funding by the "host nation". The United Kingdom Treasury would pay at least 90 per cent. of the cost of the exercise while 10 per cent. would be borne by the United States.

If we are looking for short-term, immediate, painless defence cuts, obviously the cancellation of the memorandum of understanding—before it is cancelled, I hope, by the United States Congress and the House—would be warmly welcomed not only in St. Davids but throughout the United Kingdom. The MOD must realise that by taking on St. Davids it is taking on the historical and cultural traditions of Wales. It could not have chosen a worse site. I assure the Minister that the Church in Wales will be extremely militant on this issue.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The 10 minute limit has now been lifted.

8 pm

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): I am grateful for this opportunity to speak because I represent the constituency in which British Aerospace's military aircraft division has its headquarters. The House can imagine that the cancellation announced by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement of the eighth-batch order for the Tornado is a matter of considerable discussion and concern there.

No one would like to roll back the clock to try to stop the remarkable events of the past 12 months in eastern Europe and in other parts of the world where peace has truly broken out. We must be cautious, however, because although we have speedily endorsed the moves of President Gorbachev and our Prime Minister towards achieving that peace and rejoice in what has happened in eastern Europe, we must reflect on the fact that the so-called experts did not predict those events. We still look to those experts for our guidance, but they failed to predict those events and the speed with which they happened. The experts do not have a particularly good track record, but

[Mr. Michael Jack]

achieving that peace and rejoice in what has happened in eastern Europe, we must reflect on the fact that the so-called experts did not predict those events. We still look to those experts for our guidance, but they failed to predict those events and the speed with which they happened. The experts do not have a particularly good track record, but it is they who must help us in the next few years to predict exactly what will happen in terms of security and defence in the European theatre and throughout the world.

The leader in today's edition of *The Times* reviewed the aftermath of the Tornado cancellation and discussed the defence review. It put forward a somewhat strange analysis. It declared in favour of peace and reductions in European defence systems. It said that we should not look for enemies and it praised the concept of flexibility, but it

This morning the people of Lancashire felt that a bucket of cold water had been thrown over them as they woke up to the reality that cuts in our defence system have already started. It is worth noting that the many families who have given loyal service to our defence industries now accept the reality of what the changes in Europe will mean. I hope that Ministers will not forget the human dimension of the changes. Just as Conservative Members fought vigorously to secure orders for the defence industries, so we shall fight vigorously to help companies and individuals to resolve the problems that we now face.

The Departments of Trade and Industry and of Employment have various schemes designed to promote enterprise and to help areas which, from time to time, experience economic difficulties. The MOD should ensure that those schemes are mobilised as soon as possible to aid the process of diversification which companies such as British Aerospace have already begun to develop. Nobody should ignore the fact that British Aerospace anticipated, to some extent, the changes that have occurred. It has bought Rover and Ballast and Needham and diverted into leisure, construction and investments into new technology. It has made an excellent commitment to airbus and is developing new civil aviation business with the United States. They are all attempts to broaden the company's industrial base and maintain employment within it. Last night's announcement on Tornado, however, instead of assisting the smooth transition from one stage to another, has made that task more difficult.

People in Lancashire will reflect on history and I am sure that at the back of their minds is the TSR 2 project. I am sure that they appreciate that the cuts that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has imposed on the industry in the present circumstances are not in the same vein as the complete renegation of the TSR 2 project. At a time when a good British project had been developed, the Labour party dumped TSR 2 and that decision went very deep with the aviation folk of Lancashire. The Conservatives have a record of proud support of such projects and that will continue.

Mr. Mans: Does my hon. Friend agree that, having dumped the TSR 2, the Labour Government then bought an American aircraft?

Mr. Jack: My hon. Friend has made a powerful point.

We shall continue to support our friends in Lancashire at this difficult time. British Aerospace is making progress towards diversification which makes Labour's conversion agency look like a stale pork pie. We need to free enterprise and initiative in that company and throughout the defence industries. We need to maintain the aviation skills of Lancashire. The Government have the ability to assist that process and we shall support them.

Mr. Tony Banks: How?

Mr. Jack: If the hon. Gentleman had been listening earlier he would know that the answer lies in the mobilisation of the schemes and projects run by the Departments of Trade and Industry and of Employment. Recently I asked a question about take-up of the enterprise schemes and the employment initiatives. The hon. Gentleman should know that he will find the answer and the proof he needs in the Library.

This year we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the battle of Britain. We should remember that that desperate situation arose as a result of a lack of preparedness. Whatever review is undertaken by my right hon. and hon. Friends at the MOD, I plead with them to ensure that they do not leave us unprepared. Our lack of ability to predict the future accurately makes it imperative that major defence projects, such as the European fighter aircraft, are maintained. Whatever type of defence system we procure for the land, sea or air, we must go for quality.

Our defence industries, including British Aerospace in my constituency, have a unique ability to join together complex systems to produce the best in the world of a particular type of equipment. Such technology and ability has found favour not only in this country and in Europe, but in wider export markets. I hope that that skills base will not be dissipated by further reviews.

Last night my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement spoke of the continual consultations that the MOD has had with British Aerospace on the cuts to the Tornado programme. People in my constituency have asked what specific consultations took place between the MOD and British Aerospace. I should be grateful if my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary could give us that answer either tonight or by letter. Did the MOD discuss the impact of the decision on the ability of British Aerospace to deal with future orders from Saudi Arabia and to maintain and fulfil its obligations to Italy? Those answers should be given before the capability to manufacture Tornado is dispensed with.

In common with my hon. Friends, I should like to know a little more about the criteria used to decide the way in which the defence review will be conducted. We seek an assurance from Ministers that they will properly assess the impact of the defence cuts on our industrial and technological base. We understand that we cannot stand in the way of peace, progress and security, but we want to make certain that any changes are properly managed because of the human dimension involved.

We in Britain must maintain a viable aerospace defence industry not only for home and European requirements but for the export potential that is involved. If we have piecemeal, salami-slice programmes for perhaps short-term economic reasons, that base will be put at risk in the long term.

Will the Minister be radical in his thinking? Has he considered, for example, privatising the work of maintenance facilities that is currently undertaken by the RAF, and flying training? The private sector could provide

those facilities at much reduced cost to the RAF. Likewise, the RAF support command—an expensive passenger aircraft system—could be put out to private concerns.

We appreciate that the size of the defence cake will be smaller, but will the Minister consider supporting private enterprise by redistributing the cake? Will he respond to newspaper articles about the EH101? It has been suggested that companies such as British Aerospace will have an equal opportunity to bid for a share of the contracts. Questions of that sort must be answered.

I endorse the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) about the Tornado in relation to older types of aircraft. If ever there was an opportunity to economise on maintenance, we should have removed the old aircraft first and replaced them with an aircraft such as Tornado, which could have a 30-year life.

In that connection, will the Minister comment, either tonight or by letter, on the Tornado mid-life update? If the decision on the eighth batch is final, a mid-life update and a continual wringing out of benefits from the fundamental design of Tornado is crucial. It means updating the new data bus avionics system and consideration being given to the new weapons systems, the terrain reference radar and other modifications of important items. Workers in my constituency require the Minister's assurance that that programme will go ahead and that we can look forward to Tornado being in service in Europe into the next century.

I endorse all that has been said by my hon. Friends about the importance of the European fighter aircraft. The most telling remark that I have heard on the subject came from Group Captain Ned Frith, who was formerly involved with the armed services and the Ministry of Defence and who is now with British Aerospace. He said:

"If you have forces, you need an airforce. If you have an airforce, you need an air superiority fighter."

There is no doubt that the European fighter aircraft is the finest available. Other hon. Members have referred to potential threats that it meets. It is a defensive aircraft without parallel and I hope that the Minister will endorse what has been said about the Government seeing the project through. If it does not go through with the four partner countries still participating, it will put at risk the whole question of European co-operation on future procurement projects. Whatever the shape of our armed forces, there will still be a need for such procurement activities.

Let us not overlook research and development. I am disturbed to see it said in paragraph 317 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates that the Government are committed to a reduction in defence research and development. Many fine projects are listed in the analysis of the major fields, but when I contrast paragraph 317 with paragraph 322, which talks about the role of our defence exports, I am bound to say that we cannot have our cake and eat it.

We need to develop a concept of technological deterrence. We need to increase spending on research and development to ensure that we have the ideas that will help us and the whole of western Europe to maintain credible defence systems. Research and development has a vital role, and I commend that thought to the Minister.

8.13 pm

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack), like a number of his hon. Friends, is belatedly realising that there is a link between a reduced defence commitment and building up industry in a planned way. That is why Labour's arms diversification agency, compared with the Tories' "leave it to the market" attitude, will be a huge vote winner for us in constituencies such as Fylde, as Conservative Members will begin to appreciate as the election draws near.

I apologise for the pun, but the Ministry of Defence has been getting away with murder for years, and the Secretary of State got away with murder in his speech yesterday when he said:

"By the end of this year we could, if all goes well, have in place some of the most far-reaching changes in Europe's defence and security that we have witnessed";

and a little later went on:

"Against that background, we shall also need to consider the forces that we in the United Kingdom will need over the next decade."

We are bound to wonder what response he has to the great world changes that are taking place. He said he wanted

"not only Polaris and then Trident, but the associated frigates, submarines and minesweepers that ensure their safe deployment . . . we shall maintain also sub-strategic nuclear capability . . . That means air defence aircraft; surface-to-air missiles and the necessary warning and control systems; naval forces"—

of all kinds—

"maritime patrol aircraft . . . forces for military home defence . . .force levels . . . in Northern Ireland . . . adequate forces to meet our commitments in the wider world outside Europe . . . Cyprus, Gibraltar, Belize, Hong Kong and Brunei"—

and forces

"to respond appropriately where circumstances demand."

Nor did he leave out Germany, for later he said:

"we may seek to reduce our forces stationed in Germany . . . If our stationed forces are smaller, then they will need mobility and flexibility and a balanced capability".—[*Official Report*, 18 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 693-4.]

That must mean, if they are to be smaller, their having more resources. The right hon. Gentleman was saying, in effect, that, despite all the change that is occurring, there will be no change from his point of view—that there will be no savings, no disarmament and no vision from him towards the changed world. That is why I say that in his speech yesterday he got away with murder. We are entitled to expect more from the nation's Secretary of State for Defence.

We should concentrate on two issues—the peace dividend and the security system for which we should be aiming. Hon. Members in all parts of the House talk about the peace dividend and many say that a large dividend cannot be achieved. That is absolute nonsense. The United States made it clear in its budget of March-April this year that there would be a $17 billion peace dividend for America in the coming five years—and that is just the first instalment, prior to various agreements being reached with the Soviet Union. It is clear that the United States intends to achieve a much bigger peace dividend in due course, and we could achieve great savings in Britain, too.

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement was reported—it was stated to have been a leak—as saying that we could achieve a saving of £17 billion in the next 10 years. One gets the impression that he was indulging in a kite-flying exercise, as he has not confirmed that statement in public. Either he will not stand by what he said or the Secretary of State has put him down. If the Minister said that there could be a saving of £17 billion in 10 years, he should be severely criticised because there was no reference

[Mr. Harry Cohen]

to that money being used to secure jobs for displaced workers in the defence industry and there is still heavy emphasis on nuclear weapons.

In any event, the saving is far too small. Our defence budget has been running at about £21 billion per year. In last year's Autumn Statement, the amount was increased by £1 billion per year over the next three years, raising it to £24 billion a year overall. If we reduced the figure to the European average of 3 per cent. of GNP, we should have a defence budget of about £15 billion per year. In other words, we could release £60 billion in the next 10 years to build up our neglected public services, including the national health service. What a boost that would be for Britain's economy. The Minister of State for Defence Procurement said in the "Today" radio programme:

"countries that spend a lower proportion of GDP on defence tend to have a healthier economy and industry."

We, too, could be in that position.

From where do such savings come? They could be made straight away if the defence blunders were stopped. The Select Committee said that unreliable equipment costs the country £1 billion per year. The Conservative party should change the anthem at the end of its conferences and sing, "Land of Hopeless Tories," which would be more apt. We could reduce the numbers and commitments of our forces overseas. We could bring back the 67,000 troops of the British Army of the Rhine. Under the conventional forces in Europe agreement there must be cuts in troops and equipment of 10 to 15 per cent. That is under the first CFE agreement. The second CFE agreement is likely to call for 50 per cent. cuts, and we should anticipate that. In our out-of-area territories such as the Falklands and other countries across the world where we are over-committed, we should explore alternative arrangements such as United Nations guarantees and turning such territories into trust territories rather than retaining a military burden.

We can make savings on MOD land. Earlier, the Minister of State for the Armed Forces said that the MOD not only had a vast amount of land, but wanted more. It should have less, and turn land over to housing and environmental purposes. We could then save on maintenance.

We should stop increasing our nuclear capabilities. I saw an article stating that cruise missiles were set to return to this country in the form of sea-launched cruise missiles and the tactical air-to-surface missile, of which about 400 are set to return to the United Kingdom. Even United States generals say that that would breach the spirit of the intermediate nuclear forces agreement because such missiles could be carried on aircraft, lobbed into the range of the INF agreement and even strike deep into the Soviet Union. We should not push ahead with that programme. Trident could be cancelled—we could save £1 billion straight away by cancelling the fourth Trident. The Trident programme is preventing much deeper nuclear cuts being agreed between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The peace dividend could be used for other purposes, and could mean more, not fewer jobs, as my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) said yesterday. Cambridge economists have shown that if we invest in the right sectors we could create 500,000 more jobs. That would clearly have to be tied up with the arms diversification agency.

We could also have a defensive defence policy because we have defence aplenty. The "Directory of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms and Disarmament 1990," by Paul Rogers and Malcolm Dando of Bradford university, states that even after the strategic arms agreement there will still be around 17,000 modern strategic weapons. It also states that new conventional weapons are being developed and deployed which are as lethal as small nuclear devices, but not subject to any arms negotiations. They include weapons which scatter large numbers of "bomblets" over a wide area and artillery multiple rocket launchers which can destroy a small town in one minute. There is plenty of defence to be had from conventional weapons. We can have disarmament and a big peace dividend.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): The hon. Gentleman is being extremely helpful by giving a shopping list of those things that he believes that the Labour party should cut from the defence budget. Does he believe that his Front-Bench spokesmen would make those cuts or is it simply the majority of the Labour party who look for such cuts?

Mr. Cohen: The Front-Bench spokesmen must speak for themselves, but our latest document talks of achieving cuts in our defence budget by international agreement. However, the Front-Bench spokesmen will have to answer more clearly if the matter is raised with them.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), in his typical way, has talked about trying to get a security system from Vancouver to Vladivostock and from Brest to Brest. Such a security system would have to be international. We cannot defend ourselves properly in isolation and should have a more realistic view of our position in the world. At the last election, during the Conservative party campaign, which was led by the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), the party made various allusions to keeping Britain great, the role of empire and our imperialist past. It was not a realistic view of our place in the world.

It would be ideal if we could totally defend ourselves in isolation, but that cannot be done without incurring crippling costs to our economy, and running the terrible risk of nuclear accident—the use of nuclear weapons in a crisis or against third world nations for political and economic advantage. There could be an accident in our nuclear power stations. The Minister of State for the Armed Forces has agreed to extend Calder Hall and Chapelcross, the oldest nuclear power stations in this country, for a further 10 years. The Government are flirting with a Chernobyl-style disaster, and we cannot afford to do that. Our defences must be at the level of comparative nations—not higher, as they are at present.

We must press for the opposite of the arms race, and obtain that through an international institution with a ratchet for arms reductions. NATO cannot do that. The Prime Minister's theory is that NATO can be the world's policeman, but what plans are there to extend NATO membership to every country in the world and turn it into a sort of United Nations? There are none, so it will be seen as working for, and in the interests of, the economically developed western capitalised world. Eastern Europe, China, the middle east and the third world will ask in

whose interest NATO is working. The answer is that it will be a force for world domination and continuing economic discrimination. It will be seen as such, and as such it will be resisted, which will lead to further wars and atrocities around the world. NATO cannot transform itself. While soothing words were uttered at its two recent meetings in Canada and Scotland, NATO was planning a big increase in the tactical air-to-surface missiles coming to this country.

The EC cannot fulfil that security role. Sir Leon Brittan wants to give it a military role, but that would be narrow. Even the Minister, in his opening comments, called it the Eurocentric tendency, but it cannot provide security around the world. The best institution to build on is the conference on security and co-operation in Europe. We should build that into a new Euro-wide institution involving every European country. The United States should also play a political role in it, not a military one. It would not be justified for the United States to have a military presence in Europe with its own bases, but it could and should play a political role in such an institution. I should like that organisation to be a sort of United Nations of Europe with teeth. It would be prohibited from interfering internally in any country, but it would have a duty to warn of, and act against, any invasion. A country's troops would have to remain within its own boundaries. Such an organisation should be a permanent forum for keeping down arms spending and force levels.

There should also be a political forum for the discussion and settlement of disputes. War must no longer be seen as an option. It should be made impossible. If we had vision, we should look forward to a post-nuclear Europe and aim at eliminating the arms race. We must get levels down and never allow them to increase again. Nuclear technology cannot be uninvented, but nuclear weapons can be forsworn. If there were another arms race, there would be the risk that nuclear weapons would return. Preventing that would be a powerful incentive for the sort of security institution that I have described.

The Tories have shown a lack of vision which could well lead to disaster. My right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) spoke of the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons to every country that might want them. This has been a story of missed opportunities to achieve the peace dividend and a safer world. The Minister of State for Defence Procurement wrote a book about the first world war entitled, "The Donkeys". He must know that he is serving in a Cabinet which could aptly be described in the same way.

8.31 pm

Mr. Alistair Burt (Bury, North): It is always an enormous pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen), who is an inoffensive little man; he is always perfectly charming and he has no enemies among Conservative Members, although I suspect that he has plenty of them, judging by his contribution tonight, among Labour Front-Bench spokesmen.

I made my maiden speech on defence about seven years ago little realising the difference in circumstances that would arise between then and now. I made that speech because I believed that defence had played a large part in the victory that I secured in the general election. It has been suggested that such victories might become a thing of the past and that no longer will Conservative Members be elected on the defence card. The changing nature of the world, it is said, will mean that the defence policies of Labour and the Conservatives will drift together and the general public will perceive no difference between them.

I suspect that this is largely wrong, for two reasons. First, the British public will still give credit where it is due and will realise that it was the determination of the Prime Minister and the Government, together with the United States, that helped considerably in the change in opinions and attitudes which has led us to today's progress to peace. Secondly, the British public will put their confidence in those who have been generally right about the defence issues facing this country, not in those who have been wrong on each occasion—which is why they have not won the elections.

A debate such as today's could not illustrate more clearly the differences of policy between our two parties. It is important to put these matters on record lest a veil be drawn over them by Labour Members who would like to bury the past. Nothing shows that more clearly than the speech made by the hon. Member for Leyton, which reflected other radical speeches by Labour Members which have suggested that a deep current still runs in the grass roots Labour party in favour of cutting our defence forces dramatically, ending our nuclear deterrent and removing United States forces from Europe.

Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen remain more coy about their opinions. A torrent of ideas comes from behind them to which they say nothing. They also answer nothing to further questions about their intentions from Conservative Members. All that they evince is optimism which they take too far and which takes us too quickly down a road that we would tread more cautiously.

Why do the Opposition voice such optimism? It is because, with no prospect of their campaign promises on spending being satisfied by sensible financial policies, they must seize on the changed circumstances between east and west to provide cash that they cannot find elsewhere. It is entirely right that we should all welcome the opportunities that the new defence situation will give us, but let us avoid expectations that might lead to the unwise seizure of crucial defence resources.

In relation to the fundamental review of defence which is rightly taking place at the moment, I believe that the correct approach of the Government should be to seek whatever reductions in expenditure they can whilst erring, if necessary, on the side of caution in order to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

War is a disease. There is no real cure for it, and it has been epidemic in Europe since the dawn of history. I do not believe that our forefathers' earnest desire for peace was any less sincere than ours. And yet wars occurred. The hon. Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) said yesterday that there was no longer a role for military force in Europe. I hope that he is right, but neither I nor my constituents can rely on that. Two devastating European and world wars were lived through, fought in, and remembered by people who are still alive today. Compared with European and world history, the events of recent months in Europe are but the blinking of an eye. It would be folly to take them as the sign that we have been looking for without any further pause for thought.

Can we be really certain of what is to come in these new democracies? We know that a change from a command economy to a market economy will inevitably lead to

[Mr. Alistair Burt]

dislocation, inflation and unemployment. How will such stresses and strains be coped with in cultures which for over a generation have known nothing of these things, having been artificially kept from them?

We have a sophisticated political system for dealing with such matters but no such system yet exists in eastern Europe. Can we be certain that at a time of despair in a foreign country a strong leader will not emerge with a panacea to his country's ills? It might be belief that territorial acquisition of a land once seized from it in a forgotten European charter was the answer to its economic and social ills. We have seen that before. Can we be certain that we will not see it again? Can we be certain of the effect on other countries?

Accordingly, I agree with my hon. Friends who have said that the lessons of the 1930s must not be forgotten. It is easy for a democracy to disarm, but very difficult for a democracy to re-arm. As I said earlier, I believe war to be a disease, virulent and contagious and contained so far in our century only by the inoculation of nuclear deterrence, which provided the sureness and certainty necessary to keep the peace.

Wars are caused not by weapons but by people, and by people's misunderstanding of how others might react in any given situation. I believe this to be the fundamental difference between the two parties, and I hope that the defence review will be conducted by the Government with such strategic aims in mind. I commend to the House and the wider public the excellent essay on the subject of defence and security in a changing world to be found in the Statement on the Defence Estimates.

My belief in caution as the watchword takes me briefly down a second road—that of the American military presence in Europe, which the hon. Member for Leyton and some of his hon. Friends would remove. If the world is to be a safer place, it is essential that the bridge which has been made between Europe and the Americas by way of the United States military presence in Europe be maintained. We must refute the notion that European security can be left to continental Europe alone, and that the lessons of this century can be forgotten. That is a seductive argument with some logic but no history behind it. In much the same way as it is difficult for a democracy to re-arm, it would be extremely difficult—nay, impossible—for an American President to reintroduce American forces to Europe if they were once removed. They are a stabilising link that the world has grown used to and they should be retained.

Another reason for caution in relation to the defence review is the pain that is bound to result from inevitable defence reductions. Pain is not a reason for not doing something; it is merely a reason to proceed cautiously. We have seen an example of that in the Tornado decision which was announced yesterday and which was discussed so effectively and movingly by my hon. Friends the Members for Fylde (Mr. Jack) and for Wyre (Mr. Mans). Another aspect of pain will result from the return of soldiers based in Europe to the United Kingdom, which is bound to increase pressure on training land—the consequences of that must be thought through. I refer colleagues to page 50 of the White Paper and to paragraph 414 which deals with defence lands.

There is in my constituency the Holcombe moor training camp. Some years ago the Army proposed to seek extra land in that area. The move was opposed and the public inquiry process commenced nearly two years ago. Today we are still awaiting the result of the inquiry even though the last hearing was more than 18 months ago.

Such a delay is intolerable. The arguments at the inquiry were difficult enough, and my constituents know that, providing certain conditions were met, I supported the Army's application for extra land, as I understood the need for high quality training in areas close to conurbations in which many Regular and Territorial Army personnel are based. I also accept the assurances on environmental safeguards given by the Ministry of Defence, which I know looks after the area well. However, whatever the divided views on the issue may have been, to wait so long for a decision is desperately unfair on all those who have been involved. I appreciate that that is the responsibility not of present Ministers but of others. However, I hope that some notice is taken of the lengthy and involved process necessary to deal with the acquisition and use of training land, and that some policy has been devised for dealing with such problems in the future.

It is an irony that, although it seems that the requirement for training land should diminish as the threat from the Warsaw pact reduces, it may well be that pressure on training land will increase as we will be keeping more troops at home than in Germany.

Mr. Rogers: The hon. Gentleman says that he is waiting for a policy from the Government on the acquisition of land for training. Does he not realise that there is a policy and that it has been reiterated in the past two days? It is that if any land of sufficient size becomes available the MOD will make a bid for it. Holcombe moor is not the only place where there are long delays on such matters and where blight is created. I agree with the hon. Gentleman on that issue.

Mr. Burt: I am well aware of the MOD's current policy. I was speaking about the procedures for dealing with the acquisition of the land which are poor and I am concerned about that part of the policy. If more troops come home and need more land, the policy for dealing with such land and for explaining to people what is going on will need to be improved. That was why I asked for a new policy on that matter. Unless there is full disclosure, full understanding will not be given by local people who need to be fully involved in decisions of the forces.

Finally, I should like to deal with two wider aspects which result from our defence review and which should be welcome. First, it seems certain that the response to the changing world situation will require British defence forces to be smaller but more flexible and mobile to meet the security needs of our people. This must be done with growing integration among our NATO and European allies, particularly through closer multinational co-operation in the organisation of NATO forces and in increasing NATO's contribution to the political aspects of security development.

Secondly, I hope that reductions in the expenditures of both east and west will not be made up by greater exports to third world countries. The opportunity for ending the global arms race should not be missed. There are few statistics more sickening than those of third world countries that can scarcely meet the need to feed all their

people, yet spend a disproportionate amount of their gross national product on armaments, some of which are supplied by western nations. There should be much greater co-operation now between the significant military powers to run down these exports and encourage a greater sense of responsibility among developing nations. The poor and the hungry of the world would benefit more from such a change than from almost any other method of aid which can be devised.

There are many opportunities available at this extraordinary time in human history. They must be grasped, but we must go into these changes with our eyes wide open and conscious of the mistakes of the past, being determined not to repeat them. If we should be bold in our determination to seize the opportunity, it is equally right to be cautious in how we exercise the decisions, in consultation with those who were once our enemies, to make the most of the chances that are before us.

8.42 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Apart from my unavoidable absence from the Chamber between 8.30 and 10 pm yesterday, I have listened to almost every speech. It is a matter of slight personal regret that I am the tail end Charlie. I should like partially to follow the path beaten by the hon. Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) and I shall confine my speech to what is called in the White Paper the defence estate.

Before I do so, perhaps the Minister will allow me some immodesty. He will acknowledge that I have some concern about the welfare provisions related to the well-being of members of our armed forces. In that context, will he confirm in his winding-up speech that within the next six months the House will have a Second Reading of an armed services Bill? I think that I am right in saying that such a Bill is a quinquennial event. One was passed in, I think, 1981 and one was certainly passed in 1986 because I was a member of the special Committee that was set up to examine it. Such a Committee enables hon. Members to cross-examine senior civil servants and senior members of the armed forces. The last time that we had a similar Bill I was able to persuade the then Minister of State to change some of the procedures about the care and protection of the sons and daughters of armed forces personnel who were tragically embroiled in either sexual or child abuse cases.

These are important matters and I hope that the Minister will respond helpfully. There are, of course, related matters because in addition to dealing with personnel in the armed forces the Bill deals with their families. Paragraph 414 on page 50 of Volume 1 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates states:

"We are determined to rationalise and reduce our land holdings wherever possible".

I drink to that sentiment. It goes on:

"But it is also necessary to purchase property to meet specific needs; for example land to meet increased training needs of the Regular and Territorial Army and to accommodate the larger safety areas required by modern weapons."

On the same page the statement says that since 1979 over 12,000 hectares of land and some 7,000 married quarters have been sold by the Ministry of Defence producing receipts of, I think, £640 million.

I have already asked about the programme for the disposal of married quarters. In the light of the probable redeployment of armed forces personnel from the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Kingdom, will that policy of selling married quarters be held up? We do not want members of regiments returning to the British Isles being placed in poor accommodation. That would be most unfair to soldiers and others returning from Germany.

Is it likely that a dramatic reduction in conventional forces would lead to a significant diminution in training requirements and training land? The subject of the military use of land is important and, as the hon. Member for Bury, North suggested, in some instances it is controversial. As everyone knows, the MOD is a major landowner in the United Kingdom, perhaps one of the top six. I think that I am right in saying that it owns about 350,000 hectares of land. In Scotland, the combined acreage of land used for military training is 190,000 acres or thereabouts. Those training sites in Scotland are in the Central, Grampian, Highland, Lothian and Tayside regions and in the Western Isles. On some of those sites live firing practice takes place. It is a matter of concern for many other users and would-be users of those open spaces that so much land is taken up by military training. There is a profound conflict of interest between the understandable needs of military training in open spaces and the interests of other users of those open spaces.

Dr. Susan Owens, a fellow of Newnham college, Cambridge, in a recent paper entitled, "Military live firing in national parks", commissioned by the United Kingdom Centre for Economic and Environmental Development, says:

"Few have claimed that military needs must outweigh all other considerations, and those who have sought to free the national parks from military training have not usually questioned the need in principle for well-prepared armed forces. They have, however, questioned the MOD's right to be the sole arbiter of its training and land requirements. This issue of need—and how it is determined—is crucial".

I agree wholeheartedly.

On page 71 of that fine paper Dr. Owens says:

"There is a clear need for greater public accountability on the issue of military training and land requirements. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, profound changes in geopolitics and in the political significance of environmental issues make the 1990s an appropriate time for a reappraisal of the balance between military and environmental needs."

We must strike a balance between the essential military training needs of the nation and the interests of many millions of people who find great enjoyment in walking through our countryside, whether the English and Welsh national parks or the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Yesterday, the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence, said:

"We are desperately short of training grounds and always have been."—[*Official Report*, 18 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 713.]

I am not so sure that in the 1990s we will have such a desperate shortage of training grounds. I naturally defer to the hon. Gentleman's greater military expertise in practical and theoretical terms. I understand that he was a colonel in an infantry regiment——

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): Cavalry.

Dr. Godman: Then I must defer to the hon. Gentleman. I was just a lonely lance corporal in the Royal Military Police.—*[Interruption.]* There is no need for such a comment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I did not hear it.

Dr. Godman: I am glad that you did not, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is shocking to talk like that in the presence of a lady, especially one such as you.

Nevertheless, we should not ignore the interests of others who enjoy wandering through those open spaces. We need to strike a fair and reasonable balance between the conflicting interests. Walking in the countryside is an extremely popular pastime. I have a good deal of sympathy for the views of the Ramblers Association, expressed in another fine document sent to Members of Parliament for the purposes of today's debate. Paragraph 20 says:

"It appears that the MoD will not respond willingly either to world events, public opinion or reasoned argument when it comes to its land acquisitions policy. The question is whether the decision to continue with the current policy of taking more land, a question which inevitably will have to be considered as part of the secret defence review, will be made in secret or opened up to public debate. The Ramblers Association believes that the public should be involved in deciding how much land the army should have and where it should be located. There should be a proper and full examination in public, pending the outcome of which the MoD's current policy of land acquisitions should be suspended."

I take on board the observations made by the Minister this afternoon on the Ministry's protection of some 200 sites of special scientific interest. In fairness, let me go further and quote from page 52 of the White Paper:

"A full-time conservation officer is employed for the defence estate; he co-ordinates the activities of over 200 local conservation groups. Close relations are maintained with the National Park Authorities, and with the Nature Conservancy Council. A joint Declaration of Intent has been signed with the NCC to promote conservation on the defence estate wherever it is compatible with military requirements."

There is always that qualification. The White Paper goes on:

"Care is also taken to protect archaeological sites, in consultation with English Heritage and its Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland equivalents."

That is how it should be. Balancing the interests of the two parties is difficult.

I am not here to make a party-political speech on the defence estate, but much more needs to be done. I say that in view of the astonishing changes taking place in central and eastern Europe and the remarkable changes in east-west relations. The Ministry of Defence must reassess its policy on the acquisition of land for military training. In addition, it should engage in a comprehensive public debate on its land requirements.

I believe that I am right in saying that defence-led requirements are excluded from the EC directive on environmental impact assessments. I know that such an assessment was carried out before the expansion of the Clyde submarine base. I am sure that my hon. Friends the Members for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) and for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) will agree that that expansion scarred the beautiful landscape across the firth of Clyde from the constituencies of my hon. Friend the Member for Dumbarton and myself.

Those assessments lay down the same stringent criteria as are rightly imposed upon gas and oil companies in, say, Dorset and north-east Scotland. I warrant that the same criteria were not applied to the Clyde submarine base. If comprehensive EIAs were imposed on Ministry of Defence developments—as they have been on British Petroleum and British Gas—it would be a significant improvement on the present state of affairs. Environmental considerations should be an integral element in defence policies.

I stress the need for the Defence Select Committee to investigate present and future land requirements for military training. These are important matters which should not be brushed aside by Ministers and their officials. Millions of people seek to exercise such rights as they have on something as innocuous as a country walk; they should not be denied those rights because of the Ministry of Defence's outdated requirements for military training.

8.59 pm

Sir Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): I am grateful for the remarks of the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman). It is clear that the Ministry of Defence must strike a fine balance between its needs and environmental needs. I understand that a review is taking place whereby unnecessary sites can be disposed of, and those that are absolutely essential can be either expanded or, if not required, disposed of. As the hon. Gentleman said, we must remember that the Army—and all the armed forces—must have somewhere to fire. I was also pleased when the hon. Gentleman talked of the possibility of accommodation for our forces returning from the British Army of the Rhine: so far, the debate has not dealt with that point.

The Defence White Paper provides an extremely good analysis of what we now have at our disposal. In his excellent introduction, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State explained what was necessary. Two things emerged from that explanation—the importance of retaining NATO, and United States troops in Europe—and the idea was built up in the White Paper. He also stressed that, over and above all that, we must preserve our own defences.

When we consider the reductions in our forces that could be achieved by a reduction in the threat from the Soviet bloc and the Warsaw pact, we must remember that we cannot do it overnight. We should be careful not to rush into things to please the Treasury; a comprehensive review is required. As the Minister of State for the Armed Forces said earlier, consultation with the service chiefs is essential: everyone should be involved. No concrete changes can be made until we know the exact threat that faces us.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery), who pointed out that the peace of the past 40 years had been retained through the nuclear deterrent. We now face the increased difficulties arising from the reunification of Germany, and the split in the provinces of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Who would have thought that a vast part of Russia, extending all the way up to China, would become a separate province?

After unification, we must not envisage tanks racing across Germany. After the reunification of Germany, we do not know whether a united Germany will remain in NATO, or will have a looser connection, similar to that of France. I expect the first consequence to be the replacement of tanks by helicopters: cavalry regiments would find themselves equipped with helicopters. Nor do we know the plans of President Gorbachev and the Soviet military command.

The talk of a change from tanks to helicopters reminds me of the beginning of the last war, when I was trained to be a horse cavalry officer. While bombs were falling, the

Army had 14 yeomanry regiments, four regular regiments and a scouts' regiment which were still trained on horses. The ghastly massacre of the Polish cavalry alerted us to the necessity of changing from horses to tanks. The cavalry will have to adapt to its new role. I am not suggesting that tanks will be abolished, but to a large extent they will be replaced by helicopters.

Our worldwide commitments, which are well outlined on page 21 of the Command Paper, will remain in many places such as Belize. In my view, certain commitments can be safeguarded only by troops on the ground. It is no good having troops 1,000 miles away and then bringing them in when the damage has been done. The presence of our troops in Belize is well appreciated. They were regarded by hostile neighbours with considerable alarm. Although the dangers may appear to have reduced, there is no guarantee of absolute peace.

If we reduce our armed forces considerably, we shall have to be more reliant on the citizens' army. The Territorial Army and the Regular Reserve will spring to the defence of our country. They must be re-equipped and given equality with the Regular Army. I call them the citizens' army because they will consist of more or less ordinary people able to be called up at very short notice.

There should be no hasty decisions, but clear and definite reductions suitable to our new situation, and we should not rely on quick cuts. We should make sure that our nuclear deterrent is retained.

NATO has the potential to become a great force for world peace. If NATO is expanded to include the WEU and other countries with similar thoughts and ideas, it will become a multinational force with standardised equipment and mixed armies which could be used all over the world. We should retain the ultimate deterrent to be used only in cases of absolute necessity, but under the umbrella of NATO we should be able to produce a force capable of preserving world peace.

9.7 pm

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak this evening. I never knew that the Tory party was in such a desperate economic plight that, when it has fetes in Renfrew, West and Inverclyde, it does not even say on the banner who is holding the fete. That has a lot to do with defence because I discovered a poster which was put up all over my constituency saying,

"A Day at the White House".

It described all the fun of the fair. Lo and behold, it mentioned a helicopter. I had a telephone call from a civil servant, who said, "Mr. Graham, I was so embarrassed. I went to a fete without realising that it was a Conservative fete. I do not attend any party political events because of my position." I understand that a military helicopter was flying in and out all day. For the love of me, I did not know that military personnel had been brought in to bale out the Tories in their desperate economic plight in Scotland.

I hope that the Minister will tell us how much it cost for the helicopter to fly about Scotland—how much the wages, fuel and maintenance were. How much did the Tories raise from that fair? Will they contribute the money to the Select Committee on Defence so that it can spend it on the defence of the nation?

The Minister must have been desperate for money for defence if he had to send out the troops to back up the welly-boot show. I imagine that the welly-boot throwing was the most successful event at the fair. Perhaps the Government are trying to recruit some of the expert welly-boot merchants in my constituency into the Army. How much did it cost to send the helicopter? How much money did that exercise waste for the nation?

9.10 pm

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): It is difficult to follow the points of the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham). However, he made them robustly, and I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister will take great notice of them. I am grateful to have caught your eye, Mr. Speaker. Having spoken in the Army debate last week, I did not think that I would be fortunate enough to speak in the defence debate. However, I am glad to make a brief contribution.

The opening speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence yesterday covered the defence estimates in considerable detail and gave us some insights into the way in which he is looking forward to the changes which will inevitably face his Department and which the House will have to address in the coming months. I do not feel quite ready yet to talk about the global issues. If I catch your eye in 10 years' time, Mr. Speaker, I may feel more inclined to look at the global situation. Quite frankly, no right hon. or hon. Member can know what will happen in two years' time. When NATO exercises were being planned and when the British Army of the Rhine was considering its participation, who could have thought that we should be considering the withdrawal of so many troops from Germany as the position changed? Events are moving rapidly.

It is rather nice to think that not everything moves quite as rapidly and that not everything changes quite so quickly. Like many hon. Members, I prefer to spend time with my family or in the garden on Sunday afternoons. However, this Sunday, I had the opportunity to attend the dedication of a new branch banner for the Shrewsbury Royal Artillery Association at Bicton church. That afternoon, all the British Legion branches in the constituency were represented. The general officer commanding the western district took the march past and the Harlescott youth brass band played to lead those who had served in the Royal Artillery and who were active members of the association.

Some people probably sneer at that sort of thing. However, I thought that it was an excellent display of everything that the contribution made by service men in our country stands for. They have been, and continue to be, exceptionally loyal in their service in the Royal Artillery. A great degree of comradeship was much in evidence and it was a privilge to attend the dedication. We should be sorry to miss the comradeship and loyalty as the changes in our armed forces take place.

I draw the attention of the House to page 22 of Volume 1 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates. It mentions the contribution our armed forces make and, sadly, will probably have to continue to make in Northern Ireland. The report tells us that, last year, 223 people were charged with terrorist offences, 31 of those for murder and 48 for attempted murder. I hope that those in the media who pay attention to these debates will consider seriously not only the conspiracy theories that they love to expound on the role of the security forces in Ulster, but the families of the 31 who were murdered and the heartache of the families of

[Mr. Derek Conway]

the 48 on whom murder was attempted. To the credit of the security forces, 327 weapons and a further 37,500 rounds of ammunition were found. In one of the most difficult jobs of all in the services, 196 bombs were made safe. That shows great courage which many of us in the House would find difficult to emulate. Perhaps that is why 184 awards for gallantry were made, 29 for the Ulster Defence Regiment, which is unfairly criticised all too frequently.

The Regular Reserves are commented on at page 28 of the report. I am grateful to the Minister and his colleagues in the Ministry for changing the card notice system. It was in open format before but now, due to the need for greater security, it will be in closed format. This will put at ease the minds of those who serve in a reserve capacity.

The report tells us that half the regular infantry, with a strength of over 85,000, is made up from volunteer reserves. That would not be possible without the support of the wives, families and girl friends of those who are involved.

I was grateful for the answer given today by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces about the level of employer support for our reserves. He informed the House that, as a result of the volunteer reserve forces campaign launched two years ago, more than 1,100 pledges have been received by the Department from major employers, who represent over half of the United Kingdom work force, to support those of their employees who wish to become involved in the volunteer reserves. With a strength of 85,000, there is no shortage of young men and women who are prepared to serve in our armed forces. Employers are also prepared to give their support.

I hope that we will see the continued production of a British tank which will continue to be driven by an excellent engine which is manufactured in my constituency.

With 26 per cent. of the armed forces procurement budget dedicated to research and development, our arms procurement industry has a great part to play in the foreign policy of our nation and in ensuring that our armed forces are of a high standard and that they have kit with which to work which is the best that can be found. This will give Britain not only strong defences but will continue our world reputation which has been hard earned and which I have every confidence that our colleagues in the Ministry of Defence will not allow to be idly spent.

9.17 pm

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Thank you for calling me, Mr. Speaker, particularly as at 4.30 yesterday afternoon I asked the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill), who I am delighted to see in his place, the following question:

"What cuts in which defence programmes would a Labour Government make?"

He told me, and it was many hours ago:

"If the hon. Gentleman waits, he will have an answer to his question. If he does not like what I am saying, he should try to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker."

I have tried to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, not so much because I did not like what the hon. Gentleman said, but because he said nothing. That point needs to be made in the closing minutes of this debate.

I was not the only one who asked the question. At column 698, my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) asked the hon. Gentleman to explain Labour's defence policy. The hon. Member for Clackmannan said:

"At present we are debating the defence estimates"

and he refused to say more on that point. Later in the debate, my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) asked the same question. The answer was:

"The response to that question would have to depend on the circumstances"

When my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) asked the same question, the hon. Member for Clackmannan said:

"The hon. Gentleman puts figures on cuts that have yet to take place."—[*Official Report*, 18 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 698-701.]

I am very grateful to have been called as I now have the opportunity yet again to extend the invitation to the hon. Member for Clackmannan to answer the questions that were put to him and to which no answer appears in *Hansard*.

We are not convinced that the next Labour Government, if there ever were one, would do much good, but at least we now have some hints that they will not actually do bad. That was made clear by the hon. Member for Clackmannan, when he said in London on 11 June:

"It is naive to expect instant benefits from savings on defence expenditure."

If nothing else has emerged from the debate it is that, in the words of the hon. Member for Clackmannan,

"It is naive to expect instant benefits from savings on defence expenditure."

That point is brought home clearly on page 8 of the estimates. One has only to look at the CFE limits—257,000 NATO troops and 596,000 Soviet troops are based in Europe, as against a CFE limit for both of 195,000. The defence estimates make it clear that

"The Soviet Union would still retain an offensive capability, but would no longer have (and could not, without breaching the Treaty recreate) the option which it currently enjoys of mounting large-scale offensive action against Western Europe".

I have greatly to curtail my remarks. I commend page 48 of the estimates, which deals with trading funds, agencies and defence, although I am slightly disappointed that we are still moving fairly slowly on that. As my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) pointed out, there is a lot more that we could do in maintenance, flight training, transport and the rest. Perhaps we could also do more about the disposal of surplus land, which is mentioned on page 50.

It is essential that we should keep a level head. We are talking about defence procurement programmes which could take five years of research and last for 20 years. There is no real pressure in Germany for the large-scale withdrawal of our troops. Within that 10 or 20-year cycle, we can gradually reduce our defence commitments without that reduction having a major impact on employment and on budgetary contraints. I urge the House to accept that, although we should take cognisance of what is going on in eastern Europe, we should take a balanced view.

9.21 pm

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): With the leave of the House, I should like to speak for a second time because my hon. Friend the Member for Knowsley, South (Mr.

Hughes) has not yet recovered fully from the illness from which he has been suffering for some time. I am sure that the House will join me in wishing him all the best.

We have had a useful debate in which there have been a number of points of unanimity, one of which I should like to stress at the outset. I realise that it may be construed from my remarks yesterday that I did not pay sufficient attention to the recognition of the debt that we owe to our armed forces. That recognition was perhaps implicit in my remarks, but it was not explicit and those in our armed forces who read our debates are entitled to enjoy the praise of hon. Members on both sides of the House. They make considerable sacrifices, not just in battle or because of the dangers that they face, but because they forgo a number of their civil liberties so that we may enjoy ours. I join my colleagues in paying tribute to the armed services.

Over the years, the nature of our defence debates has changed. Twenty, 30 or 40 years ago, those with a service background dominated the debates. The reduction in the size of the armed forces, the ending of national service and other factors have meant that there are now just a few hon. Members who have had some service experience. I think in particular of the hon. Members for Wyre (Mr. Mans) and Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and of senior Members such as my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) and the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery). The balance has moved towards constituency interests and today we have heard hon. Members talk with passion and care about the problems that the announcement made yesterday in respect of Tornado will create in their constituencies. We have also heard members of the Select Committee of the NATO Assembly and of the Western European Union, as well as enthusiasts—punters such as my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) who has yet to return to the Chamber but who is a regular fixture and whose ingenuity and wit we all enjoy.

It has been a good-natured debate, although the Minister of State for the Armed Forces displayed some uncharacteristic bitterness. He seems only to do that at the Dispatch Box; perhaps the trials of office are getting him down. As one colleague said, he tried to be abusive to me. As someone who has spoken on defence for the Labour party for the best part of six years, I do not need to come to the House to be abused—I can be abused at any Labour party meeting that I choose to attend.

The differences in the Labour party on which people have played have always existed. We have had anti-militarists who objected to defence expenditure for economic and social reasons, pacificists who objected to defence for moral reasons, neutralists who had a certain political view to which they wished to give a military expression, and struggles over the years between Atlanticists and Europeans. None of that is new and none of it will end. It is part of the nature of a lively radical party that it will have debates about issues that it considers to be important.

Some of my colleagues were disappointed at the adoption last year of the programme of disarmament by negotiation instead of by independent action. The nature of the exchanges and the many constructive suggestions that we have had give some emphasis to the old definition of unity in the Labour party—it breaks out when the members start stabbing each other in the chest. In the past two days we have had a fair amount of good-hearted exchanges. However, a clear sign of the Government's intentions is still to be displayed.

The Government have been extremely cautious. As the hon. Member for Dunfermline West, (Mr. Douglas) said, the Minister of State today gave the first real rationale for the Government's strategic approach. Perhaps if we had heard that yesterday it might have assisted in the debate. The Minister of State went to some lengths to explain some of the strategic considerations behind the thinking that we hope will lie at the heart of the "Options for Change" review. I say, "we hope will lie", because it seems that the publication of that document is some time away.

Perhaps the Minister of State could assist hon. Members by telling us when the document will be published, in what form it will be published, whether it will be a Green Paper or a White Paper, and giving some indication of when we can hope to debate it. Some aspects of it may require in-depth consideration by Committees of the House. It is important that we get some sign of when the process will be completed and when the dribbling of rumours and complaints from service chiefs and so on will finally stop.

Over the past two days there has been unanimous agreement that the new circumstances in Europe create tremendous opportunities. Hon. Members heard thoughtful speeches by the right hon. Member for Pavilion and by my hon. Friend the Member for Attercliffe, both of whom had a slightly different emphasis, but they had an optimism that men of their generation probably felt that we were no longer entitled to nurture.

We support the reunification of Germany. We recognise, as do all political parties in Germany and most political parties in western Europe, that there is a case for continued membership of NATO by the Federal Republic and by the Länders when they are assimilated into the new Germany. Special provisions will have to be made.

One of the exciting prospects of the new Germany will be the establishment of a new form of military force in the former East German Länders. That military force will be a people's army and a conscript army, but it will be one whose main preoccupations will be boundary defences and will be of a local militia nature. That will not necessarily be a blueprint for the rest of Europe, but it is a form of military organisation to which we can look with interest and, I hope, from which we can learn. The prospects of a united Germany must be considered in the context of the present acceptability of NATO to all its members. Unlike the Warsaw pact, NATO has existed on the basis of the willing participation of its member states and on consensus being achieved.

Sometimes it has been a consensus with which Opposition Members have not agreed in every respect—and I am sure that the same will be true in the future. However, the same can be said of Conservative Members. We know that the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Defence and his predecessor have gone into meetings with one view, but have come out with a very different view because they were tied to the consensus. We know that that was the case over short-range nuclear forces and the follow-on to Lance. We know that it was only after the discussion process that the Government reached a different view—after the heads had been counted or account had been taken of the nodding process.

I turn now to the Warsaw treaty organisation—if one can dignify it with that name because to all intents and

[Mr. Martin O'Neill]

purposes it was not a treaty but simply an extension of Soviet hegemony, sustained by force, against the legitimate desire of the east European peoples to rid themselves of the presence of those alien forces.

NATO can continue for some time, but with different purposes and to different ends. One of the major tasks in the foreseeable future for this side of Europe at least—but it may also be to the satisfaction of eastern Europe—will be the inspection and verification processes that are implicit in negotiated disarmament. As I said yesterday, the consequence of accepting that there should be withdrawal and disarmament is inspection and verification, which in turn must be monitored and organised. That organisation will require new types of equipment. That is why I say that there is a tremendous desire for a reduction in defence expenditure.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone), who walked into the Chamber just a moment ago, referred yesterday to the Cambridge Econometrics study, which makes explicit reference to the necessity for expensive equipment for inspection and verification. Much up-front expenditure will have to be met before we can get our hands on the pot of gold. It is not at the end of the rainbow; it will not be available in 1991. Indeed, in its early stages, it might not be available until 1993, but it will then be available in considerable amounts. If people want disarmament, they need inspection and verification or that disarmament is not worth the paper that it is not even written on. It is important that hon. Members of all parties appreciate that fact.

Because of the nature of the United States and the Soviet Union, the strategic arms reduction talks will take some time, but by the time of the next general election I believe that there will be an opportunity for British participation. We will welcome such participation and believe that it is necessary if we are to involve others, such as the French and the Chinese, in the START process. That would be the only glue that could effectively hold together the non-proliferation treaties which we hope the Government will start to negotiate seriously as the year progresses.

A consequence of reducing troops and changing our military deployment is that we must consider the doctrines that NATO itself adopts. Flexible response has already been examined. As I said earlier—I know that I am disagreeing with some of my hon. Friends in this matter—one cannot have flexible response without the means of flexibility. The nature of the new threat is such that there will be no means of flexibility other than air-launched nuclear systems and there is no demand in Europe for such weapons to be located there.

The idea that there must be nuclear weapons in Europe to justify the presence of conventional troops at whatever level is by no means held unanimously in the United States. If hon. Members doubt what I am saying, I suggest that they read the speeches by Sam Nunn in the Senate this spring. He is by no means a left-winger on defence matters. He is perhaps the hardest headed of the hard-headed realists in the United States. However, he said that if all forms of nuclear weapons were removed from Europe—he is not in favour of that, but he spelt out the logic clearly—it would be incumbent upon us to have some doctrine for the first use of nuclear strategic weapons, and confidence and security-building methods that can accommodate the dangers of any kind of armed movement.

There has been a great deal of talk—often loose talk—about rapidly mobile, easily deployed troops. Hon. Members should note that the mere act of moving those troops quickly can be an act of provocation unless certain ground rules are established and agreements are made. People in think tanks in the United States are giving a great deal of attention to that problem. It would be nice if the Ministry of Defence produced some form of guidance and some imaginative thinking. However, as in so many areas, the Ministry is following along behind the crowd.

I estimate that when CFE 2 comes we shall have the prospect of sizeable force reductions. Legitimate statements have been made tonight by hon. Members from the north-west, including the hon. Members for Fylde (Mr. Jack) and for Wyre (Mr. Mans), expressing anxieties about the lack of notice that they were given of the recently announced cuts and the problems that will be created for programmes which still have some time to run and for which replacements have yet to be found. Those problems will be as nothing if we do not prepare properly for them.

We may disagree about the desirability of a diversification agency. I do not believe that such an agency would provide all the answers or that it should be compulsorily applied to every potential instance of redundancies. However, considerable expertise within Government could be brought to bear to assist companies when they get into difficulties such as British Aerospace is experiencing.

I received a phone call this morning—hon. Members from the north-west probably had a similar call—from the convener of shop stewards at Wharton. He said that the management had told him that they did not know what to do and would discuss the matter and come up with proposals in four weeks. That does not suggest that the cuts in the Tornado order programme were made in a leisurely or relaxed fashion or that a great deal of planning was involved.

The questions put to the Government by hon. Members on both sides will have to be answered. Is there a strategic legitimacy to the cuts? Where do they come within the planning of NATO? We are entitled to an answer to those questions and the people of the north-west will look for a answer. Although it gives me no pleasure to point it out, I remind Conservative Members that a considerable number of Conservative seats in the north-west will be in great jeopardy as a consequence of cuts. The hon. Member for Wyre is laughing, but there are other Conservative Members whose coats are hanging on far slacker nails. I warn Conservative Members of the electoral consequences of the foolhardy, cavalier approach of Government Front-Bench Members. They may sit for safe seats, but they will face their fate at the Dispatch Box.

Mr. Franks: The minutes are ticking by and we are now in the second hour of speeches from Labour Front-Bench spokesmen. Will the hon. Gentleman say at least one sentence or perhaps two about Trident?

Mr. O'Neill: As far as I am aware, the hon. Gentleman has been in the House for the length of time that it took him to make his speech and—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] I shall answer the question in a moment, in my own time. It ill becomes the hon. Member for Barrow

and Furness (Mr. Franks) to tell the Opposition what we should or should not do with regard to Trident when the Conservative Government have yet to order the third boat and have refused the funds to allow the pipework on the fourth boat to start. This is the truth. The Trident force is not yet—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Do not let us have a shouting match about it.

Mr. O'Neill: Such was the contribution from a semi-detached, part-time Member who came in at the end of the debate. Let me repeat what I said before I was shouted down. Until the Government place an order for the third boat, it ill becomes the hon. Gentleman to ask us what we might do about a fourth.

The present record of the Government in the management of the defence estate leaves much to be desired. It is clear that the MOD could not even anticipate the increases in inflation and thus it had to come to the House with the half-baked announcements of cuts. I doubt whether the savings from those cuts will appear in this year's accounts.

We must recognise that throughout the debate there has been a considerable amount of imaginative thinking on both sides of the House, with the notable exception of Conservative Front-Bench spokesmen. The advice that has consistently been given by hon. Members on both sides suggests that the Government's defence estimates do not deserve to be supported. They are not worth the support of the country or the House. We ask the House to support the amendment in the name of the official Opposition.

9.40 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Michael Neubert): Such has been the interest in this debate that on two successive days it has been extremely difficult to accommodate all those who wanted to take part. The House is aware that the "Options for Change" exercise is under way, and the debate has been a timely opportunity to reassure those hon. Members who have contributed that their views will be taken into account.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) seems to want a fixed timetable for the exercise, but I cannot promise that. We shall come forward at a time of our choosing with our proposals to enable opportunities for discussion and consultation. For the moment we can at least debate the issues against the background of changes in the world and the reflected pressures of public opinion.

After the contributions from the Front-Bench spokesmen, my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) and the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) spoke. They are parliamentarians of the same generation and were listened to with great interest. My right hon. Friend drew attention to the Chinese saying that supreme excellence lies in winning wars without a battle, and he paid tribute to the battle we have won in such a way. He did not fail to make a connection between the peace we have achieved since the war in Europe, the prospects for the future and the maintenance of the nuclear deterrent. The hon. Member for Clackmannan was distinctly reticent about that a moment ago, as well as throughout the debate. My right hon. Friend also called for a global alliance between Europe and the United States and those who listened to his speech will give thought to and no doubt support that idea.

The hon. Member for Attercliffe said that the only significant change among all the defence changes was that concerning the amount of warning time. He was right to draw our attention to that. He also mentioned CFE2 and NATO has made it clear—it was reaffirmed at the recent meeting of Foreign Ministers at Turnberry—that as soon as the CFE agreement is reached in Vienna we will be prepared to undertake follow-on negotiations. The objective of those negotiations will be considered in full when NATO Heads of State meet in London next month.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed), a former Navy Minister, was listened to with great attention, particularly his remarks about the future shape of the Royal Navy. Obviously I shall give some thought to what he said. He asked about the need to replace LPDs HMS Fearless and Intrepid. We are still considering the results of the studies we commissioned into replacing the capability that they represent. We expect to reach a decision soon, but I remind the House that there is still plenty of time to implement our decision before the current ships reach the end of their lives.

The hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) made an unexpected speech in that it came from the Opposition Bench below the Gangway—the hon. Gentleman has his own independent standing in the House—and he supported a fourth Trident. He was almost alone on the Opposition Benches in that, except for the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert), who yesterday pledged himself to support that policy. Even more surprisingly from the Opposition Benches, the hon. Gentleman supported TASM on NATO aircraft based in Europe.

My hon. Friend the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) made a characteristically witty, if brief, contribution, and we could have listened to more without hardship. I could not say that about the speech of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), who was powerful in his call for an arms diversification agency, others probably being aghast at the logical consequences of the policies that he espouses in view of the rapid loss to employment that would result in the defence industry.

It was not the first time that I heard such an agency proposed. In *The Independent* on 1 June there was reference to an arms diversion agency, as it was called, and such is the aptitude of we in the Ministry of Defence to apply acronyms to anything, the concept immediately became ADA in my mind. I am sorry if that sounds like a cleaning lady, but apparently ADA would make good the loss of many thousands of jobs that would flow from reductions in defence expenditure to which Labour supporters are committed, no matter what stands on the Order Paper.

My hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Franks) asked what would happen to the nuclear deterrent under a future Labour Government, should there ever be one. His question failed to elicit an answer. Indeed, there has been a deafening silence on the whole subject of nuclear deterrence from the Opposition Benches.

My recently honoured hon. Friend the Member for Arundel (Sir M. Marshall) asked us to continue with the privatisation and contractorisation of services. I assure him that we are not letting up in the market testing of

[Mr. Michael Neubert]

services wherever appropriate, and that assurance can be given to my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack), who also raised the subject.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) pointed to the fact that the Soviet Union was still the biggest military power in Europe. That fear was echoed by other hon. Members, who recognised that the world was changing and that we must change with it but who nevertheless suggested that we should err on the side of caution, a phrase used by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt).

Following the announcement of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement last night, a number of my hon. Friends spoke of Tornado. My hon. Friend will be writing to hon. Members who raised the subject, but perhaps I can clarify any confusion about numbers. The number of aircraft with which we are not proceeding is 33, 26 of the strike version and seven of the air defence version.

In announcing our original intention to make the order, my hon. Friend who is now the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs referred to 41 aircraft. The reason for the difference is that eight of the air defence version were brought forward into the seventh batch and are not affected by this decision. The aircraft were intended to replace future predicted losses. We expect both variants of the Tornado to continue in service into the next century.

The hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) asked about the armed services Bill. It is a quinquennial measure which will not come up this Session, and of course I cannot anticipate the Queen's Speech.

The debate has had attached to it three Select Committee on Defence reports, one of which has not received more than passing mention, that dealing with the subject of reliability and maintainability—R and M for short. The services acknowledge that much of the equipment that they have in use today fails to come up to the required levels of R and M. That has a direct and erosive impact on our operational capability.

Our prime motivation for seeking improved levels of R and M is to enhance our operational capability. With the prospect of force reductions in Europe, it becomes ever more important that their smaller holdings of weapons and equipment will work when needed.

A second and most significant factor, upon which R and M has a direct bearing, is the cost of operating and supporting equipment. We have estimated that unreliability currently costs the taxpayer £1 billion a year. Although it is acknowledged that that is a broad estimate, it shows the size of the problem. We must reduce that figure substantially—indeed, we aim to halve it, although we recognise that it will take some years to achieve that.

The third factor is the shortage of skilled manpower to maintain and support our equipment. Higher reliability and greater ease of maintenance are essential if we are to match our manpower requirement to diminishing resources. In future, we must achieve better value for money in our equipment acquisition programmes. It is against that background that the House has shown considerable interest in R and M over the past 18 months, if not, in all cases, at this minute.

Mr. Graham *rose*——

Mr. Neubert: I am sorry but I cannot give way.

The National Audit Offices report on R and M on the Ministry of Defence provided the ground work for the Public Accounts Committee's investigation into the R and M of defence equipment and we shall respond shortly, in the usual way, to the report of the Select Committee on Defence. I am pleased to see that both those investigations, while identifying the problem areas, acknowledge the considerable effort that the Ministry of Defence is now making to secure better levels of R and M.

Mr. Graham: Will the Minister please answer the question I asked him? How much did the helicopter at the Tory party fair in Scotland cost?

Mr. Neubert: I heard the hon. Gentleman's question the first time, but the hon. Gentleman left it so late to enter the debate and pose it that he will have to wait a little longer to receive a reply.

The Statement on the Defence Estimates is printed in two volumes, which are before the House. It is quite clear that the Government stand by a budget of £21 billion this year. I wonder what the official Opposition stand by, because before we vote on the Statement on the Defence Estimates, we must vote on an amendment. I mean not the first amendment on the Order Paper, supported by 19 Opposition Members, but the second amendment, which I might describe as the official Opposition's afterthought. I wonder which one we should accept as Labour party policy. The first amendment mentions

"the imposition of wasteful, unacceptable and unnecessary burdens of military expenditure upon the British people."

Does the hon. Member for Clackmannan, who was saying how much support he gives the armed forces, support that description of expenditure on the armed forces that defend our country? Red Indians warned of white men who spoke with forked tongue. In relation to the Labour party's defence policy, the British people would do well to be warned against the official Opposition who speak with forked amendment.

We know that at the last Labour party conference at Brighton, the party which is represented by the hon. Member for Clackmannan—who may not wish to be reminded of this—voted by two to one for an initial and immediate cut of £5 billion in defence spending. The actual voting was 4·2 million to 1·9 million—it was obviously a well-attended conference. As recently as last March, the Scottish Labour party passed, not by two to one but by 12 to one, a motion calling for a reduction of £9 billion in the defence budget.

I imagine that the hon. Member for Clackmannan, as he is a Scottish Member and the Scottish Labour party is so strong in this House, would be regarded as something of a hero. He might become a local hero in Scotland—the holder of the Scottish equivalent of the Order of Lenin. Yet in yesterday's debate, when my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) challenged him about Labour party figures for reducing spending on defence, he replied as follows:

"The hon. Gentleman puts figures on cuts that have yet to take place. As far as I know, he, CND and some of the more exotic fringes of the Labour movement have been the only ones to try to impose figures of that nature."—[*Official Report*, 18 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 701.]

I find it hard to understand how the hon. Member for Clackmannan can be so dismissive of his closest parliamentary colleagues, as we understand that the Leader of the Opposition and Mrs. Kinnock are members

of CND, as are numerous others of their parliamentary colleagues, whom the hon. Gentleman has thus put in their place.

Is the hon. Gentleman asking us to accept that among "the more exotic fringes of the Labour movement" is the Scottish Labour party, which wants to cut £9 billion from the defence estimates? I see that no answer is forthcoming.

At the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union annual conference in Scarborough the union voted on a similar motion to cut £6 billion from the United Kingdom defence budget of £21 billion. When the motion was put to the vote, it was declared lost on a show of hands. Protests at the chairman's decision followed, and when the motion was put to the ballot the conference voted by 232 to 94 to cut £6 billion from the defence budget. That was either an example of partial blindness on the part of the chairman or of the sort of robust democracy which the hon. Member for Newham, North-West urged on us earlier. But the truth will always come out——

Mr. Graham: What about the helicopter?

Mr. Neubert: Never mind the helicopter; we want to know what the Labour party has to offer for the defence expenditure of this country. Does it offer the official Opposition amendment or the amendment tabled by some Labour Back Benchers? Will the Opposition be voting twice or only once at 10 o'clock?

Several hon. Members warned us against taking things too easily—against accepting the conventional wisdom that peace has broken out barring, or including, the shouting—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is a great deal of back-chat going on on both sides of the House. I ask the House to listen to the Minister's concluding words.

Mr. Neubert: We are approaching the moment of the Labour party's maximum embarrassment in this two-day debate, so I am not surprised that Opposition Members are no longer prepared to listen. If they proceed with their reductions in defence expenditure, thousands of jobs will be lost, not only in Conservative marginal seats in Lancashire—the prospect encouraging the hon. Member for Clackmannan—but all over the country. One must ask whether the hon. Gentleman's views on that are entirely straightforward because he was foremost in pressing my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence to negotiate the EFA radar project so that jobs could be saved in Ferranti in Scotland. He must make up his mind whether to support our defence estimates or to support his hon. Friends.

In opening today's debate my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces spoke about the rapidly changing world in which we live. It offers great prospects for the future, but it is an uncertain and potentially dangerous world. We need the assurance of a sound defence policy buttressed by a sound defence budget. That is what is contained in the statement, and I urge the House to support it.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 192, Noes 319.

Division No. 235] **[10.00 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carr, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*

Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question put:—
The House divided: Ayes 322, Noes 27.

Division No. 236] **[10.14 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony

Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and Mr. Tony Durant.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Canavan, Dennis
Clay, Bob
Cohen, Harry
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Douglas, Dick
Flannery, Martin
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Lambie, David
Livingstone, Ken
Loyden, Eddie
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Parry, Robert
Primarolo, Dawn
Skinner, Dennis

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and Mr. Jeremy Corbyn.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House approves the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990 contained in Cm. 1022.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Greenwich Hospital Bill [*Lords*] and the Ways and Means Motion may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

10.25 pm

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you advise the House on the last Division? If the Opposition are so divided that votes by minority are required when they are in opposition, what hope is there of this country having a proper defence policy if they are in government?

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that that is a matter for me.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I draw your attention to a matter of concern to Members with offices in Norman Shaw, South and North. Owing to work to the stairs in the subway on the corner of Bridge street and the Embankment, those of us with offices in Norman Shaw have to come to this place via the underground station, the gate of which closes at 12.30 am.

I understand that the work will take several weeks to complete. That will present difficulties when votes take place later this week and in the next few weeks. We shall have to negotiate the traffic across Bridge street and come down another subway or use the subway under the Embankment.

Will you please make inquiries and either give hon. Members some extra time for voting or make other arrangements for the work to be carried out during the summer recess?

Mr. Speaker: That is the first that I have heard of it. I shall look into the matter and request the Serjeant at Arms to make a report to me about it.

Greenwich Hospital Bill *[Lords]*

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read the Third time.—*[Mr. Archie Hamilton.]*

10.28 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): The Bill is to widen the entrance to a school for children who have some connection with seafarers. The Bill appears to be trivial, but the Minister has not graced us with an explanation of it. He should explain what the Bill covers. It is not clear that the Bill is necessary, because it does not appear to alter the basic position. I should be grateful if the Minister would outline to the House, and place on record for those outside who may be curious, what the exact position is.

10.30 pm

The Minister of State for the Armed Force (Mr. Archie Hamilton): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) for giving me the opportunity to explain what the Bill is about.

As I explained during the earlier stages of the Bill, when it received support from both sides of the House, it is an enabling measure to allow the basis of entry to the Greenwich Hospital school to be widened. In the first place, it is to allow the daughters and granddaughters of seafarers to enter the school. But studies have suggested that, to produce a balanced school, it may also be necessary to admit children from non-seafaring families, as and when the need arises.

There is, of course, no intention to alter the fundamental naval ethos of the school. I would only add that, on the existing criteria for allowing children into the school, there is a problem of viability. The basis on which children are admitted to the school must be broadened if the school is to continue.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, without amendment.

WAYS AND MEANS

Caldey Island Bill

Resolved,

That any Act resulting from the Caldey Island Bill may impose liability to non-domestic rates.—*[Sir Wyn Roberts.]*

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.),

Police

That the draft Police (Dispensation from Requirement to Investigate Complaints) Regulations 1990, which were laid before this House on 9th May, be approved.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(5) (Standing Committees on European Community documents),

Road Vehicles

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 4748/90, relating to glazing, masses and dimensions and tyres of road vehicles; and supports the Government in accepting the substance of the proposals, which will help to complete the European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval system.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

Robens Institute (Spectrometer)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

10.31 pm

Mr. David Tredinnick (Bosworth): With Mr. Speaker's permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) will read my speech for me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for informing Mr. Speaker and I hope that he will soon recover—to his usual robust debating form.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): Had my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick) had the benefit of a product of my constituency—the Fisherman's Friend—I might not now be rising in his place. I am not over-familiar with the contents of my hon. Friend's speech, but I trust that I shall read it as well as he undoubtedly would have made it.

At a time of ever-increasing concern about levels of pesticides and chemicals in the human blood, I rise tonight to argue the case for providing the Robens institute at the university of Surrey with a computer-controlled mass spectrograph. This machine would enable an accurate assessment of chemical levels, would be available to doctors from all over Britain, and would bring about a dramatic reduction in suffering.

Before I explain this need in greater detail, I must declare an interest—it is my hon. Friend's interest, not mine, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am a member of the parliamentary group for alternative and complementary medicine and I have myself suffered from and been treated for allergies. Chemicals cause allergies—so do certain foods in certain people, for that matter, as has been conclusively shown. One of my nephews has had problems with hyperactivity. After analysis of his diet and the banning of certain foods, the hyperactivity has all but disappeared. If the diet is ignored, the hyperactivity returns.

Chemical levels in the human body are now a major threat to health, and Professor Rea at the Robens institute has highlighted one area of greatest possible concern for which a mass spectrograph would provide vital and accurate analysis. That is the level of pesticides in mothers' milk. Professor Rea fears that many agricultural workers and country dwellers are exposed to high levels of pesticide which are a potential cause of ill health. Breast-fed children of these country dwellers may be at even greater risk than their parents because pesticides are concentrated in mothers' milk and at a time of life when infants are highly susceptible to poisons.

It has already been established that the pesticide DDT is concentrated in mothers' milk, and it was banned in America for that reason. The level of many commonly used pesticides in blood and in breast milk is unknown, but it is expected to be high. Professor Rea has said:

"the long term side effects of these pesticides is alarming, and it is important that at-risk agricultural workers are routinely tested to diagnose pesticide poisoning at an early stage."

[Mr. Keith Mans]

A computer-controlled mass spectrograph at the Robens institute would enable Professor Rea and his team to analyse blood pesticide levels, and it could also be used by general practitioners all over Britain.

Since 1978, the Robens institute, which is more properly called the Robens institute of industrial and environmental health and safety, has grown from two full-time and one part-time members of staff to 110 scientists and others working in a wide range of disciplines connected with human health and safety at work and the environment.

Last year, a chair in environmental medicine at the Robens institute was established by the environmental medicine foundation—a great achievement for a small group of dedicated people. As a result of the establishment of that chair, new, exciting and essential research has been initiated by Professor Rea and his colleague, Professor Bridges.

The Robens institute has a particular research interest in the effects of chemicals on human health. Part of that work involves the use of non-animal systems, such as the use of cell preparations, computer models, and so on, to understand the causes of toxicity. The other crucial aspect of that research is direct information from human investigations. Human investigations include studies of population groups, conducted by Professor Balarajan and Professor Grob, and investigations on individuals. In the case of individuals, there are two main research lines. The first is direct investigations into the effect of administering individual drugs and other chemicals to man—the work of Professor Hindmarch. The second line of research is studies of individuals who appear to be suffering ill health as a consequence of exposure to an individual chemical or multiple chemicals—Professor Rea's work.

To investigate those with illnesses that have been attributed to a chemical or chemicals, some assessment needs to be made of the chemicals and/or their metabolites present in the body. It is important also to establish, where possible, specific biological markers of the chemical exposure history.

Professor Rea and others have proposed the hypothesis that, for particular sensitive individuals, the total body burden of certain classes of chemicals is responsible for their condition. That hypothesis is interesting and potentially important in regard to treatment and ill health prevention, but it remains to be tested properly. To do that, sophisticated methods need to be developed to measure not just a single chemical but a range of chemicals to identify, first, the total body burden of chemicals and, secondly, specific classes of chemicals that are considered likely to be responsible.

Research to establish suitable analytical techniques is also needed. If they are to be widely applied they will need eventually to be cheap, robust, sensitive and specific. That requires a primary reference method which will unambiguously identify the major chemicals present in the blood or biopsied tissues of sensitive individuals, and indicate the form in which those chemicals exist in the body—for example, as parent compound or metabolites —which, if any, blood tissue components they are bound to, and whether the binding, if it occurs, is readily reversible.

The primary reference method will look for possible links between the nature and concentration of those chemicals and any biochemical abnormalities in sensitive individuals. A mass spectrometer is the only available technique that fulfils the necessary criterion for a primary reference standard. The instrument is required because in the first phase of the work its role is primarily as a research tool. It needs the following specifications—first versatility of interface. That means that samples may need to be separated before a measurement is made. That requires capability for connecting the mass spectrometer to a gas liquid chromotograph, as well as a high performance liquid chromatograph. Secondly, it needs an ability to identify and measure the levels for relatively high molecular weight components—for example, chemicals that are bonded to proteins, fats and/or carbohydrates. Thirdly, it requires mild conditions in the chamber of the instrument so that relatively unstable biological molecules are not degraded prior to measurement.

In her reply to the Adjournment debate of my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, West (Sir J. Spicer) on allergies on 30 January, my hon. Friend's predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), explained:

"facilities for the analysis of blood for very low concentrations of chemicals, including pesticides, are available in the United Kingdom at the UK Atomic Energy Authority establishment at Harwell at commercial rates."—[*Official Report*, 30 January 1990; Vol. 166, c. 288.]

That was a helpful suggestion. Indeed, it is expected that this work will complement that of Harwell, and the others who offer an excellent service for environmental samples and who have special expertise in dioxins and dibenzo-furan measurements. The continuation—indeed, the extension—of services such as Harwell's is important. However—this is the key problem—clinicians cannot readily use such services unless they know precisely what they want to measure in order that a satisfactory response can be provided. Harwell offers service rather than research, and analysis of condition rather than measurement. In contrast, the mass spectrograph identifies precisely what chemicals are in the blood and in what quantities.

I have argued for the mass spectrograph. I naturally hope that the Minister will tonight commit his Department to finding the funds for this essential project. If he cannot, I hope that he will at least use his influence with the Medical Research Council and the Science and Engineering Research Council. He does have a very real influence there—will he give that commitment tonight? Will he also inform other Departments and organisations, including the Department of the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Health and Safety Executive of the work of the Robens institute, and will he co-ordinate a fund-raising campaign with those other interested parties?

In conclusion, the mass spectrometer is essential to investigate the very important hypothesis that the total body burden of chemicals is an important factor in the ill health of certain sensitive individuals in the population. In addition, the instrument would have many other valuable uses in the area of human health and safety from chemicals. In the first instance, the primary role of the instrument will be to aid the development of simple technologies. Ultimately, the Robens institute will be able

to provide an effective, economic analytical strategy for investigating patients whose condition has been attributed to chemical exposure.

10.43 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Stephen Dorrell): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick) on winning the opportunity to raise this subject this evening and to extend to him the good wishes of the entire House on the recovery of his voice. I celebrated my arrival in the Department of Health as a new Minister by suffering from exactly the same condition as my hon. Friend. It meant that I had more time to read briefs and less ability to annoy the civil servants in my first week in the Department. I hope that my hon. Friend recovers quickly.

I extend to my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) my commiseration on being asked to read out a technical brief with, I suspect, relatively little notice. I wish that I could read out a brief containing as many long words with the same skill. I thank both my hon. Friends for raising the matter this evening.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre said, the Robens institute is well respected and dedicated to research in occupational and environmental health. It was founded on the intitiative of Alf Robens with that background. It is not surprising that it was originally interested in occupational health research and since then has extended its activities to include environmental health research as a topic related to its original core interest. The issues that my hon. Friend raised on the Adjournment tonight reflect that development of interest.

The institute argues that in order fully to realise the opportunities which that development of interests provides, it needs a spectrometer within its armoury of facilities to conduct the research that it wishes to do. That case was advanced by Professor Bridges in the paper that my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth was kind enough to send to me earlier today. I am the first to concede that the paper raises several interesting subjects which could certainly be the subject of legitimate scientific research.

The first question prompted by the case advanced by my hon. Friends this evening is to whom the case that Professor Bridges made should be directed. In effect, he seeks an independent capital project to invest a substantial sum of money in a mass spectrometer for the Robens institute. There is no fund within the Department of Health which can legitimately be regarded as a fund for such investment. The Robens institute is part of the university of Surrey. Proposals for major capital projects such as this should properly be made to the authorities at the university of Surrey or, in the education world, through the institutions set up by the Department of Education and Science. I do not pretend to have sufficiently developed expertise in the various institutions of that Department to suggest precisely which course my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth should pursue.

Within the Department of Health no fund has been established precisely to meet the need that Professor Bridges has advanced for a spectrometer for an academic research institution. We fund research but not capital investment required by a research institute in an academic setting.

My first point in response to my hon. Friends is that they have made their case to the wrong institution of Government. My second point is that my Department is not hostile to the idea that environmental medicine and theories, particularly those advanced by the Environmental Medicine Foundation, should be researched. We are not hostile to that idea. However, if research funds are to be made available to undertake scientific tests on the theories advanced by that foundation, it is incumbent upon it to construct a clearly specified, properly tested programme of academic scientific research to test its propositions. I am sure that my hon. Friends would be the first to accept that they have not advanced such an approach, but rather made the case for investment in a particular piece of advanced scientific kit.

The Medical Research Council is funded from my Department's budget and if its money is to be used to support research into environmental medicine it must be on the basis of a formally presented, clearly specified, properly tested proposal for research. Our doors are not closed to such a proposal—on the contrary, discussions have gone on for some time with those interested and much enthusiasm has been expressed for the ideas advanced. However, I am advised that no formally presented proposal of the kind that I have described has been put before the Medical Research Council.

Even though the Department is not opposed to the idea of research, I know that those at the Environmental Medicine Foundation believe that the Medical Research Council gives their ideas a frosty reception. Those who want their ideas to be tested properly should recognise, however, that there are other courses open to them. The national health service does not seek to determine centrally the clinical decisions of individual clinicians. Those who find that they cannot secure the acceptance of the Medical Research Council to test their ideas properly should consider making their case to the clinicians and suggesting that their ideas should be properly examined in medical institutions.

My hon. Friends have argued that the Department should invest in the mass spectrometer, but their case is misdirected as the Department does not have the resources to make such an investment. It is not for lay Ministers, people who are properly not expert in such matters, to make decisions about precisely the type of research that should be followed and tested in the scientific world of medicine.

It is incumbent upon those who want to advance the case for their research to do so through the academic research institutions, pre-eminently the MRC in this case, and to seek the interest of individual clinicians. They should seek to persuade those clinicians and institutions about the development of research that offers the opportunity for the treatment of patients and clinical conditions. No Minister should pretend to be able to make a decision on such an issue. The NHS does not seek to centralise clinical decision making and it makes a virtue out of leaving clinicians free to make such decisions in the interests of their patients.

My hon. Friend questioned whether those who wish to see their ideas tested have a realistic prospect of access to the mass spectrometer that they believe necessary to provide a proper testing of their concepts. My hon. Friend suggested that if I were not able to promise funds this evening—and I have made it clear that I am not—I should

[Mr. Stephen Dorrell]

sponsor or otherwise bless a fund-raising campaign to raise money to provide a spectrometer for this type of research. I would not want to take that stance, but I have a suggestion to make to my hon. Friend which I hope he will feel goes some way towards responding to the concern which he expresses and which I know exists in the field about whether it is realistic to see any prospect of access to a spectrometer for research of this type.

In the context of the general programme of research that is constituted in the document prepared by Professor Bridges, I am the first to recognise that a spectrometer would contribute to that kind of proposal. Referring back to some earlier remarks I made about the proper source of capital funds for that type of proposal, it is up to him to make a bid for investment in a spectrometer from the bodies that provide capital investment funds for academic research of that nature.

Mr. Mans: If the Robens institute produces a proposal which meets the Department's criteria, would the Minister be prepared to use his influence with the Medical Research Council to consider that proposal with great care?

Mr. Dorrell: I am not sufficiently experienced in the ways of my Department, after five weeks in office, to know the extent of my influence with the Medical Research Council. But I can make a slightly different offer, which I hope my hon. Friend will take in the spirit in which it is made.

The facility of mass spectrometers is not rare in the academic and medical world now, and I am told that several hundred of them have already been installed. I suggest to my hon. Friend that if the Robens institute prepares the kind of properly tested, clearly specified programme of research into this field about which I have talked—as part of a structured programme of research—and it finds that that programme is running into the sands because of its inability to secure access to a mass spectrometer, I will offer the services of my Department to try to find one of the installations that already exists in the country that may be made available to provide the opportunity to use the facility required by the Robens institute.

I hope that my hon. Friend will feel that that is a genuine expression of my Department's good will towards genuine research in the field which he is anxious to encourage.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at three minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 20 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

SOUTH YORKSHIRE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (NO. 2) BILL

Lords amendments considered.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendments.

Hon. Members: Object.

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

REDBRIDGE LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL

Order for consideration of Lords amendment read.

To be considered tomorrow.

HASMONEAN HIGH SCHOOL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Read a Second time, and committed.

Oral Answers to Questions

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Computer Components

1. **Mr. Leadbitter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the components of computers assembled in the United Kingdom are of *(a)* British and *(b)* European Economic Community origin.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Eric Forth): Official statistics do not show the end uses of electronic components produced in the United Kingdom or the European Community. It is not possible, therefore, to give the information requested by the hon. Member.

Mr. Leadbitter: The Minister's reply is not encouraging, bearing in mind the known fact that neither the United Kingdom nor the Common Market produces any major computer components. Our share of computer components production thus reveals our low skills and damages our balance of payments. What will the Minister do to redress and reverse that damaging situation, bearing in mind the fact that research and development, and its funding, is going on apace in both Japan and America?

Mr. Forth: I regret that the hon. Gentleman wants to portray the industry in such a negative way. The House should know that the truth is that all the major countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, except Japan, have trade deficits in information technology. Another truth is that the United Kingdom has a large trade surplus in information technology with the rest of the European Community, which amounted to £900 million last year. Therefore, although it is unreasonable to pick on any one sector of the economy and to identify the trade flows within that sector, I should like the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends to see the industry for what it is—a successful and growing industry, which is attracting inward investment, creating employment and generally being a great success.

Mr. Jack: My hon. Friend will be aware that the aerospace industry is a major user of electronic and computer components. In the light of Monday's announcement about the cancellation of 33 Tornado aircraft, will my hon. Friend ensure that both the aerospace and electronics companies in Lancashire, which are so effective, are given the help of his Department's excellent enterprise scheme to support the workers who may lose their jobs?

Mr. Forth: My hon. Friend is correct to identify that the task that now faces all of us is to ensure that the employment that was previously provided by defence sector work is switched as quickly and effectively as possible to alternative work. My hon. Friend is also right to point out that we manufacture, export and re-export considerable quantities of both defence and civil equipment that contains a significant element of electronics componentry and information technology. I am sure that we all want that to continue. I note that, as ever, my hon. Friend is active in those matters and I can assure him that the Department of Trade and Industry will be helping to discover every possible way in which we can switch our efforts from defence to civil activities.

Dr. Moonie: I found the Minister's reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) somewhat surprising because I am aware—and I thought that he would be—that his Department conducted a survey of computer manufacturers in this country over the past year, which identified a shortage of local suppliers for those components. Will the Minister confirm whether that is the case and tell us what his Department will do to improve that position?

Mr. Forth: The hon. Gentleman claims knowledge beyond that which I possess—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Forth.

Mr. Forth: I can confirm that the hon. Gentleman is correct in saying that the Department has commissioned and is undertaking the survey to which he referred. That work is as yet incomplete. The hon. Gentleman may be prepared to jump to conclusions on the basis of incomplete information, but neither I nor my colleages are prepared to do so. The hon. Gentleman will have to contain himself, be a bit patient and wait for the full results to emerge before we jump to any conclusions.

Miss Emma Nicholson: Will my hon. Friend confirm that computer companies do not know what proportion of components are manufactured in the United Kingdom? The computer companies are keenly interested in what I sense is the underlying purpose of the question, which is to discover the quantity of components that come here from Japan. As yet there are no answers, and I do not believe that the Department will be able to find them at this stage.

Will my hon. Friend confirm that the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) may be inaccurate in his

statement that few hardware components are manufactured in the United Kingdom? I am delighted to say that hard disc manufacturing takes place in West Germany and in Denmark, for example. That is the central story of component manufacturing——

Hon. Members: Too long.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that that is enough.

Mr. Forth: My hon. Friend is renowned for her knowledge of the industry. I am grateful to her for her assistance in clarification. An important point has been made and it is one of which we should not lose sight. We are talking of a global industry in which components move freely across international boundaries. Goods are assembled and manufactured in a variety of different ways. To seek to identify whether components flow one way or another is probably a futile exercise. I doubt whether we could base any policy initiatives on such information.

British Steel

2. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to meet the British Steel board and shareholders at the annual general meeting of British Steel.

5. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the future of Ravenscraig; and if he will make a statement.

9. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the future of the Scottish steel industry.

10. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to meet the British Steel board and shareholders at the annual general meeting of British Steel.

19. **Mr. Maxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has recently met the chairman of British Steel to discuss British Steel's plans for future capacity.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Nicholas Ridley): With permission, I shall answer Question 2 together with Questions 5, 9, 10 and 19.

Mr. Maxton: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ridley: I met the chairman of British Steel——

Mr. Maxton: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have just heard the Secretary of State say that he is taking Question 19, which is in my name, with Question 2 and others. I must inform you, Mr. Speaker, that this is the first that I have heard of this grouping. I might well not have been in my place at this stage——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is a matter for departmental Ministers to decide. I have often heard hon. Members complain that their questions have not been brought before us. I have never heard anyone complain that his question will be called.

Mr. Ridley: I met the chairman of British Steel on 5 June and have no plans at this stage for a further meeting. Although I do not expect to attend British Steel's annual general meeting, I shall be represented.

Mr. Salmond: Has the Secretary of State read the comments attributed to Sir Robert Scholey in *The Guardian* this morning? The report states that British Steel has invested £100 million in a German steel plant, because after 1992 the United Kingdom will no longer be the centre of gravity for manufacturing in the European Community. Where does the right hon. Gentleman think that the centre of gravity lies for supplying the millions of tonnes of steel products that will be required in the North sea market throughout the 1990s? If British Steel is unwilling to supply the products from Scotland, will the right hon. Gentleman go to British Steel's annual general meeting and argue for those productive assets to be turned over to an international investor who would be willing to make a success of the Scottish operation?

Mr. Ridley: I am a very small shareholder in British Steel. I do not think that any views that I should express at the annual general meeting would carry much weight. British Steel is becoming an international company of great repute and success. The fact that it is extending its activities into the Community is something that the hon. Gentleman should welcome. It is not my job to second-guess how best to go about improving the company's performance.

Mr. Canavan: Will the Secretary of State condemn the chairman's failure to meet the trade union representatives at Ravenscraig and will he urge the chairman to do so now, instead of simply writing a secret letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland in a vain effort to try and justify the closure of the hot strip mill? Will the Government publish the contents of that letter, in view of the great public anxiety about what until recently was a publicly owned industry and British Steel's failure so far to give any public justification for the proposed closure, which would have a devastating effect on the whole Scottish economy?

Mr. Ridley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and I have urged British Steel to discuss its proposals with and explain them to the work force and the trade unions, as the hon. Gentleman suggests. Secondly, my right hon. and learned Friend has requested British Steel to agree to the publication of the letter to which the hon. Gentleman refers. No response has yet been received, but the request has been made.

Mr. McKelvey: Nevertheless, is not it the case that recently a group of Scottish Labour Members briefed the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the devastating effect that the closure would have on the Scottish economy? Therefore, will he abandon this glaikit approach and adopt a more progressive approach? Will he say from the Dispatch Box whether he is prepared to line up fully with the Secretary of State for Scotland to lead the fight against British Steel and get it to reverse this scandalous, vandalous decision against the Scottish economy?

Mr. Ridley: Indeed, a group of Labour Members came to visit me and at the end of the day they said that they were grateful for the support that I had offered the Secretary of State for Scotland. The hon. Gentleman is

wrong on that point. The more I hear about the matter, the less I can discover what the difference is between the Government and the Labour party. The Labour party does not appear to have the slightest intention of wanting to renationalise British Steel, nor to make subsidies to rescue the Ravenscraig plant, nor to take the power to issue directives to British Steel. Our position is exactly the same and I cannot see what the argument is about.

Mrs. Ewing: Cannot the Secretary of State understand that his laissez faire approach is equated with a don't care approach in Scotland and that his hands-off philosophy means that he is washing his hands of the steel industry in Scotland? Given the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) and the fact that British Steel is also considering an additional acquisition in Spain and joint ventures in France and West Germany, can the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether his Department ever takes Scotland into its consideration and whether the assets of British Steel in Scotland will be used to the advantage of the Scottish economy?

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Lady must direct her strictures at the Labour party in Scotland, which shares our view that the Government should seek only to examine carefully the arguments that British Steel advances, to respond to them and to discuss them with British Steel with a view, we hope, to winning British Steel over to our view. That is what the Government are doing and what the Labour party wants to do. The Labour party does not go anything like as far as the hon. Lady and the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond). She should pursue her quarrel with the Labour party, not with us.

Mr. Maxton: Does the Secretary of State agree with the Secretary of State for Scotland that British Steel should reverse its decision to close the Ravenscraig strip mill? Can we have a clear answer that the Secretary of State believes in demanding the reversal of that closure decision?

Mr. Ridley: I am delighted to tell the hon. Gentleman that the parliamentary clerk in my Department rang the hon. Gentleman's secretary at 10.15 am with the information that his question was to be included in this group. I am sorry if the hon. Gentleman did not get the message. On his substantive question, I have nothing to add to what the House decided in a debate. The motion was passed and the Government are busy, actively pursuing it. That is the right answer to the hon. Gentleman's question.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. Friend realise that many Conservative Members believe that commercial decisions should properly be left to commercial managers? However, we also believe that in a modern, dynamic economy, management should consult the workers fully and adequately, particularly when their production records have never been achieved before and are beating those of foreign competitors. If British Steel has no place for its Scottish plants in its future plans—it is perfectly entitled not to—it should honour its promise and put them up for sale now as a going concern.

Mr. Ridley: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that this is ultimately a commercial decision for British Steel. I support his assertion that British Steel's efficiency is becoming formidable. It now produces 347 tonnes per man year, well above the EEC average of 330 tonnes. If it is to remain at the head of the world league of steel producers, we must not unnecessarily fetter its commercial decision making. I have already agreed that it is a good principle that companies should consult their work forces and persuade them of the rightness of their decisions.

Mr. Holt: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is a long time since British Steel was taken out of the public sector, away from inept Ministers making inept decisions that cost taxpayers millions of pounds per day? The money is now redirected into social services, hospital building and other sectors, instead of being squandered and wasted. This year, British Steel has a record profit of £733 million and is the envy of steel makers throughout the world.

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend that I should be as inept as my predecessors in trying to judge the steel market or to run a steel industry. Those are not my skills.

Mr. Favell: My right hon. Friend will hear continuously from the Labour party, especially Scottish Members, about the—as they term it—deindustrialisation of Scotland. Does he agree that if the Scots were not so bellicose towards management trying to make proper management decisions, people would be more inclined to invest and remain invested there?

Mr. Ridley: As an English Borderer, I should not dare to express any views on the subject raised by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Quentin Davies: Is not it a most astonishing sign of the extraordinary turn-round that has taken place in British manufacturing industry in the past few years that British Steel, once regarded as the sick man of the international steel industry, should now be buying a venerable German company in what is traditionally regarded as the most sophisticated steel market in the world?

Mr. Ridley: I believe that our industry needs excellence, leading to domination of world markets. The House will agree not only that British Steel has done remarkably well in the short time since it was released from the public sector, but that none of us wants to do anything to hamper it from doing even better in future.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: Does not the Secretary of State recognise that he has responsibility for both competition and trade policy? In those circumstances, can he be complacent about the fact that British Steel is a monopoly producer in the United Kingdom that can run down assets and deny them to a potential competitor that might service the market and keep down prices? Why does he stand by and allow British Steel to abandon markets in the North sea and Europe, which could be served by a Scottish-based competitor?

Mr. Ridley: Neither of the hon. Gentleman's hypotheses has yet happened. He will know that various people have written to the Director General of Fair Trading about the proposed closure of the strip mill. The director general is considering those representations and will give me advice. If I receive advice from him—as I am sure I shall—I shall consider it carefully when making any decision. One cannot presume a decision about closure or refusal to supply markets in advance of its being taken.

Mr. Oppenheim: Was not Ravenscraig originally built at the behest of politicians? Is not it also the case that

political meddling over the years has done a great deal of damage to the British steel industry? Bearing in mind the incredible record of British Steel's management over the past few years as opposed to the record of politicians, would not the best course be for the Government to let the management get on with its job?

Mr. Ridley: I confirm what my hon. Friend has said. The decision to build the steelworks at Ravenscraig was part of a policy of splitting the family silver in half, if I may put it that way. I also entirely agree with him that the reason for the recent success of British Steel has been the freeing of the management from constraints in order to allow it to get on with doing best what only it knows how.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Will the Minister confirm precisely that the Government's policy is to deplore the closure and to ask for it to be reconsidered with a view to the decision being reversed? Will he tell us and list precisely what he has done to implement that objective? Will he and the Secretary of State for Scotland now meet the board of British Steel to discuss the letter that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has received and will he refer the matter to the Office of Fair Trading and ask it to look at monopoly and restrictive practices? Will he conduct an independent assessment within government of the strip mill's prospects and will he end the do nothing, care nothing, listen to nothing attitude that characterises the performance of the Department of Trade and Industry in this matter as in everything else?

Mr. Ridley: Curiously enough, the hon. Gentleman must not have been listening because I have already answered all those questions. He has not answered my question, which I shall repeat. In what respect does the Government's policy differ from the policy of the Labour party—not that of the Scottish Nationalists? This is a row between the Scottish Nationalist party and the Scottish Labour party. Does he agree that Labour has no intention of renationalising British Steel, that it cannot subsidise it and does not have powers of direction? The Labour party should stop this discreditable conduct and end the pain that it is trying to inflict on the House.

Trade Deficit

3. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his Japanese and United States counterparts to discuss the United Kingdom trade deficit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I have regular meetings with my Japanese and United States counterparts at which the full range of trade issues affecting our countries are discussed.

Mrs. Gorman: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Does he agree, to paraphrase what the Leader of the Opposition said last week, that that question is even sillier than it seems because the inflow of capital from the United States and Japan far exceeds whatever the trade deficit figure is said to be? It is ridiculous for the House frequently to flagellate itself about trade deficits when more than 190 top European companies are based in Britain and operate in other countries remitting profits to Britain. The trade balance merely measures packets of salt going backwards and forwards across Customs.

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend that Britain's massive investment in industrial and commercial assets overseas benefits probably more than 14 out of 15 people, if I may also quote the Leader of the Opposition. I must part company with her slightly on one matter because I should like to see the trade deficit reduced. It is important for us to regain our share of world trade, increase our exports and reduce our imports.

Mr. Hoyle: Would not it be true to say that that complacent and lethargic approach basically matches the performance of the Department of Trade and Industry? I am not aware of the Secretary of State's desires in relation to flagellation. He would do far better to address himself to the ever-growing deficit with Japan, the United States and West Germany and to use the endeavours of his Department to ensure that there is more investment in British industry and that it is more competitive in relation to those countries.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman must keep the facts in mind. We have a tiny deficit with the United States and over the past four years we have had a surplus in total. The Japanese deficit is relatively small and is improving; the German deficit is the real problem. One cannot put those problems entirely at the door of the Government, as some of them result from the fact that British unit labour costs are rising at 8·1 per cent. annually, whereas our competitors' unit labour costs are not.

Mr. David Martin: Does my right hon. Friend agree that if reports that the BBC world service is to cut back on its service to Japan are true, that would have an unhelpful effect on our trading relationship with Japan?

Mr. Ridley: I have no knowledge of those facts and that matter is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Textiles

4. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in textiles.

Mr. Forth: Latest available figures show that imports of textiles exceeded exports by £1,564 million in the 12 months to March 1990.

Mr. Haynes: Is the Minister aware that when I worked at the pit and we had our summer holidays, we brought the ponies out from the stables down in the pit and put them in a field for the holidays? Could I suggest that the Secretary of State should be farmed out with them, and that we should leave him there because of the response that I have just had from the Minister? Is he aware that 153,000 jobs have been lost in textiles and that the east midlands has really suffered? I want to know what is going to happen. The Secretary of State should pull his socks up. Let us do something for the textile industry.

Mr. Forth: Everyone is painfully aware of the difficulties that have arisen in the textile sector, affecting many parts of the country for some years. On the other hand, we should also be aware that the overall trade gap, as I mentioned, is going down—in this context perhaps I should say "shrinking"—slightly year by year and that certain significant sectors of the industry—woollen, worsted, flax and soft furnishings—are in surplus. That

shows that it would be helpful if the industry directed itself towards high-quality, high-value-added manufacture, in which our excellence of design and quality of manufacture can be brought to bear in a world trading context. That would make a great difference to the future of the industry.

Mrs. Peacock: Will my hon. Friend welcome the continual growth of export manufactures, especially of woollen textiles, which are of high value, from Yorkshire and our part of the world over the past five years? We have many good examples of what is happening in Yorkshire. Does he think that that growth would continue under a Labour Government?

Mr. Forth: I am well aware of the great interest and support that my hon. Friend gives to the industry in her part of the world. I have had the honour to visit parts of that industry. I suspect that were there ever to be a change of Government and a change of policy—if we knew what policies would emanate from the Opposition; that is still entirely unclear—the type of measures that could emanate from the Opposition would cripple the textile industry as well as all other industries by adding to costs and prejudicing their competitive position, which is showing some signs of improvement.

Mr. Janner: Does the Under-Secretary not know that the textile industry in Leicester and the whole of the east midlands is in a state of catastrophic decline and depression, and that the Government are continuing to do nothing to assist it? What are the Government prepared to do now, before the industry practically disappears?

Mr. Forth: The hon. and learned Gentleman raises another question in my mind—what would he or his party do about it? I am not aware of anything in the Labour party's latest convoluted policy document that deals with the industry in any way. If the Opposition are saying that they would put money into the textile industry, I hope that the hon. and learned Gentleman will consult his leader and ask where the money is to come from, since his leader seems to be totally confused about where it would come from and where it would go to.

Industry (Grants)

6. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed in his Department dealing with grants to industry; and what is their estimated annual cost.

The Minister for Industry (Mr. Douglas Hogg): The Department's main schemes involving grants to industry are regional selective assistance, regional development grants, regional enterprise grants, the consultancy initiative and support for R and D and innovation. Some 850 of the Department's staff work on the development of policy and administration of these schemes at an estimated annual cost of £19 million. That represents some 7 per cent. of the Department's total manpower.

Mr. Gill: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that all the human and financial resources currently targeted at individual commercial projects would be better spent on infrastructure for the benefit of all taxpayers and that, in conjunction with the lower wage rates and property values in the regions, that would be the best way of stimulating permanent and sustainable employment in those areas?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend makes two valuable points. Most certainly the Government should invest in infrastructure and most certainly the regions can do a great deal for themselves. But regional assistance through Government grant is also important. I am glad to say that since April 1987 regional selective assistance is estimated to have created or safeguarded about 185,000 jobs in Great Britain.

Mr. John D. Taylor: In view of the large number of people employed, do the British taxpayers of Northern Ireland contribute to their salaries?

Mr. Hogg: I rather hope so.

Mr. Ward: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that it seems that an astonishingly large number of people distribute the money? Would not it be better to get rid of them and of the grant and cut taxes?

Mr. Hogg: I am glad to say that the Government have an unequal record in cutting taxes. We have done better than any Government at any time. Regional selective assistance and regional policy are also important and should be pursued.

Mr. Gordon Brown: On the question of grants to industry and the European Commission's extended consideration of industry grants given in the Rover deal, will the Minister admit to the House the extent of not only the hidden subsidies given in grants to British Aerospace but the hidden subsidies in the form of tax concessions, which Lord Young has admitted could be worth millions of pounds? Will the Minister take this opportunity to admit to the House, to which he should have reported months ago, that in offering hidden subsidies which should have been declared, the Government were guilty of not only incompetence but deception?

Mr. Hogg: There are several unpleasant features about the hon. Gentleman. One of them is that he is doing his best to persuade the Commission to penalise British Aerospace more than it should. That is a disreputable policy of which he should be profoundly ashamed.

Cars

7. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his European counterparts to discuss the treatment of cars manufactured in the United Kingdom by Japanese-owned companies.

Mr. Ridley: I discussed the subject yesterday at the Foreign Affairs Council. I have insisted that cars manufactured in the European Commission by Japanese-owned companies should continue to enjoy unlimited free circulation throughout the Community, and I believe that that has now been accepted.

Mr. Mans: Will my right hon. Friend continue to welcome investment by Japanese companies in Britain? Will he assure me that the European Commission will treat motor cars manufactured by those companies in this country in exactly the same way as they treat motor cars manufactured by Ford and General Motors in Germany?

Mr. Ridley: Yes, Sir. I have insisted on that point, despite contrary views within the Community. In the meeting yesterday I discerned that it has now been firmly established that we are acting within the treaty of Rome in

demanding that that be the case. I am also happy to say that satisfactory progress has been made on the whole issue.

Sir Hal Miller: In his discussions, has my right hon. Friend been able to discover the basis of the objection to British workers in British factories making vehicles from European components financed by British money? What possible basis can there be for objecting to the free circulation of those vehicles throughout the Common Market? Has my right hon. Friend taken note of joint ventures by Japanese companies with companies in the countries of our continental partners and of the joint ventures that they have established in third-world countries such as Brazil, Mexico and the far east—to say nothing of eastern Europe?

Mr. Ridley: In my opinion, there can be no question but that cars manufactured in this country are part of Community production. I see no reason why any member state should think otherwise. On my hon. Friend's second point, there are more than 90 major Japanese investments in France, for example—and no one has suggested that the products of those factories should be treated as other than Community production. Nor do I believe for one moment than anyone could or should.

Mr. Cryer: Has the Secretary of State studied yesterday's decision by the Luxembourg court and its potential effect on Government decisions—for example, in car manufacturing? Does that decision mean that a manufacturer anywhere in the world who is dissatisfied with the position and actions taken by the British Government—for example, in giving regional selective assistance to a car component manufacturer in Scotland, Yorkshire or elsewhere—could apply to a British court and have the Government's decision, and legislation passed by this Parliament, suspended? If it could do that, it would set the Government and Parliament at naught. Should not the Government and Parliament resist such action?

Mr. Ridley: I cannot claim to be a lawyer, who could pronounce on such matters. I have read the articles that appeared in this morning's press, and feel that the hon. Gentleman would be wiser to seek an interpretation from someone more skilled in the law. It was always implicit on our joining the Community that we should have control over our affairs from the centre as to where we yielded in that respect. That is the importance of the doctrine of subsidiarity in making clear where the boundary is.

Mr. Grylls: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the importance of the news that he has given the House this afternoon, that motor cars made in Great Britain by Japanese-owned firms will be freely allowed on to the continent? Will he make sure that that actually happens? Until those motor cars are seen to flow out of the factories in Britain and on to the continent, there will still be doubt about whether the free market of 1992 will really arrive.

Mr. Ridley: I can only give my hon. Friend the assurance that I am confident that that result will prevail. Cars are already flowing out of at least one factory, in north-east England, and on to the continent without let or hindrance.

As I said, that issue was raised a second time in discussions, and I am confident that it has been suitably resolved. I cannot claim that the way in which the Community is moving will result in a totally free market for cars after 1992, but it will for British-made cars.

Post Office

8. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of the Post Office to discuss the state of industrial relations.

Mr. Forth: Industrial relations are a matter for the Post Office, its employees, and their trade unions.

Miss Hoey: In view of the difficulty that the Post Office has both in recruiting and retaining postal workers, will the Minister meet the chairman of the Post Office urgently and make sure that the increased postal charges that have recently been announced are used not to prop up the profits of the Post Office but to improve the services to people—and particularly to improve the working conditions and pay of the many thousands of loyal postal workers in this country?

Mr. Forth: The hon. Lady will be delighted to know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I meet the chairman of the Post Office and his colleagues regularly to keep in touch with the efforts that the Post Office is making to do precisely what she asks—to maintain a consistent investment policy and ensure that pay rewards to employees are sufficient to attract and retain employees of a suitable quality to enable the Post Office to provide an acceptable level of service to the people of Britain. The Post Office can demonstrate considerable success in this matter, and I am sure that the hon. Lady will join me in wishing it well in the continuation of that programme.

Mr. Gow: As industrial relations in the privatised industries have been much better than those in the nationalised industries, will my hon. Friend take this opportunity to reaffirm that the Government are still considering the possibility of introducing a measure of privatisation and competition into the collection and delivery of letters?

Mr. Forth: My hon. Friend knows that the Department is constantly reviewing ways in which improvements can be brought about in organisations such as the Post Office. That is a continuing process. But in the short term, we must look to the management and employees of the Post Office to sustain improvements in their quality of service so that requests such as that made by my hon. Friend will be muted and can continue to be put in their place.

Mr. Ewing: Can the Minister confirm that when he was a Back Bencher he supported privatisation of the royal mail, whereas now that he is Minister responsible for the Post Office, he has changed his mind and there is now no possibility—we are all grateful for this—of the privatisation of the royal mail?

Mr. Forth: I shall share a secret with the hon. Gentleman: remarkable things happen when one is translated from the Back Benches to the Dispatch Box and if, from time to time, the hon. Gentleman has noticed the tiniest change in my demeanour, he should not be too surprised.

Mr. John Marshall: Is my hon. Friend aware that no postal collections are taking place in my constituency today? He has frequently said that the Post office monopoly is a privilege, not a right. Does he accept that many Conservative Members believe that that privilege should be taken away?

Mr. Forth: I am aware of the difficulties in my hon. Friend's constituency. I repeat what I said at the beginning: neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor I have—or will have—any responsibility for industrial relations. I must emphasise, however, that every time unofficial action is taken that prejudices the level of service given by the Post Office, it weakens the argument that most Opposition Members will wish to advance in favour of maintaining the present status of the Post Office. My hon. Friend knows that well. His argument, which he has pursued consistently, and which he will be pursuing again in an Adjournment debate on Monday, is strengthened every time unofficial industrial action reduces the level of service given by the Post Office.

Juno Project

11. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received concerning the future funding of the Juno project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The organisers of the Juno project have requested Government funding. Juno was conceived as a private sector venture to put a British astronaut into spece on the basis of commercial and media sponsorship. I could not justify diverting resources from the Government's own space programme which has quite different goals, notably Earth observation and telecommunications.

Mr. Fearn: Does the Minister agree that the Juno project involves more than simply putting a woman from the Mars bars company or a service man from the British Army into space? Is he aware that microgravity experiments were to be conducted and that they would have had a bearing on both AIDS and arthritis? Would not the resultant savings to the health service amount to more than the £12 million for the want of which the project is in jeopardy?

Mr. Hogg: I doubt the hon. Gentleman's conclusion. What I am certain about is that the Government are right to target our spending programme as we are targeting it at present—to use space for specific useful purposes. I do not think that Juno is a proper candidate for public money in that context.

Mr. Batiste: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that research in space is a vital ingredient of the high-tech industries of the future, where many important technologies will be field tested? As the cost of those experiments is so high, it is vital that Government funds are not diverted from matters that we deem to be of strategic importance to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is entirely right. The Juno mission is not of strategic importance to the United Kingdom. What are of strategic importance are the polar platform and the Earth observation programme, to which we are subscribing, and the latest European Space Agency telecommunications satellite programme, to which we are also subscribing. We are putting our money where it matters.

Regional Assistance

12. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the level of regional development grants and regional selective assistance in *(a)* 1978-79 and *(b)* the last financial year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In 1978-79, expenditure in Great Britain on regional development grants and regional selective assistance was £416·9 million and £104·5 million respectively, while in 1989-90 expenditure was £203·9 million and £197·8 million respectively at current prices.

Mr. Martlew: In the northern region, development grants have been cut in real terms by £118 million a year and selective assistance has been cut by 75 per cent. As unemployment in the north-west is still much higher than 1979, what justification can the Government give for that? With unemployment rising and industry being hit by high interest rates and inflation, will the Minister reconsider putting more money into the north-west to stimulate investment?

Mr. Hogg: This is an interesting question because it points to two things: first, a lack of knowledge and, secondly, a change in the Labour party programme, as it is disclosed. The hon. Gentleman spoke of rising employment. In his constituency, which is an unassisted area, between March 1989 and March 1990 unemployment fell by 21·4 per cent.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: What about 1979?

Mr. Hogg: I said 1989 to 1990. In the adjoining constituency of Workington, which is an assisted area, between March 1989 and March 1990 unemployment fell by 28·3 per cent., so the policy is working. The hon. Gentleman has disclosed a new spending programme for the Labour party. If he looks at page 16 of his party's policy document he will find that it mentions only a reshaping of regional grants. He wants to bring back regional development grants, but that would cost £1 billion. I do not suppose that that has been provided for in the spending plans.

Mr. Yeo: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that if anyone were to advocate an increase in development grants and selective assistance, to be paid for exclusively by extra taxes on one person in 15, the burden placed on those taxpayers would be crippling and the disincentive effects and the likely increase in unemployment would be substantial?

Mr. Hogg: I entirely agree. The programme disclosed in the Labour party document is only a small part of its spending programmes. The hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) has made it quite plain that he wants to bring back regional development grants, but it would cost £1 billion to reinstate them to 1978-79 figures. Is that included in the bill of £50 billion, which independent experts have assessed as the cost of the Labour party programme?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Minister looked quite pathetic in answering my hon. Friend the Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew). He completely misrepresented what my hon. Friend said.

What discussions are going on between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of the Environment about West Cumbria's application for objective 2 assistance? Does he realise that we desperately need that assistance in West Cumbria because we face as many as 3,000 or 4,000 redundancies following the run down of the Sellafield thermal oxide reprocessing plant construction project? We need the money and that help in West Cumbria. What will the Minister do?

Mr. Hogg: That is an extraordinary question. I have had the pleasure of telling the House that unemployment in the hon. Gentleman's constituency fell by 28·3 per cent. between March 1989 and March 1990. For him to describe me as "pathetic" when I am giving good news represents a curious reversal of values.

Mr. Sumberg: Instead of listening to the dismal Jimmies opposite, will my hon. and learned Friend pay a visit to the north-west of England, where he will see a revival of economic activity, a reversal of the north-south divide and a reduction in unemployment? The only threat to all that would be the election of the Labour party to government.

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend is manifestly right. If a Government try to introduce a spending programme that will cost £50 billion—according to independent assessments—it will lead to rampant inflation and massive taxation. However, that is the policy of the Labour party, and we shall remind the electorate of that fact until they are fed up with it.

Mr. Caborn: In future, will the Minister obtain his briefings from the Department of Trade and Industry, and not from the right hon. Member for Mole Valley (Mr. Baker)? If he did, we might hear a little more sense. Does he agree that since the last Labour Government there have been cuts in regional grant amounting to £660 million a year? Such cuts lead to headlines such as

"British cities struggle in prosperity league."

The Government have excelled even themselves by relegating 15 of our great cities to the bottom of the European league: we now have the worst record in the European Community.

Rather than attacking the Labour party's policy, the Minister should read the Audit Commission's report on the Government's performance in dispensing aid. The report calls it

"a patchwork quilt of complexity which cannot be understood either by business or local authorities."

Will the Minister arrange for a debate on the report?

Mr. Hogg: I know that the Labour party is upset about the way in which the public are beginning to realise what is in its programme. Let me tell the House—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Foulkes: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Order Paper refers to "Questions" to the Secretary of State: that means that Ministers must answer questions. This little arrogant shit has not answered a single question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must withdraw that word immediately, and must not repeat it.

Mr. Foulkes: Which word do you want me to withdraw, Mr. Speaker—little, arrogant or shit?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman knows which word: the last.

Mr. Foulkes: I withdraw the last word.

Mr. Hogg: All this whingeing and whining from Opposition Members is amusing and pathetic. We are now costing the Labour party's programme. Let me add that it was not my right hon. Friend the Member for Mole Valley (Mr. Baker) who attached a bill of £50 billion, but the independent experts Midland Montagu Research.

West Germany

13. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in manufactured goods with West Germany.

Mr. Ridley: In the four months ended April 1990 the United Kingdom trade deficit in manufactured goods with West Germany was £3·1 billion.

Mr. Thompson: You will have noted, Mr. Speaker, the reference by Ministers to the Labour party's policy document. At least we have a policy for trade and industry. The Secretary of State's figure of £3·1 billion for the first four months of this year suggests that the Government will match, if not exceed, last year's deficit of £9·6 billion, which was part of a deficit of £14·5 billion with EEC countries. Has the Secretary of State learnt any lessons from the West German Government's attitude to industry? It supports industry with railway systems, infrastructure and support for training. There are significant lessons to be learnt from our European neighbours about trade and industry, but has the Secretary of State learnt any yet?

Mr. Ridley: I have learnt one lesson: to impose a further burden on British industry of 0·5 per cent. payroll tax on its total labour costs, yielding £1 billion, would be crippling to its competitiveness and would make the deficit with West Germany worse. That is the policy contained in the Labour party's document, to which the hon. Gentleman referred. Will he now formally denounce his Front Bench for suggesting imposing penalties on our industry which would make our trade deficit worse? Will he admit that it is time that the Labour party thought again?

Mr. Roger King: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the way to beat countries such as Germany is to produce finer and better quality goods? Will he join me in congratulating Tom Walkinshaw Racing and Jaguar Cars on their magnificent Le Mans victory, when they came first and second, beating a West German Porsche well and truly into third place?

Mr. Ridley: I agree with my hon. Friend that the way to improve our trade performance is to improve quality and our competitiveness so that we can sell in every market of the world. Of course, I join my hon. Friend in congratulating those who won that victory. It is a great British success which I want to see translated into a dividend in terms of sales around the world.

European Court of Justice (Decision)

3.30 pm

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take the application under Standing Order No. 20 first.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you, under Standing Order No. 20——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am taking the Standing Order No. 20 application in the hon. Member's name before points of order.

3.31 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I beg to ask leave, under Standing Order No. 20, for an immediate debate on the following subject, namely,

"The consequences for the sovereignty of the House of Commons of the decision of the European Court of Justice on interim relief."

Although there has appeared to be an all-party conspiracy in the House not to discuss dramatic European developments which have consequences for our sovereignty, I believe that the events of yesterday are so specific and serious that we must consider them now as a free Parliament.

The issue is certainly specific. Until yesterday, it was always considered that the task of our Parliament was to make laws and the task of the courts was to interpret them. Following our accession to the EEC, we had to accept that, under article 2, if a European Court decided that any of our laws were in conflict with Euro-law, we had to consider its judgment and then draft alternative laws or amendments to change our laws, in due course and taking account of all the other laws of our land. However, yesterday's judgment on the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 creates an entirely new situation. The European Court has taken upon itself the right to declare that an Act of this Parliament becomes null and void if it receives what it regards as a justifiable complaint of damage or loss until such time as the Court makes a decision. *[Interruption.]* If hon. Members do not think that this is a serious matter, let them remember that, until yesterday, no court has ever told this Parliament to suspend or nullify the law.

The seriousness of the matter is abundantly clear. Any law that we enacted last week, that we will consider today or that we enact next week can be repealed in a flash by the judges in Luxembourg, the moment they receive a complaint from anyone in Britain or elsewhere which they consider serious enough to investigate. The immediate issue is serious for our fishermen and trawler operators, who were led to believe by the Government and the Opposition that the modest quota of fish stocks allocated to the United Kingdom by Brussels belonged to them, but it now appears that those stocks can be eaten up by the Spanish or other operators who have no link with the United Kingdom. This serious issue is only one of what may be a substantial number of similar cases in the future.

This issue should certainly take precedence over all other business. There is no point in our going ahead with passing laws when we have no guarantee that those laws will prevail. We might be able to cope with or to plan for a new situation if Euro-laws were clear and precise, but we have a special problem in that the wording of the treaty of Rome and the Single European Act is so general and so non-specific that it is almost impossible to anticipate what the European Court would say.

There are very few issues that deserve special priority, but this is surely one. It affects the sovereignty of this House, the rights of the people and, more importantly, the power of Parliament, which has always been to respond to the people, not to non-elected officials. We must have a debate. The issue is vital.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the implications for parliamentary sovereignty of the decision of the European Court of Justice yesterday on interim relief."

I have listened with great attention to what the hon. Member said about this matter. As he knows, I have a difficult decision to take: whether his application should take precedence over the business set down for today or tomorrow.

In this case, the matter that he has raised does not meet the requirements of the Standing Order. [HON. MEMBERS: "Shame."] Order. I therefore cannot submit his application to the House. Nevertheless, he has raised a vital matter concerning the sovereignty of Parliament. I hope that the House will address it in due time.

Points of Order

3.36 pm

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) first.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your protection as a Back-Bench Member of this House. It is clear that, at Question Time, my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Central (Mr. Watson) and the hon. Member for York (Mr. Gregory) were deprived of the opportunity of putting a question because the Minister of State sought to hijack the proceedings. He did so in response to a question that was put to him by quoting figures on Labour party policy that had been provided to him by Conservative central office.

I seek your protection because, if called, we should have been able to put our questions at Question Time and contribute to the debate. I hope that you will request Ministers to reply to the questions on the Order Paper.

Several Hon. Members *rose—*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is really impossible to expect the Chair to monitor the answers given to questions. That is a matter for the Ministers concerned.

I must say that today I do not think that the length of answers to questions was the problem. I think the problem was that so many questions were linked. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Those questions fell high on the Order Paper. Had they fallen a little lower down, it is just possible that we could have taken them at the end of Question Time.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will hear the points of order, but I must remind the House that today we have a very important Report stage which is time-limited. The first guillotine falls at 7 o'clock. Points of order are bound to take time out of the speeches of those hon. Members who wish to participate in the debate.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Well, I will take it.

Mr. Conway: Can I ask Mr. Speaker, that, when you leave the Chamber today, you should study column 19 of the *Official Report* for 16 June 1983, and consider the words in that column said by you—that you,

"in your name and on your behalf, made claim by humble petition to Her Majesty to all your ancient and undoubted rights and privileges"—[*Official Report*, 16 June 1983: Vol. 44, c.19.]

Would you reflect upon that speech and consider whether the sovereignty of this House has been given away during this afternoon's proceedings and yesterday's ruling?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman should do further homework and reflect upon the Single European Act, which was passed by this House. [*Interruption.*] Order. The difficult decision that I have had to take today is whether the submission by the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) under Standing Order No. 20 met the criteria of the Standing Order. I rejected it on that basis, but I went on to say that it was indeed a very important matter for the whole House of Commons and that I hoped that there would be opportunities to address it.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I feel sure that you and the House will join me in expressing sympathy to the families affected by the tragic British Rail accident south of Doncaster. In view of the Secretary of State's statement to the papers, has he told you that he intends to make a statement to the House on safety at level crossings?

Mr. Speaker: I have not had such a request. I am sure that the whole House shares the concern of the hon. Gentleman about his constituents.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This ruling of the European Court sets aside our constitution as we have understood it for several hundred years. Two principles are of fundamental importance: one is the supremacy of Parliament, which represents the supremacy of the British people. For the first time in our national history, a ruling has been imposed that overrides the sovereignty of the British people. Therefore, to abdicate that is surely the most important issue that the House can discuss under any circumstances. Our deliberations this afternoon may be invalidated by this new constitutional principle. It is at the very heart of the business of the House.

Mr. Speaker: I entirely share the concern of the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members who no doubt will be rising on this matter, I repeat that the Leader of the House is here and I hope that he will have heard what has been said. [*Interruption.*] I am bound by the criteria of the Standing Order.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I return to the serious issue raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell)? Do you agree that Question Time today did the House of Commons no credit whatsoever? We reached only 13 questions. In the next 24 hours, will you reflect on what happened and possibly give your views tomorrow on the abuse of Question Time, not only from one side of the House? Rightly, you are quick enough to call some hon. Members to order, but others seem to get away with proverbial murder.

Mr. Speaker: That is a reprehensible statement from the hon. Gentleman. I cannot be held responsible for answers that are given from the Front Bench, provided that they are in order. [AN HON. MEMBER: "They were not."] They may have been lengthy, but the whole House knows that some rough things are said in this Chamber. That is what it is all about.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When the European Communities Act 1972 was passed, all the White Papers and documents that were produced made it clear that there would not be any fundamental change in the position of the British constitution as regards legislation passed by the House, save where Acts of Parliament took into account the

obligations we had entered into under the European Communities Act. That did not include a repeal or an implied repeal of the Bill of Rights. It is well established that, under article 9 of the Bill of Rights, the courts do not give instructions to Parliament. Would you be good enough to consider that question in the light of what is written in "Erskine May" and the Bill of Rights?

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. These are matters which the hon. Gentleman should properly raise in a debate that I hope we shall have on the matter.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I raised with you on question 2 the linking of those five questions on British Steel. Let me make it clear that I have received no letter on the board, which is the normal courtesy from the Department. The hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) has very kindly showed me the letter that the Department of Trade and Industry sent her, and there is no mention of my name in that letter. Secondly, those five questions are not the same, so I received no answer to the question that I had on the Order Paper, which was totally different from the other four questions. The only common thing is that they are all about British Steel, but it is possible to ask a variety of different questions about British Steel.

I believe that those five questions were a deliberate abuse by the Department of Trade and Industry to exclude other hon. Members who have steel interests in their constituencies, particularly my hon. Friend the Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid), from asking supplementary questions. I have to say——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a surprising point of order to put to me. The hon. Gentleman was actually called: he asked a question.

Mr. Maxton: That is not the point.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot say to the Department that I will not hear the questions that it has linked. The mark, I believe, is that questions may be linked up to 20. With any luck, if we had a straight run down the Order Paper, we might have got to 19. However, that did not happen today. I believe that the hon. Gentleman was very fortunate.

Mr. Maxton: Exactly, Mr. Speaker. I accept that my question might not have been reached, but that is not my point. The point is that the Department of Trade and Industry should not have linked together five questions on that subject. I intend to write to you, Mr. Speaker, to tell you that I believe that the procedures of the House should be changed, so that your approval must be gained before questions can be linked.

The Minister for Industry (Mr. Douglas Hogg): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. First, I understand that the parliamentary clerk in the DTI notified the Secretary of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton).

Mr. Maxton: That is irrelevant.

Mr. Hogg: Secondly, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, in grouping the questions, did so in part at least to ensure that the hon. Member for Cathcart would have an opportunity to get in at Question Time. His question was No.19, and it probably would not have been reached had the questions not been grouped.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a very important debate today on which the first guillotine falls at 7 o'clock. There is a great deal of interest in that debate and I propose to take two more points of order, one from each side of the House, and then we shall move on.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. While appreciating your difficulties and of course totally accepting your decisions, as we always do on these occasions, do you not think that there is an awful danger that the public will not understand why we are not going to debate a matter which is of enormous importance—perhaps one of the most major issues to face this Parliament for the past 40 years?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman should look carefully at Standing Order No. 20 and consider the criteria. I have a very difficult decision to take on that matter. I must weigh whether the business is of such importance that it should take precedence over the business set down for today or tomorrow. I hope that the public will understand that. I do not deny that it is a very important matter. However, I must judge whether it is of such urgency that it should take precedence over the business already set down. I hope very much that there will be a debate on this very important matter in parliamentary time.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will take one more point of order. No waving of arms.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): Are these questions on the European Court's decision really out of order? Surely the pass was sold on the sovereignty of this Parliament when Conservative Members voted for the Single European Act?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any more points of order.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any more points of order. *[Interruption.]* Order. I am on my feet.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any more points of order. I have a duty to protect the business of this House.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No. I ask the hon. Gentleman to sit down.

Motor Vehicle Excise Licence (Amendment)

3.48 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make the issuing of excise licences for motor vehicles conditional on proof of valid insurance and roadworthiness for the period of the licence.

In essence, my Bill is quite straightforward. It seeks to co-ordinate the length of time a vehicle may be licensed for road use with the validity of that vehicle's insurance and relevant test certificate.

At the moment, anyone seeking to obtain an excise licence for a motor vehicle must upon application also present a valid insurance certificate and a valid test certificate. In terms of the validity of the two certificates, it is necessary that they are valid only on the day of the excise licence. Thus, it is quite permissible for a certificate of insurance to expire 48 hours after an excise licence has been issued.

It is estimated that, at present, 20 per cent. of motorists drive around uninsured. Some do so wilfully; some because they have forgotten to renew, despite reminders from their insurance companies; and others have difficulty meeting the premiums and never get around to renewing. That total represents not only 1·5 million lost premiums, and an added burden for the majority of motorists, but the risk of the law-abiding being involved in an accident with someone who is uninsured. The consequent heartache and anger at that growing problem are known to most of us.

The innocent party can, of course, seek compensation from the Motor Insurers Bureau in the event of being involved in an accident with someone who is uninsured, but that does not mask the fact that the premiums that are paid into the central fund come from motorists who do adequately insure. It therefore follows that premiums reflect a percentage contribution to the fund. With claims ever rising in value, that can only get worse.

The annual test certificate is another requirement that is open to exploitation. Let us suppose that one applies for an excise licence in January for, say, six months. The vehicle in question may have passed its annual check-up in August of the preceding year, but the certificate would be still valid for the issue of either a 12 or six-month excise licence in January. Let us also suppose that subsequent to the expiry of the six-month excise licence, the motorist then renews on 1 July for a further 12 months. He can still use the valid MOT certificate with just one month to run, but does not need to present his car for a further test until he needs to renew the excise licence a year later. That vehicle need not have been tested for 22 months.

Critics will say that more spot checks are needed by the police and that fines should be greater to deter those who are tempted to ignore the legal requirements. I absolutely agree that that would be welcome, but however hard the police crack down, the chances of being caught are very much in favour of the motorist—and the police surely have better things to do. Others might say that the concept of an excise licence is obsolete anyway and that it should be done away with, with the loss of income being made up by additional duty on motor fuel. I do not object to that either. Indeed, I would urge it—in which case, in the

absence of an excise licence, the current insurance disc should be displayed. Without such progress, I believe that my Bill represents a worthwhile step forward.

Both the AA and RAC have expressed interest in my proposals. However, it is only fair to tell the House that while understanding the reasons for my proposals, the Association of British Insurers can see some practical problems. Its view is that a conterminus system as envisaged might present difficulties when owners change cars. Ensuring that insurance is in phase with excise licences would possibly require a huge amount of cashing up of current policies so that new ones could be issued. Equally, no-claims bonus calculations and implementation would be affected by such chopping and changing, calculated as it is on an annualised basis.

Although I understand the practical difficulties of adapting current insurance company practices to my Bill's requirements, I believe that the prize of bringing in a large percentage of those currently uninsured would be worth the effort.

Annual insurance polices could normally be sold in monthly increments. Many policy holders already pay their premiums by monthly instalments anyway, so it would not be much of a departure from present practice. It would make cashing in and renewal relatively simple. Besides, whenever a change of car takes place a new insurance proposal must be made. The procedure for calculating credits should be quite straightforward.

When a new or used car is purchased from a dealer, a new vehicle excise licence is usually part of the deal. Indeed, most dealers cash in a used car's excise licence unless a quick sale is expected. The prospective purchaser should have no difficulty in obtaining the relevant insurance to cover the period of the new excise licence.

Insurers will point out that cover notes to cover the time needed between car purchase and the issue of a proper policy would no longer be possible, but it would still be permissible under my Bill so long as the vehicle in question did not require the issue of an immediate excise licence. Used car sales might well be covered in that way, as might pre-registered new cars.

Private sales would involve the purchaser in notifying his insurance company of the relevant details; a monthly premium adjustment would be made and a new policy established to cover the excise licence renewal when the time comes. No-claims bonuses could be introduced at the appropriate anniversary month.

Owners of car fleets that are registered as businesses and covered by corporate insurance would be exempt from the requirements of my Bill. I estimate that at least five vehicles would comprise a fleet for the purpose of that requirement.

The Bill would extend to cars and light vans, but would exclude commercial vehicles, buses and coaches, for which existing practices can be maintained.

Although I said earlier that the annual test certificate is open to exploitation, it is not possible to organise a totally conterminus arrangement with the excise licence in the same way as for insurance. Therefore, my Bill proposes that a vehicle's annual test certificate should have a validity of at least six months when an application for an excise licence is made.

The Bill may seem simple enough in its aims, but initially it will create new systems. Given the opportunity of starting afresh on a clean sheet of paper, I believe that some of the obtacles, or all of them, can be overcome. I understand the reservations that some might have, but I believe that driving a vehicle on our highways is a responsible exercise and that we must ensure that legal requirements are met by everyone. It seems reasonable to ensure that, when a car owner seeks a vehicle excise licence, his vehicle is adequately insured for the appropriate period and that it is in a reasonable state of repair. At no other stage does the opportunity occur to make those checks. The display of a current excise licence should signify that the vehicle is properly insured and roadworthy.

Some will say that too many owners do not purchase an excise licence as things stand. That may be true but at least one can see whether a current licence is on display. If the licence were brighter and stood out more, monitoring display would be much easier.

The Bill outlines broad concepts that I believe are entirely feasible. It represents a useful step forward, and that is why I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Roger King, Sir Hal Miller, Sir Trevor Skeet, Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark, Mr. Gary Waller, Mr. Simon Burns, Mr. Keith Mans, Mr. David Evans, Mr. Roger Knapman and Mr. Christopher Gill.

Motor Vehicle Excise Licence (Amendment)

Mr. Roger King accordingly presented a Bill to make the issuing of excise licences for motor vehicles conditional on proof of valid insurance and roadworthiness for the period of the licence; And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 July and to be printed [Bill 165.]

Points of Order

3.56 pm

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. And it is very important.

Mr. Speaker: Is it? All points of order are very important.

Mr. Skinner: It is to do——

Mr. Speaker: Is it a point of order that relates to the Bill with which we are about to deal?

Mr. Skinner: Yes. It relates also to the Bill which has just been presented.

Mr. Speaker: No. I am not taking it.

Mr. Skinner: You are just giving in, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the hon. Gentleman to sit down.

HUMAN FERTILISATION AND EMBRYOLOGY BILL *[LORDS]* (ALLOCATION OF TIME)

Ordered,

That the Reports [6 and 9 June] from the Business Committee be now considered.—*[Sir Geoffrey Howe.]*

Reports considered accordingly.

Question, That this House doth agree with the Committee in their resolutions, *put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 80 [Business Committee] and agreed to.*

Following is the report of the Business Committee [6 June, [as amended by the Committee's report [19 June]]:

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill *[Lords]* (Business Committee),—The Chairman of Ways and Means reported from the Business Committee, That it had come to a Resolution in respect of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill *[Lords]*, which it had directed him to report to the House:

That—

(1) The order in which proceedings on consideration are taken shall be that shown in the second column of the Table set out below;

(2) the allotted days which under the Order [2nd April] are given to the proceedings on consideration and Third Reading shall be allotted in the manner shown in that Table; and

(3) subject to the provisions of that Order, each part of the proceedings shall be brought to a conclusion at the time specified in the third column of that Table.

TABLE

Allotted day	*Proceedings*	*Time for conclusion of proceedings*
First day	Amendments to: Clauses Nos. 1 to 5, Schedule No. 1, Clauses Nos. 6 to 11, and Schedule No. 2	7 p.m.
	Amendments to: Clause No. 12, Schedule No. 3, Clauses Nos. 13 to 29, Schedule No. 4, Clauses Nos. 30 to 33, and Clauses Nos. 35 to 42 and 44, Government new Clauses and new Schedules not relating to the termination of pregnancy, and other new Clauses and new Schedules not relating to the termination of pregnancy.	11 p.m.
Second day	New Clauses Nos. 1 and 6, amendment No. 31, new Clause No. 5, amendment No. 54, new Clause No. 7.	7 p.m.
	Amendments Nos. 4, 30, 29, 28 and remaining proceedings on consideration.	10 p.m.
	Third Reading	11 p.m.

Orders of the Day

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill *[Lords]*

[1ST ALLOTTED DAY]

As amended [in Committee and in the Standing Committee], considered.

Clause 1

MEANING OF "EMBRYO", "GAMETE" AND ASSOCIATED EXPRESSIONS

Mr. Speaker: The first amendment today is No. 38.

3.57 pm

Ms. Jo Richardson (Barking): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to seek your guidance, Sir, and I do not know whether this is the right time to do so. The Secretary of State for Health and the Solicitor-General have tabled some new clauses, which are to be discussed today. They were tabled only yesterday and we saw them only yesterday. I should like to know whether the Secretary of State has notes on clauses. We have no notes on the new clauses and the Library staff are trying to get their heads round the new clauses. We need to understand them. They may be perfectly all right but we would like some elaboration on what they are about.

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that I am right in saying that all the new clauses in question are unlikely to be debated before 7 o'clock. They are to be debated after the first guillotine falls. I shall make every effort to ensure that briefing is available to the hon. Lady and to any other right hon. or hon. Member. Notes on clauses will be made available at the first possible opportunity.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Bill that is before us has implications for the Common Market. There are people and countries in the Common Market that do not have the same abortion rights as those which have been recognised by this Parliament. If the Italians, for example, decided that they were not happy with the way in which abortion rights were being exercised in this country, they could, if they obtained a majority in the Common Market, decide to impose conditions upon Britain. That is very important for you, Mr. Speaker.

Those on the Government Front Bench agree with the Common Market. The Opposition Front Bench now agrees with the Common Market and all that takes place within it. Liberals have long been defenders of Common Market; they are Euro-fanatics. The Scottish Nationalists believe in the Common Market. My point is that many Back Benchers do not agree with the Common Market.

You will have representations from Back Benchers, Mr. Speaker, but you may not have representations from the Government Front Bench or the Opposition Front Bench. The net result is that the Front Benches will not ask for a debate on this important constitutional matter, so we Back Benchers have to rely on your decision that the matter is important enough for Parliament, despite the collaboration between the Front Benches. That is why this is an important matter for you, Mr. Speaker.

Previous Speakers of the House have had to stand up against the monarch and various interests. Now the Speaker of the House—yourself, Sir—must stand up against the mighty Common Market, which is beginning to do what it likes. As a result of the government's ruling, it will impose its rules, conditions and constitution on this Parliament. Somebody must speak out about it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member may be surprised to hear that I entirely share his anxiety, but he should have made that speech when we debated the Single European Act——

Mr. Skinner: I voted against it.

Mr. Speaker: But the House passed it. I will not go back on the decision which I have taken. We all agree that the matter is important. The question is whether it is so urgent that it must be debated immediately. *[Interruption.]* Order. Back Benchers also have time at their disposal and there will be opportunities for them to use that time on this important matter, even if the Front Benches do not find time, which I hope they will.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): On a point of order——

Mr. Speaker: No.

Mr. Marlow: It is not about the timing of the debate.

Mr. Speaker: Is it about this Bill?

Mr. Marlow: It is about the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Can the hon. Member put his hand on his heart and say that it is about this Bill?

Mr. Marlow: I put my hand on my heart and say that this is about the Bill.

The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) rightly said that, even if the House passed the Bill, the Act of Parliament could be as confetti as a result of the ruling made by the court yesterday. The ruling does as much potential damage to this House as was threatened by Guy Fawkes in his day. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, for your assistance. You are the champion of this House. Even after the Single European Act, "Erskine May" says that the powers of the EC institutions——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman put the wrong hand on his heart. We must proceed with today's Bill.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No. I call the Minister.

The Minister for Health (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley): I beg to move amendment No. 38, in page 1, line 17, leave out from '*in vitro*' to 'and' in line 18 and insert

'(in their application to those where fertilisation is complete) are to those where fertilisation began outside the human body whether or not it was completed there'.

This is a formal drafting amendment which follows from the change made to the definition of fertilisation in another place. It is important to make it clear when fertilisation begins, to inform the arrangements concerned

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

with consents. The amendment clarifies beyond any doubt where fertilisation begins—whether inside or outside the body.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We now come to the next group of amendments.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No. I am not going back to this matter.

Mr. Cryer: It has to do with the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: I wonder which hand the hon. Gentleman will put on his heart.

Mr. Cryer: I put my hand on my heart.

We are dealing with several amendments to an important Bill and I share your concern, Mr. Speaker, that we should be debating them. Nevertheless, may we have an assurance from the Secretary of State that if, when the Bill is enacted, it is challenged, as the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 has been challenged, in the court in Luxembourg, he will use the available path demonstrated in "Erskine May" which is that primary legislation can maintain the supremacy of Parliament? If the Bill is challenged, will the Secretary of State be prepared to consult his Cabinet colleagues about producing legislation to maintain our supremacy? If we do not get that assurance, we are not exactly occupying our time usefully.

Mr. Speaker: That point will have been taken by the Secretary of State.

Clause 3

PROHIBITIONS IN CONNECTION WITH EMBRYOS

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): I beg to move amendment No. 6, in page 2, line 35, at end insert—

'( ) bringing about the creation of an embryo other than in the course of providing treatment services,'.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 7, in schedule 2, page 29, line 32, leave out from 'authorise' to 'keeping' in line 34.

No. 8, in line 41, leave out paragraph (d).

No. 9, in page 29, leave out lines 44 and 45.

No. 10, in page 30, line 1, after 'authorise,' insert—

'(a) the administration of a substance to an embryo for the purpose of ascertaining the properties of that substance in relation to the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of disease, or

(b)'.

No. 11, in page 30, line 1, after 'authorise,' insert—

'(aa) any activity designed to develop more effective techniques of contraception, or

(b)'.

Mr. Field: The House has decided that it will allow research on embryos. When we voted last time, there was an option before us—we could either vote against or for research. The House gave a clear undertaking about what it wished. I wish to propose a third option that was not considered during that evening when we, as a Committee of the whole House, considered the Bill. That option is that there should be research, but embryos should not be created merely for the sake of research, but only, as they are now, for the treatment of patients.

The current law is that all embryos that are created belong to patients and that research can occur in two circumstances. First, it can take place on embryos that are not used in the current round of infertility treatment. Secondly, a much more rare opportunity arises for research on embryos that are not used in the current round of infertility treatment, but are frozen and used later.

As I understand the law, in those circumstances the patient will have a major say about what happens to those embryos. The clinics that conduct such affairs in the best way include Bourne hall in Cambridgeshire. There, not only are patients and researchers consulted, but the clinic has an ethics committee that considers whether research should be allowed.

Therefore, amendment No. 6 and the consequential amendment No. 7 are designed to put on the statute book what most of us understand to be the current and best treatment.

When an amendment is moved, the mover is sometimes accused of trying to wreck a decision that the House has already made. Some people may have that as their motive, but I do not. If anyone says that mine is a wrecking amendment, they must answer two questions. First, if the amendment were passed, to what extent would what appeared on the statute book be different from current arrangements? Secondly, under the new arrangements, which authorities could not undertake research that they now undertake? If mine were a wrecking amendment, presumably one would be able to answer those two questions.

I have tabled amendment Nos. 6 and 7 because although I accept that the House has made a decision about research, I want to ensure that what we understand by current practice and best behaviour is placed on the statute book. Therefore, the choice involves best practice or changing current procedures of linking the creation of embryos to the treatment of patients. If the amendment is not accepted I fear that we shall open up the possibility —I put it no higher than that—of creating embryo farms. That is a different decision, I think, from the one that we made in Committee.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): I am happy to support the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). As the House knows, I have always been opposed to research that involves the destruction of a human embryo. I accept, as I think the hon. Gentleman accepts, the decision by the majority to allow research up to 14 days, even though I voted against it. The amendment is a reasonable compromise and I support it because it seeks to establish some limit on the research that we have already sanctioned. Therefore, it is not a repeat of what the majority decided in Committee.

At the outset of one of the most important debates in the Session, I should like to make clear what I think the amendment will and will not do. It allows human embryos to be created only for the purpose of providing treatment for infertility. Therefore, it will not stop in vitro fertilisation. It does not put any limit on the number of embryos that may be created, to be used as part of a course of such treatment. Nor will it stop all experimentation on human embryos. Spare embryos which remain after IVF and which are destined, alas, to die can be used for experimentation.

What the amendment will stop, however, is the creation of human embryos purely and solely for research. To allow

such research is totally unacceptable to many hon. Members and to many citizens. The amendment is not a ban but a compromise that does not give a free-for-all to the experimenters. The Bill cannot be allowed to stand in its present form.

Mr. Frank Field: I am puzzled by the hon. Gentleman's use of the word "compromise". I tabled the amendment not as a compromise but as a clarification of what I understand the status quo to be in research. The amendment places no restrictions on research. If hon. Members want to place restrictions on such research, they must do so by supporting later amendments. I repeat that the amendment is not a compromise but seeks to place on the statute book what I understand to be current best practice.

Sir Bernard Braine: I stand corrected, and accept what the hon. Gentleman has said. "Compromise" was not the best word to have chosen. However, under the Bill as it is presently drafted, doctors and scientists can deliberately create a human being who will have no chance of developing in its mother's womb or of being born. It will be experimented upon and destroyed within days. I find this one of the most repugnant aspects of these developments, because it means using a human being as a means to an end.

At the start of our debate, we should stand back a little and ask ourselves, as I ask the Minister, where we are going. Have we given sufficient thought to developments that have been occurring in the field of human embryology or what is likely to happen in the years immediately ahead? For example, the Warnock report was published six years ago and the notion then of creating embryos purely for research horrified many people, including many hon. Members.

I was told by British and French scientists only yesterday that developments in the freezing of female eggs which are not yet human beings have progressed so rapidly that the time could soon come when the freezing of embryos may become obsolete. There would then be no need to freeze an embryo, which has a totally different status from the gamete, which has no hope of life unless it is fertilised. That is an important distinction.

I emphasise that there can be no doubt that we are dealing here with human life at its very earliest stage. In all our debates on the Bill, I have said—and I shall say again—that, with the fertilisation of a human egg by human sperm, a completely new human being begins who, if that being is ensured an appropriate environment and nutrients, has all the potential to grow and develop to adulthood.

Can we accept that it is permissible to create a new life only to destroy it? In my book, that would be flagrant abuse of the medical skills which have surely been developed to create and to uphold life, rather than to destroy it. Admittedly, the newly fertilised egg or embryo—he or she; the sex of the embryo is determined at that stage—will have to pass through many stages before adulthood. When we speak of an embryo, we are speaking of a human being at the beginning of that journey.

Surely our intention must never be to start a life merely in order to deliberately destroy it. As I said earlier, the amendment concerns a limit on research—it is a question of degree. It seeks to set a limit on the purpose for which a human embryo can be created. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves, "What is the right use to make of a human embryo?"

4.15 pm

All lines of research are not permitted in other areas. Surely medical ethics requires us to draw the line at some point. I contend that the boundaries of research must be determined by the status of the subject. I call in aid the declaration of Helsinki, which clearly states:

"in research on man the interests of science and society must never take precedence over considerations relating to the well-being of the subject."

Therefore, one thing is crystal clear to me: it is unacceptable to treat the human embryo as experimental material.

David Short, professor emeritus in clinical medicine at the university of Aberdeen, who is one of my advisers, has pointed out to me that there is a world of difference between experimenting with an embryo and with a blood cell. The human embryo is a complete individual with the potential to become a child, a young person and an adult—perhaps even a genius. A blood cell is no more than a replaceable part of a human body.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): As a member of the university of Aberdeen, does the emeritus professor speak with the authority of the existing department of biology there? The answer is no.

Sir Bernard Braine: I am not going to answer for the professor. Advisers to the pro-life group in the House, which covers all political parties, are drawn from professors emeritus whose names are world famous. I shall not go into the qualifications of a distinguished figure from the medical world. I am as entitled to quote him as the hon. Gentleman is entitled to quote the authorities upon whom he places reliance.

Without the amendment we would be creating a category of sub-humans purely for research, who can be destroyed with impunity in the course of such research. The pro-experimenters and the Government, too, are asking us for the right to create a sub-human category for experimentation, seemingly for the benefit of mankind. This Bill, unamended, would give them that right. So, in our arrogance, we would start down the slippery road of accepting that the end justifies the means. That may sound extreme, but it is what we will be doing with human embryos unless the amendment is accepted.

It is prefectly true to say that the medical world is divided on the issue—I allow that. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists tells us that we should allow the creation of embryos which are intended purely for research purposes to continue. It does not say why, but merely tells us that such research

"is an essential part of research on factors which influence the process of fertilisation".

I have information to the contrary. The creation of embryos purely for research purposes is not necessary to improve IVF procedures. In Victoria and South Australia, where embryo research is banned, clinical practice has not been affected adversely. In Victoria, the take-home-baby rate is better than in any other centre in the world. It is not better by a large margin, but it is better. That suggests that what the Bill seeks to do is not strictly necessary. Indeed, it may not be necessary at all.

So what are embryos wanted for? The House is made up of intelligent men and women. Surely they should not

[Sir Bernard Braine]

only ask that question but press for an answer. The two main problematical areas in the development of IVF are the culture medium and methods of embryo transfer. That is a proper field for research.

What is the real reason why a free-for-all in embryo research is required? Is not it true that embryos are wanted for drug testing and new contraceptives, not only for IVF treatment? In those activities, there are vast fortunes to be made. Let us face the reality of what lies behind the Bill. Therefore, I commend the amendment to the House before it is too late and we start travelling down a road which we and our descendants will bitterly regret.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): The Father of the House, the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), will not be surprised that, once again, I have a different opinion from him on these matters. The words that he used showed where our differences lie. He believes that the pre-embryo at the one, two or three-day stage is a human being in its own right. I respect his opinion but he knows that I do not share it. As we start from different positions, we may be led to different conclusions, as at earlier stages.

I suggest there are several reasons why we need to examine the matter carefully before incorporating the amendment into the Bill. I accept the reasons given by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) and his rationale. I remind him that simply because Bourne hall, which we all respect for the work that it does, does not necessarily need the techniques does not mean that other reputable research establishments may not need them. It depends on the emphasis and type of research undertaken. It does not necessarily mean that valid, acceptable research —assuming that we do not ban all research—could benefit from using such techniques.

I also wish to examine the wording of the amendment, especially the term "treatment services". The term is defined in clause 2 as

"medical, surgical or obstetric services provided to the public or a section of the public for the purpose of assisting women to carry children."

It is a general term. Such services are not intended to assist a specific woman to carry a specific child. Therefore, even if the amendment is passed and includes the words

"bringing about the creation of an embryo other than in the course of providing treatment services",

the term "treatment services" could mean services to help women in general to have children rather than to help a specific woman to have a specific child.

Mr. Frank Field *indicated assent.*

Mr. Wigley: I am glad to note that the hon. Member for Birkenhead agrees with that interpretation.

That might mean that, if the wording of the amendment is incorporated in the Bill, it would not be as restricitve as some of us fear. My next few comments will apply in case the interpretation of the wording is restrictive. The House would benefit if the Minister could clarify the interpretation that the Government and their legal advisers would put on the wording.

The Father of the House seeks a restrictive interpretation of the wording. I understand his way of looking at the matter, but we must agree to disagree. If the interpretation is restrictive, valuable research could be lost. The type of research that could be lost falls into several categories. First, there is research on fertilisation for the benefit of those who have difficulty in conceiving. Those undertaking such research would seek to improve the level of knowledge in an area that is poorly understood at present. It is critical that, in improving the rate of fertilisation, the techniques employed do not lead to abnormality. For that reason, those undertaking such research will from time to time need to ascertain how the cells develop, at the four-cell and eight-cell stage, to identify any abnormality. That would involve the creation of embryos for the purpose of establishing whether there is likely to be an abnormality.

If the meaning of the words in amendment No. 6 implies acceptance that that can be done, because it will in the generality help people to have children, that is a very different interpretation from that which the Father of the House placed on the wording of the amendment. If I understood his words correctly, he was seeking a restriction of the kind I described. Fertilisation research is important, as is maximising the help available to those affected. Such research would be undertaken on donated eggs during treatment.

Mr. Frank Field: I understand the amendment in the way that the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) interprets it. Therefore, the course of treatment that he describes would be safeguarded if it were passed. What would not be permitted would be the creation of embryos specifically for the purpose of furthering contraceptive techniques, for example. I was careful to ensure that no such riders were incorporated in the amendment. If restrictions are wanted, it will be for hon. Members to move amendments later, if they are lucky enough to have them called, and we may then vote separately on them. However, I am totally with the hon. Gentleman as he develops his argument.

Mr. Wigley: I am grateful for that helpful intervention and to know where the hon. Member for Birkenhead is leading the argument. We may not agree on some of the implications, but in the first step, he and I are in agreement that certain research would be allowed. However, I suspect that other hon. Members would not want to see even that research undertaken.

Research is important in understanding, for example, why so many chromosomal abnormalities occur at or shortly after fertilisation. If it is possible to detect and better understand such abnormalities, that will clearly help the generality of women to have babies without some of the problems that might otherwise arise, which could lead to a child being handicapped or to the loss of the baby during pregnancy. I assume that such work is acceptable to the hon. Member for Birkenhead.

Attempts are also being made to develop polar body biopsy—though I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman for Birkenhead finds that acceptable also—and to improve the sperm's ability to fertilise the egg in cases of male sub-fertility. I assume that the hon. Gentleman would certainly find that work acceptable. I imagine that a fourth category of research is not acceptable to the hon. Gentleman, judging from his earlier intervention. I refer to the development of contraceptive methods. Clearly, that is another issue that may divide the House—but in a different way from the basic divisions between right hon. and hon. Members regarding the Bill in general.

I personally believe that contraception is important and that it is for countless millions of people an essential part of life. If contraception has acceptance in theory and is permissible in our society—I believe that the majority of people in these islands wish it to be—it is important that it should be as effective as possible. If one accepts the concept of contraception and methods of contraception that may involve the termination of pregnancy in the case of an embryo that is only a few hours old, clearly there are plenty of arguments for allowing research into more effective ways of doing that.

However, if one shares the view of the Father of the House, that in the embryo of only a few hours there is a human being, one would obviously take a different view of such research. If one does not accept contraception of that sort, one will not accept the case in favour of improving its effectiveness. I suggest that that question has to do with the acceptability or otherwise of contraception rather than the need to undertake research or the need to prevent it.

4.30 pm

Research is also concerned with the care and treatment of eggs before fertilisation. It is essential that eggs fertilised in vitro are then allowed to undergo several cell divisions to check that their later development is unimpaired. I imagine that the hon. Member for Birkenhead will accept such research as valid.

Questions also arise in relation to the freezing of unfertilised eggs involving the creation of pre-embryos in the cause of the project. At present, only pre-embryos can be frozen successfully, so that pregnancies may result when they are thawed and replaced. It would often be more appropriate and convenient to store unfertilised eggs and then, following fertilisation, to replace them singly in the womb in subsequent cycles. This would avoid multiple pregnancies and their complications and would be more ethically acceptable to some.

However, before fertilisation, the chromosomes are attached to a fragile spindle, which tends to disintegrate on cooling and rewarming. Research is under way to find freezing and cooling methods that will not result in chromosome abnormalities. That research is also needed, and I imagine that the hon. Member for Birkenhead would consider it valid, because it would help those with difficulties in having children.

There appear to be three schools of thought: those of us who would accept research, including research into methods of contraception; those who want to restrict research, as I believe the hon. Member for Birkenhead intends; and those who do not want research at all and who want the amendment to be passed as a step in the direction of preventing research altogether. It is important that the House should have guidance on the interpretation and implications of the amendment should it become law. Whichever line of argument one follows, it is important that we should know what the amendment would do, and I hope that the Minister will give us a clear lead on that.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): I support the amendment, for a reason that has not yet been touched upon, although I believe that the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) referred to a farm. I am troubled about the economic value of an embryo. There is no question but that embryos could have a good marketable value. They are extremely valuable pieces of human tissue —even if that is all some people consider them to be—and there is no end to the ingenuity of the human being when it comes to making money.

The better we understand the nature of the gates that we are opening, the better qualified we shall be to vote on the amendments and consider the implications of the Bill. Already, there is not the slightest doubt that some people outside this place want the doors to be opened. When it is seen that not much research can be carried out on such a tiny human being, they will push for a longer period of experimentation.

If that happens, people will be able to find out more and more about handicap and the other matters that the House has discussed during the passage of the Bill, and the further we go, the more valuable these tiny human beings will become. I am sorry to say this, but it is true and we should understand it: if we are not careful, we shall give an easy way of making money to those who may need it and to those who certainly want it.

Nowhere in the Bill is it forbidden to buy and sell embryos; indeed at this moment, the buying and selling of embryos is perfectly within the law. I thought that that was one of the matters which the Bill was designed to stop—the present legal trade in human flesh. If we permit the gratuitous creation of embryos in test tubes for no purpose other than research, I fear that we shall give many people a way of making a quick buck. We should understand how dangerous this research is, and no hon. Member should underestimate how valuable these tiny human beings could be on the open market.

The House should not create such a market, which it will unless it is careful, and unless it accepts the amendment.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I am happy to support the hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight). Most hon. Members would be repelled by the idea of a human embryo of the smallest of our species being used for exploitative or speculative purposes. I hope that the Secretary of State will comment on that when he replies to the debate.

I support the tone of the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) in moving the amendment. As the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) said, there will be differences in hon. Members' views. I freely admit that I am opposed to destructive experiments on human embryos. However valid research is said to be by those in favour of it and whatever achievements it might bring for humanity, it does not justify the destruction of the smallest of our species. We must be careful before sanctioning such experimentation.

That is why the Bill is restrictive. Although I do not much like it, I recognise that in some parts it at least attempts to be restrictive. It is therefore in keeping with the existing restrictions. If we say that a line is to be drawn at 14 days, beyond which experiments will not be permitted, it is perfectly in keeping for the hon. Member for Birkenhead to clarify an issue that Lord Jakobovits, the Chief Rabbi, raised in the other place—whether we should authorise the deliberate creation of spare, extra embryos merely for the purposes of experimentation.

The hon. Member for Caernarfon used the expression "pre-embryos". Depending upon which side of the argument they fall, hon. Members use different expressions. The word "pre-embryo" did not appear in the Warnock report, but it has been used as shorthand by

[Mr. David Alton]

those who would rather not admit that it is the earliest form of life. There is no point, other than fertilisation, at which we can say, "That was me, that was the point from which I began." It is dangerous for Parliament to authorise any interference with that life from the moment of conception. That is why I believe that anything that we can do today to restrict the excesses of the Bill will be worth while.

The hon. Member for Caernarfon implied that hon. Members who hold a different view from his are luddite or antediluvian in their attitudes and against all research. I think that we know each other well enough to know that that is not the case. I am not opposed to research that does not involve the human subject as the guinea pig. But once one accepts that conception is the point from which life begins, it is impossible to countenance, in reason or logic, interference for any purposes, however supposedly justifiable people say they are.

Mr. Wigley: I did not intend to call the hon. Gentleman antediluvian, although we disagree on this matter. I was saying that there is a difference of opinion among the Father of the House, the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Birkenhead who moved the amendment. The hon. Member for Birkenhead accepts certain destructive research, whereas I suspect from his comments that the hon. Gentleman does not.

Mr. Alton: I am happy to accept that point. I support the hon. Member for Birkenhead because his amendment represents a restriction that I believe we would be wise to place in the Bill. However, the whole Bill is restrictive. I do not think that even the hon. Member for Caernarfon accepts that there should be destructive experiments or research beyond 14 days. The House has already said that there will be certain restrictions. It is therefore proper for the hon. Member for Birkenhead to argue his point and for me to support it, although I would prefer no destructive experiments to take place.

Mr. Frank Field: While I am grateful to any hon. Member who speaks in favour of my amendment, and even more to those who will vote for it, does the hon. Gentleman not agree that it may be confusing for some hon. Members if those supporting the amendment argue in absolutist terms against research? We had and lost that debate in Committee, and it is not the point of my amendment.

Mr. Alton: That is absolutely true. The amendment attempts to isolate the issues. Although many of us felt that it was a tragedy when the House decided to allow experimentation in certain circumstances, today we have a chance to set to one side the emotionally loaded arguments about in vitro fertilisation and handicap. We have the opportunity to decide the specific question whether to create embryos merely for the purpose of destructive experimentation. Was that the wish of Parliament when it voted for something that did not give us the chance to vote for specific nuances or detail?

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): I was not on the Committee, but does the hon. Gentleman accept that in passing schedule 2, the Committee agreed—not many Conservative Members spoke against it—that licences could be granted "bringing about the creation of embryos in vitro"? The hon. Gentleman says that the House has not agreed to that, but it has.

Mr. Alton: I accept that that is what the House voted for—I am sorry that it did. Now, I am glad to say, we have the chance to re-examine one aspect of that. At that early stage, we did not have the chance to distinguish between different forms of experimentation and research. However, we have that chance today. Before the hon. Gentleman suggests that all the arguments were put in Committee by all the hon. Members who take a pro-life view, let me remind him that, despite an assurance from the Leader of the House that the make-up of the Committee would be commensurate with the votes cast in the two-day debate, and although more than 30 per cent. of hon. Members supported the pro-life argument, only two of the 18 Committee members held pro-life views. Because the Committee was rigged—I use the word deliberately—I do not think that it was possible for all the points to be properly argued.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): The hon. Gentleman said earlier that he wanted debate on the amendment to be stripped of the emotions that had divided hon. Members earlier. If he continues to speak as though "pro-life" meant his and no one else's point of view, his use of language is totally unjustified. He will not get my support if he pretends that he is being unemotional when in fact he is deliberately seeking to raise emotions and to distort the views of those who disagree with him.

Mr. Alton: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman takes that view. I can only express to the House my profound misgivings about what Parliament is being asked to authorise. The hon. Gentleman must make up his own mind. I want the debate to be on record, so that, when future generations consider the inconsistencies and illogicalities that now exist in this country, they will know that not everyone sanctioned what Parliament is now agreeing.

It is extremely distasteful that, in a country where people take violent action in opposing experiments on animals—I dissociate myself from such actions—we should sanction experiments on our own species. That cheapens human life, and treats it as no more than expendable raw material. That is at the heart of the Bill. The amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Birkenhead will not change all that, but he is trying—in line with the philosophy of the Bill—to incorporate reasonable safeguards and restrictions, so that excesses do not occur. I think that the majority of hon. Members would agree with that.

Sir Bernard Braine: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that more safeguards exist in regard to animal experimentation —I refer to the formation of the governing body, which is the licensing authority—than are provided by the Bill in its present form? Should that not be a matter of grave concern to the House?

Mr. Alton: I am certain that it should. If we debate the amendment in the name of the right hon. Gentleman concerning accountability to Parliament—an issue on which even my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) would surely support him—I hope that the House will agree that, when we authorise action that concerns all humankind,

those who carry out the experiments should be accountable to Parliament. Without incorporating those safeguards, and those that the hon. Member for Birkenhead so rationally and calmly proposed, how would that be possible? It is with some enthusiasm that I support the amendment.

4.45 pm

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I am sorry that the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) tabled the amendment. If he had read the report of the debate in another place, he would have realised why their Lordships rejected the proposal so strongly. It does not stand up at all.

The hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) gave six medical reasons why the research is necessary; I wish to add a seventh. I have a note from the Medical Research Council concerning the micro-injection of sperm, which is of use in treating oligospermic men. Apparently, that treatment should not be carried out without research. I believe that two patients had the treatment in Italy because the licensing authority in this country refused to sanction the work without research. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Birkenhead would rather allow experiments on women than allow the research, but I believe that the research should be allowed.

Morally, the amendment does not stand up. The Rev. Professor Gordon Dunstan advanced the arguments very well. Unfortunately, the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) wants to rehearse all the old arguments. One is that, if we are to allow research, we should ration it to just a little research. That has no moral foundation. Another is that we should allow research on one class of embryos but not on another. That surely creates two types of human being. We should not discriminate.

My strongest argument against the amendment, however, is that, if it had been in existence earlier, we would never had had test tube babies and all the research that was carried out before the birth of Louise Brown by Steptoe and Edwards. They were creating embryos to see the conditions that were necessary for them to survive and grow in a test tube.

We should reject the amendment on moral as well as medical grounds. I am sorry that so far hon. Members who have spoken have failed to recognise that, because the arguments were put so well in the other place.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): The hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) suggested that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) had missed the point of the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), but I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman himself missed the point. I am in favour of in vitro fertilisation and research on its behalf. I am opposed, however, to destructive research, which is the point behind the amendment.

The basic position of many hon. Members and the uneasy position of others who could not join us in the debate a few weeks ago is that nothing should be done to the embryo except for its own good. Even the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East almost conceded that it was a human life, although he quickly qualified his position. I put that point to the Secretary of State in the debate on Monday 23 April.

Mr. Wigley: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Duffy: No.

Mr. Wigley: I should just like to clarify a point.

Mr. Duffy: I give way.

Mr. Wigley: The hon. Gentleman said that the purpose of the amendment was to avoid destructive research. Is not it true, judging by the comments of the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), that the mover of the amendment accepts destructive research for certain purposes? Therefore, that is not the point of the amendment.

Mr. Duffy: The hon. Gentleman's comments show why I was reluctant to give way. I put my point quietly and I hope that he will allow me to develop my argument. No one prevented him from developing his argument. We listened to him with great understanding and sympathy, as we always do.

One fertility centre that understands the ethical problems well is the Sheffield fertility centre. It stated:

"Here the emphasis is on IVF the natural way, using the one egg normally produced. Drugs are used only in rare cases, when women do not ovulate."

The centre said that the latest results

"show that one in four women who finally receive an embryo become pregnant, although not all run to term. There is no risk of multiple births, overstimulated ovaries, or spare embryos. With no drugs, the cost is considerably lower."

Those are not my words, but the words of the Sheffield fertility centre.

I understand that the university of Sheffield's infertility clinic at the Jessop hospital for women runs a natural cycle programme, with emphasis on developing a follicle without excessive stimulation so there is only one follicle and hence only one embryo to deal with. This does away with many of the ethical problems about "spare" embryos.

The right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) —the Father of the House—reminded us of a point that cannot be made too often. In earlier debates, those who hold a different view or who entertain the possibilities of research, but in a different way, got away with too much. The Father of the House reminded us that we can have all the benefits which even the pro-researchers claim they want without creating human embryos for use solely in destructive research. Human embryos were not, and are not, needed for developing or improving artificial fertilisation techniques. As with all medical research, all preliminary work can and should use non-human subjects. Human embryos are not needed for testing drugs. They have not been used in any recent discoveries in identifying and locating such diseases as Down's syndrome and cystic fibrosis. That point has been made in the House before, but it cannot be made too often.

There is no reason to suppose that future progress will depend on human embryos. There is nothing to be learnt from experiments on human embryos which cannot be discovered from non-human material. We must ceaselessly try to conquer genetic diseases without human embryo abuse. Parents at risk of having disabled children can be fully "protected" without any destructive research using human material. The production and the use of human beings for research which is not for their own benefit—treating them as things to be exploited as laboratory material, which is my basic point—are morally objectionable and unnecessary.

[Mr. Duffy]

Having said all that, I am prepared to move in the direction proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead and to allow the creation of spare embryos which will die. The essential point is that embryos will not be created specifically for the purpose of destructive experimentation. Only spares will be used, and on that point I can move far enough to support amendment No. 6.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I support the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) and amendment No. 6, having voted against research. I share the view of the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy)—although I support IVF, I am totally opposed to destructive research.

I shall set aside the matters with which the House has dealt. We must consider what is before us objectively, as one issue. The amendment would control the use of spare embryos for the purposes of research and nothing more. By limiting the amendment to "providing treatment services", the hon. Member for Birkenhead has provided a definition that will exclude many uses.

I share the view of the Father of the House, my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), that when an embryo is fertilised, an individual is created. I do not subscribe to the view that there is a pre-embryo period of 14 days when, in effect, nothing exists but that, at the end of that period, there is an embryo capable of growing into a human being. The most offensive aspect of the Bill as it stands is that it means that embryos can be created, used and destroyed. That means destroying embryos which, if implanted in the mother's womb, would have grown into human beings. To destroy embryos is totally unacceptable to me, to my colleagues on both sides of the House and to those who share the view of the all-party pro-life group in the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) has expressed one of our reservations: there is no effective control in the Bill over the creation for the purpose of research of embryos which can be sold on. A trade could develop and embryos would, in effect, be sold on for any purpose or any use. Those who share my view regard that as totally unacceptable and an insult to humankind.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hind: I should like to finish my argument and then I shall happily give way to my hon. Friend, who disagrees with my view. We can discuss this matter until we are blue in the face, but we will never agree on certain fundamental matters of principle that divide us.

The point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Edgbaston is valid. How would those who support the Bill in its entirety and oppose amendment No. 6 stop a trade in fertilised embryos? Where will it lead us? It will lead us down a slippery slope, down which many hon. Members will not logically want to go in any circumstances.

Mr. Key: I think that it will do a lot of good. The very reason that we are enacting this legislation is that there are no controls. We are seeking to give a framework of control. My hon. Friend says that there might be a trade so that embryos could be used for any purpose anywhere, but he is utterly wrong. It is a matter of fact, not a matter of opinion. I hope that we can agree that the legislation is designed to overcome that problem.

5 pm

Mr. Hind: I take my hon. Friend's point. He may be interested to know that in 1986 I introduced a private Member's Bill to protect the unborn child for the very reason that he put forward: that there was no legislative protection for the unborn child at that time. It is something that I believe in. Many hon. Members share that view. I am pleased that my hon. Friend shares it. It all depends on how far it is taken. Hon. Members who support the amendment feel that it should go further.

Three major arguments are important to amendment No. 6. The first is that it will have no effect on in vitro fertilisation. That is very important. That has been put to me by parents who are infertile. Secondly, and most important, it will prevent the creation of embryos for research and ultimate destruction. Thirdly—to bury the argument put by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham)—it is my considered opinion that if this amendment had been in operation, the research that was carried out by Professor Steptoe and Professor Browne which led to the IVF implantation of fertilised embryos and consequently the birth of children would have continued. They were not thinking in terms other than the fact that they were providing children for infertile parents. Purely and simply, that was their aim. They took it no further. They were not thinking of research to further contraception which this amendment will prevent. That is a fundamental argument for the amendment.

Mr. Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I concur entirely with the hon. Gentleman, but is not it also the case that destructive experimentation is the cheapest and easiest way to proceed? Is not that the reason why many people favour that approach? The more complicated approach requires effort and time devoted by people such as Professor Lejeune to non-destructive forms of research.

Mr. Hind: We are at risk of going down the same route as in the previous debate. I agree with the hon. Gentleman, who cited Professor Lejeune on Down's syndrome. Effective research has been carried out in the area of handicap without the use of embryos. A large amount of research can be carried out without using embryos.

The impression gained is that there is no other means of solving the problem of infertility other than the use of embryos. Many of us recognise that that is nonsense. Destructive research is something that I deplore and oppose. I fully support the amendment that stands in the name of the hon. Member for Birkenhead.

Mr. Dalyell: I put two factual questions to the Minister. The first concerns money. The Father of the House, the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), referred to the vast fortunes that can be made. He talked about a free-for-all. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) spoke about a quick buck and tiny human beings on the market. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) spoke about speculative purposes. Finally, the hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) referred to the trade in embryos. Is not it a fact that that would be impossible under schedule 2 if the law were adhered to? Has the

Department any evidence of money changing hands in the purchase of embryos? Is there any evidence that this has ever happened?

The Minister said that nothing could be learnt from research on human material that cannot be learnt from "non-human material". My understanding from some biologists is that that is not factually so. On account of the organic nature of the experimentation, some experiments really have to be done on human material. I ask the Minister to put on record, albeit briefly, the technical advice that she has received from the Department.

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): I rise to oppose amendment No. 6 and to comment on amendment No. 11.

I support the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), who referred to the weakness of the moral arguments in support of amendment No. 6. It is illogical to support embryo research on a basis that would restrict the use of embryos specifically created for research so that one could not use embryos specifically created for research. The IVF programme would never have gone ahead had we not had the creation of embryos specifically for embryo research. It is also illogical to distinguish between embryos created for research and those which are the by-product of treatment.

If one takes on board, as this House has done, the importance of the objectives that the research has, and if we are prepared, under very specific safeguards, to use embryos for the purpose of research, a distinction thereafter has to be drawn between those created specifically for research and those created as a by-product for treatment. There is, however, no moral, compelling basis for the distinction.

The hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) invited the House to consider what the amendment actually means. How restrictive is it? I welcome the fact that the Minister of State has been invited to interpret the amendment. However, that is not good enough. If the amendment is not clear to the hon. Gentleman or to me, how can we include in the Bill an amendment which might or might not severely restrict the availability of embryos for research?

Mr. Wigley: There has been a difference of interpretation in the speeches tonight. A number of hon. Members have said that the amendment would allow only spare embryos to be used for research. That was not the implication of the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) when he responded to the earlier intervention. That will need to be clarified, or votes will be cast on different bases.

Ms. Harman: My point is that it cannot be clarified, because the amendment is confusing, and therefore defective. We cannot leave it to be clarified by the Minister while it remains unclear on the face of the Bill and has to be sorted out in court. The House has a responsibility to make clear laws. Ministerial interpretations of what a Bill means are useful, but they are not the end of the matter, and they will not do. Therefore, I shall listen with interest to what the Minister says, but we cannot have a "We'll see you in court" attitude.

Mr. Frank Field: I hope to deal with the substance of my hon. Friend's argument if the House allows me to respond to the points raised on the amendment. However, we should not omit to note that a lawyer is saying that it is bad news if the Acts that we pass are taken to the courts for interpretation. I thought that that was the most fundamental part of our legal system.

Ms. Harman: I do not want Parliament to pass a Bill which contains an ambiguity which creates work for lawyers and anxiety for researchers. We have to produce clear legislation and reduce the scope for ambiguity. Assuming that the Bill reads as it says, there is a scientific problem. My hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), who moved the amendment, asked which authorities considered that there would be a problem for research if the amendment were accepted. The list is obvious: it includes the reproductive biology unit at Edinburgh, the assisted conception unit at King's College in my constituency, the Medical Research Council, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Robert Winston. The consensus of medical opinion among those involved in the research is that the amendment would prevent research which needs to go ahead.

I am not suggesting that medical opinion is unanimous. We can all find someone who takes a different view. However, I hope that I am not misleading the House by saying that the overwhelming balance of medical and scientific opinion among those who are involved in the research is that the amendment would create a terrible restriction and frustrate the will of the House as expressed in its support for clause 11.

Mr. Thurnham: Does the hon. Lady agree that the licensing authority would allow research to go ahead only if it considered that that research was necessary? Therefore, it is arrogant of people to assume that research is not necessary, when the people who examine it so carefully will allow it to go ahead only if they consider that it is necessary.

Ms. Harman: I absolutely agree.

Mrs. Ann Winterton (Congleton): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Harman: I shall, but I do not want to give way too often, because I do not want to take up too much time.

Mrs. Winterton: Is it not true that the way in which the licensing authority is constituted will affect the number of licences and the reason for those licences being given? Does the hon. Lady agree that we are prepared to protect animals from research more than human beings? I served on the Committee which considered the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 which provides much greater protection for animals.

Ms. Harman: I remind the hon. Lady of the safeguards in the Bill. She seems to have no confidence in those safeguards or in the statutory licensing authority.

Mrs. Winterton: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Harman: I shall not give way. The statutory licensing authority has a legal frame of reference that we have agreed, saying that research will not be allowed unless it cannot be carried out except on embryos. The statutory licensing authority has to satisfy itself that any research cannot be carried out on animal tissue and has to have one of several specific objectives. Therefore, to say, "They would, wouldn't they?" of the statutory licensing authority is unsatisfactory.

[Ms. Harman]

Let me identify the specific problems that the amendment would cause to research that should be allowed. Unless embryos are created for the purpose of research, research which centres on the process of fertilisation will not continue. Many chromosomal defects arise around the time of fertilisation. We need to learn more about the conditions in which that fertilisation takes place that lead to those chromosomal defects, so that we can understand how diet or other factors may be able to prevent chromosomal abnormalities arising on fertilisation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) said that research on embryos would not help prevent Down's syndrome, but some researchers take the view that research could be undertaken on the prevention of Down's syndrome if the process of fertilisation were better understood. Understanding the process of fertilisation is important in understanding subsequent miscarriage.

Mr. Alton: Will the hon. Lady give way?

5.15 pm

Ms. Harman: I shall not give way again, as the hon. Gentleman has made his speech. I might relent later, but I shall press on for the moment.

Reference has been made to micro-injection, whereby the sperm is injected into the egg because it cannot fertilise the egg in the woman or in a test tube. The voluntary licensing authority will not allow the implantation of embryos fertilised in that way, because it wants to be sure through more research that the embryo is not damaged by being created by micro-injection. To avoid couples becoming involved in this procedure, there should be more research to find out how those embryos develop in the laboratory before they can be implanted to develop in the woman. Therefore, embryos need to be created for research into the important problem of male sub-fertility.

The right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) talked about the exciting new opportunities that are opened up by the ability to freeze and store eggs, making it unnecessary to store and freeze embryos. However, we will not know whether the eggs that are frozen and stored will develop normally unless they are used to create embryos.

Polar body biopsy research has already been mentioned. We need to improve pre-implantation diagnosis, and the idea that one cell could be taken from the embryo to see whether it has a genetic defect before putting it back in the womb provides exciting opportunities. However, we do not want embryos which have been damaged by the process of polar body biopsy to be put back in the womb. We owe it to the women who are undergoing the treatment and to their husbands to make sure that we get it right so that they are not used as experiments.

The hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) suggested that the scientific community were opposed to the amendment because they were lazy and were looking for short cuts. That does scientists an injustice. I am sure that scientists are not looking for an easy solution or are not prepared to carry out research conscientiously. We should accept the argument that important research will not be able to continue if it is limited to spare embryos.

Once again, I remind the House of the safeguards in the Bill. The idea that there could be a farm for embryos has been put forward, but the statutory licensing authority will have to give licences for research. It will be an offence if research goes ahead and embryos are created without the approval, monitoring and supervision of the statutory licensing authority. Are we to believe that we are creating by statute a licensing authority which will turn a blind eye to embryology farming? That is absurd scaremongering, and I urge people to rule it out.

Miss Ann Winterton: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Harman: No.

There will also be supervision by Members of Parliament. We will be able to ask the Secretary of State for Health questions about what is going on—*[Interruption.]* If my colleagues will allow me, I should like to move on.

I want now to consider contraception, because there has not been much focus on amendment No. 11 so far in our debate. I seriously urge the House to reject amendment No. 11, because that would permit embryo research for the purposes of investigating miscarriages, for treating infertility and to investigate congenital diseases and genetic defects, but there cannot be embryo research into contraception.

What are women to make of this House if we say that contraception is not sufficiently important to be included in the list permitting embryo research? What will they think if embryo research designed to find a contraceptive vaccine is to be stopped? I was very sad to read the report of the debate in the other place, in which the Chief Rabbi said that he was not concerned with the morality of contraception or even against contraception: he simply did not believe that it was a sufficiently urgent consideration.

The Chief Rabbi might not think that contraception is a sufficiently urgent consideration. However, he should ask his wife or his daughters. Before [illegible]. Members in this House vote to exclude the possibility of research to find a contraceptive vaccine, they should consult their wives and daughters as well. They should listen to women outside this place. The battle for safe, effective and convenient contraception has not yet been won. The shadow of the fear of unwanted pregnancy has existed through the ages, and it remains a problem in this country.

Hon. Members such as my hon. Friends the Members for Birkenhead and for Attercliffe who are concerned about the abortion rate should be aware that, if we make contraception easier, we will prevent a high abortion rate. The idea that hon. Members should vote for an amendment tonight that undermines progress on contraception while tomorrow those same hon. Members will ask the House to restrict abortion is absolutely wrong.

Mr. Alton: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Harman: It will be a mistake, but I will give way.

Mr. Alton: I hope from the hon. Lady's point of view that it will be a mistake. She referred to the contradictions. Does she not accept that it is also a contradiction that people like her who are arguing tonight that we should authorise destructive experiments for the purpose of curing infertility will, by a cruel paradox, be those same people tomorrow who will be arguing in favour of abortion? One in five pregnancies is ended through abortion, and 184,000 children are aborted each year.

Surely the paradox is that many families in this country would dearly love to adopt those children and provide homes for them. Is that not a paradox in the hon. Lady's argument?

Ms. Harman: We will argue about that tomorrow; it would not be in order for me to pursue the hon. Gentleman's point now.

Some hon. Members may believe that it is an attractive argument to stop embryo research on contraception because that is different from a woman's desire to have a baby. A woman's desire not to have a baby might be considered less important than a woman's desire to have a healthy baby. A view is still lurking around the House that contraception is somehow a third-world issue and that it is no longer an issue for women in this country. The idea is that contraception is all about population control in the third world. That is not the case. It is an issue now and it is an issue here. Unfortunately, it is not as much of an issue as it should be in the other place or in this House.

I hope that the House will reject amendment No. 11, which would prevent embryo research to develop contraception. I hope also that the House will reject amendment No. 6, which would restrict research to spare embryos. In this House, we have agreed that the objectives of the research are important. We have agreed that we want to see the problems of contraception solved. We have agreed that we want to see an end to the misery of miscarriage. We have talked about the suffering of infertile couples and about the importance of research to help them. We have talked also about the devastation that hits families when they have a child with a serious genetic abnormality. We have agreed that all those issues are important and that we want to do something about them. Let us not vote for an amendment which prevents us from achieving those objectives.

Mrs Ann Winterton: I shall speak to my amendments Nos. 10 and 11 and support amendment No. 6 tabled by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field).

I believe that the creation of human life with its destruction pre-planned is the most repugnant aspect of the Bill. I believe that human life must never be used solely as a means to an end. In vitro fertilisation produces surplus embryos which cannot be transferred to a woman's womb and those spare embryos, although created with the possibility of continuing life, in practice cannot be given that chance. To use them for research beneficial to other human beings does them no additional injury. If we accept the production of possibly "spare" embryos, we should accept their use in research. However, that is no reason to create embryos specifically for research. That approach allows a degree of consensus between the opposing sides of the argument. It allows the benefits of embryo research without the need to cheapen human life in the way that opponents fear might happen.

A law that alienates a large section of the community and offends their deeply held beliefs is a bad law even if the majority in Parliament are in favour of it. I believe that amendment No. 6 would minimise opposition and alienation. The production of embryos purely for research means the extraction of eggs from women purely for research. That is not a safe procedure and it can even result in death.

Experimentation on embryos necessarily means experimentation on women. The Helsinki declaration requires:

"In the purely scientific application of medical research carried out on a human being, it is the duty of the doctor to remain the protector of the life and health of that person on whom biomedical research is being carried out . . . The investigator or investigating team should discontinue the research if in his/her or their judgement it may, if continued, be harmful to the individual."

Mr. Dalyell: The hon. Lady said that the process could result in death. Has she any examples of that happening?

Mrs. Winterton: I have a sheaf of papers from which I could quote at length, but I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept what I have said. There is much scientific data which I will give to him later if he likes.

Dame Jill Knight: The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) might care to look at the reports of the debates in Committee. He will find that I gave full details of 11 women who had died as a result of that procedure. All the details can be found in the Committee stage reports.

Mrs. Winterton: I am most grateful for that intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) who served on the Standing Committee and who is much more knowledgeable about the point to which I had referred. My hon. Friend made a most helpful intervention.

We must also worry about women being placed under undue pressure to donate eggs for research in order, for example, to receive treatment or to receive treatment faster or at a reduced cost. The "spares" only restriction would prevent that.

Of course that would place an additional restriction on research. That is inevitable. Indeed, the whole purpose of the Bill is to place restrictions on research. The 14-day limit, for example, is a restriction that we have included for ethical reasons, but we accept that it might prevent some useful work from taking place.

I should have liked to ask the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) how she thinks that research carried out on embryos under 14 days would be policed. I believe that it will be impossible to police such research and that we shall merely have to take on trust what the scientists are doing. I hope that the House will recognise the validity of that point.

5.30 pm

Embryo research would still be operating under fewer restraints than most medical research. Research on adults must either be therapeutic or on corpses, with the appropriate consent.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): My hon. Friend has used the word "therapeutic". Those of us who have delved into the question of ethical guidelines in the past four years or so since this issue first arose are aware that "therapeutic" is defined by doctors and scientists in their self-regulating capacity. Does my hon. Friend accept that that raises a serious and difficult question because the Bill is effectively handing over that responsibility to people who have an inbuilt desire to induce the difficulties that we are discussing, and that there is no opportunity——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Briefly please.

Mr. Cash: —for Parliament or anyone else to intervene thereafter?

Mrs. Winterton: My hon. Friend has made a valid point, which the House would do well to note.

Embryo researchers would also be allowed a restricted class of live human embryos to test destructively. I am confident that most useful work could proceed under that constraint.

We have already heard the argument that IVF could never have developed without creating the embryos for the initial research. Steptoe and Edwards began creating embryos long before they had the facility to transfer them to the womb. At that time, they were more concerned with studying embryos than with infertility. Clinically, it would have been far more responsible to attempt GIFT before IVF.

Destructive research is the cheap and easy way to proceed. Non-destructive research is far more complicated and time consuming, but most people consider that it is more appropriate for work involving human beings. The fact that early IVF workers chose to proceed in a particular way does not prove that it could not have been done differently. Every other major medical advance in the 20th century has been achieved without destructive research. In any case, there is little doubt that current IVF research could proceed without deliberately creating embryos for the purpose. It would also be impossible or unethical to develop techniques of egg freezing or egg testing without using some of those eggs to create embryos that would not be transferred to the womb in order to make sure that the embryos developed normally.

If that were true, it would have been impossible to develop sperm freezing, which was done long before IVF, and frozen sperm was not tested in this way. Nevertheless, children created from frozen sperm grow up perfectly normal. Frozen eggs can be tested for damage without being fertilised. In any case, 50 per cent. of eggs produced by IVF techniques are known to be abnormal. Damaged eggs simply fail to produce viable embryos. There is only a miniscule risk of producing an abnormal child. Extensive testing using animal eggs would allow these techniques to be verified safe. This is how all other new medical techniques are tested.

It has also been argued that it would be impossible or unethical to create new forms of contraception without testing them in vitro, and embryos would be created in some cases. It would also be necessary to see if embryos accidentally created were abnormal. If that were true, it would have been impossible to develop any of the modern contraceptives now in use. How was the pill developed? There is no reason why new forms of contraception cannot be developed without embryo experiments. Drugs to block fertilisation would need clinical trials in any case. This cannot be bypassed by in vitro research.

Responsible scientists develop new techniques in human medicine, first, by extensive testing on animals—as I said earlier, there is far more control over experimentation on animals than would be the case for human embryos—and, secondly, by controlled clinical trials with human beings. They do not use an intermediate stage of destructive testing on human beings. IVF scientists wish to dispense with that in favour of destructive testing on human embryos.

The hon. Member for Peckham spoke at some length against amendment No. 10, which places a specific prohibition on

"the administration of a substance to an embryo for the purpose of ascertaining the properties of that substance in relation to the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of disease".

In other words, the amendment seeks to prevent the use of human embryos for the testing of drugs.

Destructive research on human embryos has been agreed to on the basis that it will be used for the most urgent therapeutic needs. We wish to ensure that it is not used for a much wider range of less urgent purposes for which we do not feel it can be right to use human embryos. Page 64 of the Warnock report stated:

"We do not want to see a situation in which human embryos are frivolously or unnecessarily used in research."

Much has been said about the alleviation of infertility and the application of embryo research to genetic diseases. We are not attempting to restrict that, but we do not want a situation in which it becomes commonplace for pharmaceutical companies to test drugs on human embryos because they are cheaper than rats and mice. Surely that would not be right. Anyone who knows anything about experimentation on animals knows how costly such experimentation is, not only financially, but, for example, in terms of the numbers of staff who need to be employed.

It is pertinent to the debate to note that RU486, the French abortion drug, has already been tested on human embryos. It might also be relevant to note that Bourne hall, the first IVF clinic, which was much hailed, has been bought by a pharmaceutical company. Perhaps that piece of news will cause hon. Members to make some connections.

Amendment No. 11 seeks to prevent the use of human embryos in research projects to develop more effective techniques of contraception. As the hon. Member for Peckham said, it was moved originally on Report in the other place by the Chief Rabbi. I hasten to add that the amendment is not based on any opposition in principle to contraception, any more than the similar amendment relating to drugs testing is based on an opposition to medical drugs. However, I do not feel that the development of contraception is the sort of work for which human embryos should be used.

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): Does my hon. Friend agree that one major argument against the destructive use of embryos for contraceptive purposes is that there are so many alternatives for research on contraception and such research does not offer anything unique? Unlike the argument of possible long-term future benefits for people suffering from cystic fibrosis, this case offers nothing unique—nothing that is not offered by other research.

Mrs. Winterton: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is true that all present forms of contraception have been developed successfully without the use of the human embryo. That being so, how necessary is the use of human embryos for these purposes?

During a debate in the other place on 6 March the Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits, said:

"It would be both ironic and morally offensive to destroy the most basic substance of life for research to prevent the generation of life."—[*Official Report, House of Lords;* 6 March 1990; Vol. 516, c. 1061.]

I agree with those sentiments. That view is borne out by those who took part in a Gallup poll which was conducted between 13 and 18 September. The results suggested that public opinion supported the Chief Rabbi's view because 57 per cent. said that they would not support the use of human embryos to develop new techniques of contraception, with only 32 per cent. supporting that use. The remaining 11 per cent. did not know.

I do not wish to give the impression that I am knocking pharmaceutical companies or accusing them of wanting to do anything unethical. I shall quote from a document of the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly of 4 March 1986. It is the product of a joint hearing of the legal affairs committee, the sub-committee on bio-ethics of the committee on social and health questions, and the committee on science and technology. During an evidence session a contribution was made by Professor Hess of Ciba-Geigy, which is an excellent pharmaceutical company. Its headquarters happen to be based in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton). My hon. Friend attended its opening recently and I know precisely how good a local company it is. Professor Hess, in representing the company, had much to say in answer to various questions. I shall quote what he said because I think that his remarks are pertinent to the arguments that are being advanced. He said:

"In my own company, scientific experiments with human embryos are not performed. To my knowledge, the same applies to the other main pharmaceutical firms in Western Europe. Human embryos and tissues are neither used for the production of medicaments, nor is their use an issue of industrial biotechnology."

He continued by saying in summary that

"the use of human embryos or fetuses is no purpose of industry."

He later said:

"I cannot easily imagine a situation of, say, drug-induced damage in which human embryos could be expected to yield information which is not obtained from animal models. The architecture and development potency of early embryos of most mammalian species are very similar."

In the next paragraph, he added:

"I see no need or justification for the production and subsequent use of human embryos for drug research and development."

That says it all.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The House will be aware that, when the Bill was considered in Committee of the whole House, we had the opportunity to vote on the basic principle of whether human embryos up to 14 days should be used for research for certain specified purposes, under the strict control of a statutory licensing authority. I agree with the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) that he is not seeking to deny the clear wish of the House, which was signalled by a clear majority, that research on human embryos should be permitted. The hon. Gentleman's amendment No. 6 seeks to ensure that embryos should be created only for treatment purposes. I recognise that, although many of those who have contributed to the debate are opposed to embryo research, they have sought to concentrate on the issues that arise from the hon. Gentleman's amendment and others rather than to re-run an earlier and lengthier debate.

If embryos can be created only for treatment purposes, a restriction will be placed on the embryos that are available for research. That would mean that various research activities on th embryo would not be possible. I refer the hon. Member for Birkenhead to the definition of treatment in clause 2(1). It is defined as

"medical, surgical or obstetric services . . . for the purpose of assisting women to carry children."

In those terms, the women who chose to donate their eggs when being sterilised, for example, could not possibly come within the terms of providing embryos in the course of treatment. The amendment would mean that many embryos and gametes would no longer be available. Does that matter, and what would the implications be?

5.45 pm

The concern that has been expressed is that, if embryos could not be specifically created for research purposes, there would be a danger that the quality of embryos being used for research would deteriorate. There would be a scarcity of embryos. Rather than the present situation, where the embryos that look the healthiest and are flourishing and developing best are liable to be implanted in the woman, there would be a danger that the boundary would move. It is clear that for treatment purposes and for following on from the implications of reseach, it is important to have high-quality, properly supervised treatment. It has been made clear also that there are areas of research that could not be permitted if amendment No. 6 were accepted.

Mr. Dalyell: I hope that the Minister will forgive me for being sceptical. I wish to clear up an issue of fact that relates to remarks made by the hon. Members for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) and for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight). On 8 May, the hon. Member for Edgbaston said:

"We already have details of dangers on the record: at least 11 women have died during the course of IVF programmes." —[*Official Report, Standing Committee B;* 8 May 1990, c. 57.]

Does the Department have any knowledge of those 11 cases? It is a matter of considerable importance to the debate whether the hon. Lady's claim can be substantiated.

Mrs. Bottomley: We have no information about such cases within the United Kingdom. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) provided information but, as I have said, we have no information about such cases within this country. When these techniques are practised under proper supervision there is no undue risk to the woman. We are talking of fairly recent techniques, and one of the purposes of establishing a licensing authority is to ensure that best practice is properly supervised and that proper guidance is available.

Mr. Frank Field: I take the Minister back to the phrase which she used when talking about the decline in the quality of embryos in the furtherance of treatment. Even on the hon. Lady's reading of my amendment, I am not seeking any restrictions on the creation of embryos for the furtherance of treatment. I could not understand the Minister's argument. Even if the amendment were agreed to, further embryos would be created until we had embryos of the quality required for the furtherance of treatment.

Mrs. Bottomley: I accept the hon. Gentleman's argument. The point is well put by Professor the Rev. Gordon Dunstan and others. It is that if there is a scarcity of embryos there may be a tendency to want to use

[Mrs. Bottomley]

embryos for treatment purposes in all possible circumstances, whereas if there is not such a scarcity that is less likely to be the position.

Mr. Field: I thank the Minister for giving way. I hope that I shall not have to intervene again. I shall try to avoid doing so.

The Minister talks about a possible scarcity of embryos. Experience in my constituency suggests that scarcity arises because those women who wish to follow treatment for their infertility are unable to do so because of budgetary restrictions. If we had more resources, there would be more women seeking an end to their infertility, and that would result in the greater creation of embryos. The circle would be squared for the Minister. Is that not the answer?

Mrs. Bottomley: I do not intend to follow the hon. Gentleman in that line of argument. The Bill is about establishing a framework of law properly to control and regulate relatively new areas of treatment and research. That should be done before discussing national health service resources. I am standing next to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health, who has managed to achieve record levels for the health service. He has had unprecedented success in that area. Far be it from me to add to the debate on resources.

Dame Jill Knight: I noted how carefully my hon. Friend chose her words when she said that there was no such evidence "in this country". She will agree that in Committee I gave her the information that 11 women had died in other countries. I find it appalling that Opposition Members seek to keep that under wraps—I certainly absolve the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) from that charge. It is important for all of us that it is made clear when there is a danger connected with a certain health procedure. It does not matter whether the women have died here or elsewhere; they have died, and there is no doubt about it.

Mrs. Bottomley: Our primary concern must be for the welfare of women in this country, which has a health service to which unprecedented resources are allocated and in which we can have confidence in the quality and standard of care. Obviously, it is primarily in that area that we shall make a judgment. My hon. Friend's point must be considered, but hon. Members would be right to give more weight to the experience of this country.

Mr. Raison: It is important to know whether, in those 11 cases, death occurred as a result of the extraction of ovaries for research purposes or for treatment. I suspect that the reason for their extraction is immaterial. Does my hon. Friend agree that the problem with the debate is that it is meant to be about a particular category, but that those who support amendment No. 6 are against all research on embryos and are using this as a device to advance their view?

Mrs. Bottomley: I thank my right hon. Friend for his intervention. Although the hon. Member for Birkenhead and others acknowledge their deep reservations about, and in some cases hostility to, the principle of research, during the debate they have tried to distinguish between that principle and the amendments that we are debating.

The key question is whether, with appropriate consents, embryos could continue to be created specifically for research purposes, provided that the research establishments were properly licensed under the Bill, or whether the Bill should provide that the research should be carried out only on spare embryos from IVF treatment programmes, which would otherwise be left to perish. That is a matter for the judgment of hon. Members.

Mr. Cash: My hon. Friend knows of my deep opposition to these proposals, which I have expressed for at least four years. Am I right in thinking that she has considered the dangers of patenting the procedures involved in research in this area, and the vast sums involved in the commercial exploitation of the procedures?

Mrs. Bottomley: This may be the moment for me to lay to rest a myth about great commercial exploitation and the vast resources available. Great sums do not change hands. There is no suggestion of any money changing hands. Clause 12(e) makes it clear that no benefit or payment may be made for embryos or gametes without the authorisation of the licensing authority. It imposes clear legislative controls in this area. Nor is there any evidence that drug companies have any particular interest in embryo research. Nor do they use embryo research on animals for testing drugs because, before 14 days are up, there is little validation or assistance that they can get from it. It is important to lay to rest that alarmist myth which is being perpetrated, because it is unhelpful to the debate to have such comments passed.

The Bill permits research licences to be granted for five main purposes: promoting advances in the treatment of infertility, increasing knowledge about the causes of congenital disease, increasing knowledge about the causes of miscarriage, developing more effective techniques of contraception and developing methods of detecting the presence of gene and chromosome abnormalities in embryos before implantation.

In her amendment, my hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) seeks to remove the ability to provide research for developing effective techniques of contraception. That point was ably answered by the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman). Many hon. Members may take the view that there is as yet no thoroughly satisfactory and effective method of contraception. Population questions worldwide make it only too clear that, if an effective method of contraception without undue or long-term risks to women became available, it might well be a force for good. I recognise that some hon. Members would be implacably opposed to any form of contraception but they do not speak for most hon. Members or for most of the country. Work on the development of a vaccine is being undertaken. It must involve embryo research in order to establish its effectiveness. I find it difficult to come to terms with my hon. Friend's amendment.

My right hon. Friend the Father of the House spoke to amendment No. 10 about drugs. As I made it clear in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), it is not the case that drug companies make particular use of embryos. The Bill provides a power to prohibit the use of embryos, were they to be used in a way in which the authority and the Government found unsatisfactory. Clause 3(3)(c) gives the Secretary of State

a power to make regulations, which will be subject to an affirmative resolution to prohibit such activities, were the need to arise.

Mr. Wigley: Earlier, I asked whether the Minister had Government legal advice on the interpretation of amendment No. 6. If it were passed, could only spare embryos be used for research? Clearly, hon. Members interpret amendment No. 6 differently and it is important for us to understand it.

Mrs. Bottomley: I have made it clear that that is the case. I told the House the definition of "treatment", under which such embryos will be created, and that only spare embryos would be available.

Mr. Field: Is the distinction not slightly different? Did the Minister not say that the number of embryos available for research would be smaller? She did not comment on erecting gates against forms of treatment.

Mrs. Bottomley: I hope that I made it clear that embryos would be made available only in the course of treatment, and I gave the definition of treatment. Embryos which are not necessary for treatment could still be used for research purposes. The hon. Gentleman made it clear —this is also my interpretation of his amendment—that the amendment would not prohibit, but would greatly limit, research.

The hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) and others have suggested that the amendment would mean that research in some areas could not continue. There would be areas in which research could continue on those spare embryos, but it would not be possible to undertake research in the areas identified by the hon. Member for Birkenhead, such as contraceptive vaccines, research influencing the process of fertilisation, research on some origins of chromosome disorders, research on freezing and thawing unfertilised eggs, research on freezing and thawing eggs in the process of fertilisation, research on the fertilisation of eggs by a single sperm and the best culture medium for fertilisation. All those forms of research would require that an embryo was subsequently created and allowed to develop in order to ensure that such research had no long-term adverse effect. It would be unsatisfactory to undertake such reseach and then use the gamete to conceive a child. Clearly, we could not satisfy ourselves as to the outcome of that research in any other way.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): On Second Reading, I asked my hon. Friend if she could say how many embryos had been used in research up to that date. How many embryos are expected to be required to allow the treatments that she has outlined?

6 pm

Mrs. Bottomley: Would my hon. Friend repeat the beginning of his question?

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: How many embryos does my hon. Friend think will be required annually to meet the needs that she has just outlined?

Mrs. Bottomley: Clearly, it is impossible to give a forecast of the kind that my hon. Friend seeks. The Bill is about establishing a clear framework of law, a licensing authority, to regulate such activities properly. We need proper arrangements for informed consent for the donors of gametes and embryos. We must also ensure that the activities take place in strictly licensed premises that are properly inspected and that there are proper safeguards.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: Surely somebody has some idea of how many embryos are being used in embryo research, which has been going on for four, nearly five, years. I cannot believe that that figure is unknown to the Department.

Mrs. Bottomley: It is impossible to provide such information for my hon. Friend. A great many authoritative sources and individuals are involved in the treatment of disease and the promotion of well-being who are profoundly committed to the development of embryo research. That was the view of the House when the issue was debated and a conclusion reached some time ago.

Dame Jill Knight *rose*——

Mrs. Bottomley: I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me, but I must make some headway.

Dame Jill Knight: I have an important question. Earlier, the Minister referred to clause 42(e), under which she said that it would be impossible for money to change hands. Surely that clause makes it impossible for money to change hands if it is authorised by directions. What form of authorisation would be given and in what circumstances would it be given?

Mrs. Bottomley: We debated that issue at some length in Committee, when it was made clear that the authority would be able to issue directions. The interim authority has recently made it clear that it is possible for those who donate their eggs for research or treatment purposes, depending on their wishes, to be sterilised. It has been made clear that no inducement is envisaged. If my hon. Friend consults the *Hansard* report of our Committee, she will see that we made it clear that the only type of benefit considered for those involved in such treatment were expenses. There is no intention of starting a market in embryos or eggs, or any such alarmist talk.

Government amendment No. 48 covers a subject similar to that in amendment No. 9, but it has a different conclusion. It arises from a point raised with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State by the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) and the Bishop of Leeds, that schedule 2 contains a clear contradiction between the last two lines of paragraph 3(2) and the earlier suggestion in the schedule that the authority could extend the areas in which research would be justified. It is clear from amendment No. 9, and it is our view, that the last two lines of paragraph 3(2) are too widely drawn.

Mr. Vivian Bendall (Ilford, North): Does Government amendment No. 48 mean that the list cannot be extended without reference to Parliament and the Secretary of State? It is important that the last points should not open things up in a way that the House would not want.

Mrs. Bottomley: That is precisely the position. If my hon. Friend consults the Bill, he will notice that, in schedule 2, paragraph (1)(g) states that a licence may authorise

"other practices as may be specified in, or determined in accordance with, regulations."

However, paragraph 3(2)(e) refers to other purposes

[Mrs. Bottomley]

"of increasing knowledge about the creation and development of embryos and enabling such knowledge to be applied."

Government amendment No. 48 seeks to ensure that, should further purposes be envisaged apart from those that I have already specified where research would be justified, they could be introduced only by affirmative resolution, following a debate in the House.

For example, at present, one of the purposes is congenital disease. A time may come when research into embryos could greatly assist the treatment of other diseases, such as cancer. If amendment No. 9 were passed, that would be impossible without recourse to primary legislation. I hope that the House will agree that, should any extension of the areas in which research could legitimately be undertaken be envisaged, that should be subject to affirmative resolution, as outlined in Government amendment No. 48.

This is a new and important Bill that sets up an authority that will police activities, have powers of entry and ensure that research is undertaken in a carefully supervised and regulatory way. I hope that I have clarified some of the amendments and explained why Government amendment No. 48 is particularly important to give additional strength to, and to safeguard, the Bill.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Earlier, the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) asked whether the Government would make available the notes on the Government new clauses likely to be discussed after 7 pm. I hope that it will be helpful to say that we are putting notes on new clauses in the Vote Office and the Library about now, so that those interested in the debates after 7 pm can begin their studies.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I made my position on the Bill and its attendant factors pretty clear on Second Reading. I shall not repeat my views, except to draw the same conclusion now as I did then.

One fact that has been noticeable during this debate and the previous two is that when debating such issues we try to mobilise other people's opinions. It is right to do so because we need to inform ourselves. But the more we listen to the debates, the more we mobilise those opinions that happen to coincide with our own beliefs and prejudices, or whatever one chooses to call them. I accept that we listen to scientific opinions. But, as lay people, we make value judgments, based on scientific opinions, that are governed by our own views. It is akin to the definition of freedom of the press as being the freedom to publish news that coincides with the prejudices of the proprietor of the newspaper.

Two matters are crucial. It was said earlier in the debate that moral arguments did not stand up because those who opposed experimentation had conceded the argument by supporting the amendment. That is a fallacious argument although it was put responsibly, unlike some of the accusations about some of us who were described as anachronistic, mediaevalist, misogynistic and jesuitical. When the opinions in the North of Ireland are coupled in that way, it gives many of us reason for amusement.

Is it right to end the life of a human being, which is how I regard an embryo? If it is right, all the other arguments about the scientific facts that we have rightly been marshalling for so long should be taken into account. If it is wrong to take the life of a human being, it is doubly wrong to create life so that we can end it.

No matter how scientific or valid the argument or how eminent the person who advances it, and no matter what interpretation is placed on research by scientists, the House will decide not on the basis of the scientific arguments, but on the simple question whether it is right to take the life of a human being. In terms of the amendment, is it wrong—I believe that it is—to create embryos so that research can be carried out on them and because of which they will be destroyed?

By its very nature, research has to go beyond the bounds of constraint. That is what it is all about. Research that is carried out within clearly defined limits will not be successful. There is no doubt that people involved in research will automatically always look for more scope. In terms of the legislation that means two things. The first is that, rightly from their professional point of view but wrongly from the point of view of the legislation, people will naturally look for more embryos upon which to experiment. Secondly, it is, therefore, a matter not of dealing with spare embryos but of the creation of embryos for a specific purpose. As I said on Second Reading, that will inevitably lead to clear demands for an extension of the 14-day rule. As research develops, the need for more time and more subjects will develop and at some time in the future the Government will have to take a decision about an extension of the 14-day rule.

I hope that I shall be forgiven for widening the debate. It is wrong to kill a human being, but it is even more wrong to create human beings so that we can kill them for research. If such research is allowed, we will not be able to restrain it. Future generations will look back at this legislation and say that it was the beginning of a problem which will have become enormous in moral, ethical and scientific terms.

6.15 pm

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: The hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) made an extremely important speech. I support the amendment because, while it is one thing to use spare embryos that may result from a treatment such as IVF, which is a life-giving treatment, it is another to create embryos simply for research.

I asked the Minister how many embryos were used annually because I did not know the figure and hoped that she would. As the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh has said, when dealing with embryos we are dealing with human beings in the making. It is appalling that we do not know how many human beings in the making are being destroyed each year in embryo research.

To reduce human embryos to a lesser level than the white mice used in laboratories suggests that we no longer place any ethical or moral value on life, although I may be told that at the embryo stage life is so diminutive that we do not need to place on it the value that we place on a grown human being.

Following my question to the Minister, I was told that approximately 5,000 embryos are being used every year in this country. I understand that that figure comes from Oxford university. If it is correct, it means that approximately 25,000 embryos have been used in the past five years. How soon will it be before we are using healthy embryos in research to cure illnesses in fewer people than

those healthy embryos would represent if they became human beings in their own right? Can we justify putting certain congenital conditions above the possibility of those embryos growing into normal human beings with all the potential that is in a human being for his or her life and what he or she may or may not do with that life?

We have to decide where our values lie in this matter. We must limit the amount of embryo research that can be carried out rather than allow science to demand the sacrifice of embryos in the name of progress without recognising that we are creating an imbalance between what we are doing with the embryos, which we know will be destroyed, and the cures that they might bring to all the illnesses and handicaps that we are told about.

The Minister will know that at no time during this debate or on Second Reading has anyone been able to establish that embryo research has produced any of the curses that are always held out to us like an illusion or a mirage. No one can yet say categorically that those cures will be found through this research. In spite of that, we are prepared to say that the human embryo is less than life simply to enable scientists to continue with work that they have decided they would like to do. That is all with the intention of increasing the knowledge of human beings and their disorders, but no one has yet been able to tell the House that the 5,000 embryos which will be sacrificed this year—and how many more next year?—will have died to any purpose whatever.

The amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) is right. He is saying that if, as a result of treatment such as IVF, which brings a positive result, there are spare embryos, we may use them, but beyond that we should not go. I whole-heartedly support him.

Mr. Raison: I have not previously participated in the debates on the Bill, but, like all hon. Members, I have thought hard about the fundamental question whether it is right to conduct research on embryos. After much thought, I came to support the view that we should conduct such research.

Amendment No. 6 is a refinement of that question. I have been struck by the fact that hon. Members who support the amendment seem to be fundamentally basing their arguments on the fact that they are against all research on embryos. The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) said that that was not the point. He clearly said that he was merely arguing a specific case about a particular way of creating embryos, but the fact remains —I stand to be corrected—that every hon. Member who has supported amendment No. 6 has done so on the basis that they are against all research on embryos. If anyone wishes to tell me that I am wrong, I shall give way.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: If the research was not destructive I would support it.

Mr. Raison: That is as may be, but it does not answer my point, which was that those hon. Members who support amendment No. 6 are, without exception, against any research on embryos. However, that is not what the debate is about. It is about whether we can legitimately draw distinctions between research in which embryos have been created for use in a treatment, and research in which the embryo has been created specifically for that research. How and why the embryos have been created should not dominate our decisions.

The argument has been set out with more elegance and clarity than I could summon by Canon Professor Dunstan in a paper from the Medical Research Council which has been widely circulated. I hope that the House will forgive me if I quote a sentence or two from it. He says:

"if the future Statutory Licensing Authority is to be permitted to grant licences for research as well as for treatment and storage, it must be because a strong moral justification is perceived, for example, the recognition that the research will contribute to the alleviation of infertility and to a decrease in the number of handicapped babies born.

"Once it has been granted that such purposes and potential benefits are of sufficient moral worth to justify using the early human conceptus for research, no moral distinction seems sustainable between those conceptuses that are 'spare' from a therapeutic attempt, and those that are 'specially created', ie generated as part of a research project. What may be justified for one may also be justified for the other."

To my mind, that exactly sums up the position. Either we believe that research on embryos is permissible, or we do not. The purpose for which embryos are created is secondary and irrelevant. Therefore, although I have great respect for what hon. Members on both sides of the House have said in support of amendment No. 6, after listening carefully to their arguments, they appear to be against all research on embryos, and I think that the House will recognise that.

Sir Bernard Braine: I did not intervene on the first occasion that my right hon. Friend made that charge, but it will be within the recollection of the House that, when supporting the amendment, I said no such thing. I made it absolutely clear that spare embryos might well be used for research because they were destined to die anyway. Also, I made it absolutely clear that to create embryos for the purpose of research—this lies at the heart of all the arguments advanced by hon. Members who support the amendment—which would end in their destruction is totally unacceptable, because the embryo is the beginning of human life.

Mr. Raison: I understand and respect the stance of my right hon. Friend, the Father of the House, but it does not alter what I said.

Sir Bernard Braine: Of course it does.

Mr. Raison: My understanding is that those hon. Members who support amendment No. 6 are, without exception, against all research on embryos.

Mr. David Wilshire (Spelthorne): Hon. Members will be greatly relieved to hear that I do not have the slightest intention of repeating the speech that I made when we considered the Bill in Committee on the Floor of the House, or of repeating all that I said in Standing Committee.

One basic point has been overlooked in the debate. It is perfectly possible to be anti-abuse and pro-life while supporting all forms of research. The two are not incompatible.

I am a little weary—and I suspect that one or two other hon. Members are too—of listening to the anti-research lobby seeking to take the moral high ground, and demanding that we somehow or other prove that research is absolutely essential so that they can tolerate it as a necessary evil. I find that unacceptable and unpalatable.

I have no doubt that research is both good and moral in principle. I am sure that all hon. Members present will accept that abuse can happen, but I have no doubt that the

[Mr. David Wilshire]

Bill will take care of that without the need for any more refinements. I reject the claim, which I heard earlier, that I should feel disgusted at the notion of deliberately creating embryos and then using them for research. I do not feel in the least bit disgusted at that because I realise that there is a fundamental difference between a potential person and an actual human being. I am clear in my mind that research does not take place on human beings, and I say that not for the convenience of scientists, but because I believe that it is so, and it should be on the record that some hon. Members believe that.

Research should take the moral high ground because, in principle, research can help all mankind and it can help a huge number of future individuals. We should be proud of that. We should vote in favour of making that help available to all our constituents. Therefore, I urge the House not to entertain the amendments, but to leave the Bill as it stands. An overwhelming majority of hon. Members previously voted for it as it stands.

Mr. Frank Field: I must pick up the point made by the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison). For once, I cross swords with him, and I do so to caution the House about the wisdom of putting one's sticky fingers into other people's souls and trying to suggest what their motives might be.

I have changed my position in the debate and shall briefly explain that change. In the debates on embryo research and abortion I held an absolutist position. I hoped that the objectives that I could achieve, and that I wished to advance, could be furthered by that stance. In Committee, the House seemed to make two resounding comments about my stance First, while there may be minor changes to the Abortion Act 1967, this House—and probably any House in my lifetime—will not make major changes to it, and certainly not wrecking changes. Secondly, the House unequivocally supported the newer subject of embryo research.

I could have continued to maintain my old absolutist stance, and to feel that by pushing that line I might be able to sway the debate in the House, or I could desert that position and take a more compromised one—muckier, less clear and non-absolutist—in an attempt to sway the House's decision. Therefore, I have deserted my previous stance. If we have a debate and a Division on abortion tomorrow, although I previously believed that the rules should be tightened up, I should vote for an amendment to make abortion easier under 12 weeks, and I should want that firmly linked to urgent reinforcement and care for family planning, which we have not seen. We would not be able to guarantee that tomorrow because the House does not often allow us to decide matters in such a sensible way. I have fundamentally changed my position.

Similarly, I made clear my position on embryo research in the Division in the previous debate. To my heart's content I could make a speech similar to that which I made then as if we had not voted then. I might go out of the Chamber feeling better for it, but I doubt that I should influence the way in which many hon. Members voted. Perhaps I should change that statement. I may influence many hon. Members, because they would be so annoyed at listening to a speech that had nothing to do with the amendment that they would vote in the opposite Lobby.

6.30 pm

By tabling the amendment, I have signified in the most public way that a Member of Parliament can that I have changed my stance, not because my gut feeling is that I was wrong to vote as I did but because, while I respect those who take the absolutist position, I want to influence the decision of the House. Therefore, I tabled the amendment and sought support for it. As I wished to maximise support for the amendment I refused to allow other hon. Members to attach other measures to it, such as a statement that we believe in research but want to qualify the provision and specify that research should not be allowed on contraception. If hon. Members wish to include such a limit they must vote for it in another amendment. It is not part of amendment No. 6 or the consequential amendment.

I intended to pick up many of the points made in the debate, but I sense that the House is not in the mood for it. I shall stay on the ground that the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) called the moral high ground. Everyone wants to occupy the moral high ground—and why not?

Ms. Harman: It is full up.

Mr. Field: There might even be room for my hon. Friend, so I invite her to join us on it.

The hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham)—tonight I have his constituency right—presented his argument. For once I could not follow it. It takes more than to quote the research of Professor Rev. Dunstan, say that there is a high moral argument and make the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) give a powerful grunt of "Hear, hear" to persuade us that that the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East has a good enough argument. It is a good debating point in the House, but surely the House wishes to be persuaded by the arguments, not by the trick of a good theatregoer.

The argument of the hon. Member for Spelthorne takes us back to that of the right hon. Member for Aylesbury. It may be that many of those who support the amendment hold the absolutist position that I held. So what? Surely the House will be convinced by the weight of the argument, not by guilt by association. Hon. Members will not say, "They are the people whom we voted against last time, so we had better vote against them this time."

I can bring my reasons for moving the amendment to a head by centring on the distinction presented by the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East and—we thank the right hon. Member for Aylesbury for drawing our attention to it—the argument used by Professor Rev. Dunstan. It is legitimate for Professor Rev. Dunstan to argue that his view is logical and his moral position correct. That does not make every other position immoral, amoral or non-moral. We must put our various positions before the House and let the House choose.

One distinction is fundamental and crucial to the debate. There is all the difference in the world between creating an embryo, which some of us would say is life but others would say has the potential for life, in an attempt to allow couples who are infertile to have children and using the embryos that are not required for other purposes, and saying that we are so mesmerised by the wonders of science and the blank cheque that we shall give to science that scientific activity itself is the moral stance while the creation of embryos is a secondary consideration. To

create embryos for research simply to destroy them is different from using embryos to further fertility and using spare embryos that would otherwise die. The distinction seems so clear and powerful that I am surprised that some hon. Members cannot see or support it.

The amendment does not seek to limit research. The number of experiments that can be carried out may be limited because there will be a limited number of embryos, but as the Minister would not or could not answer the question put to her by the hon. Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) about how many embryos will be needed, none of us knows whether that is a real possibility.

The amendment seeks, to use a phrase from another debate, to ring-fence the research.

Mr. Barron: It seeks to restrict it.

Mr. Field: No, it does not seek to restrict research. The amendment contains no restriction on research. There may be a restriction on the number of experiments that can be carried out as a result of the number of embryos available, but amendment No. 6 and its consequential amendment contain no such restriction. Other amendments such as that on contraception would restrict research, but that is not what this amendment is about.

Mr. Barron: I disagree on that. It is likely that if the amendment is accepted more embryos will be created when people receive what my hon. Friend would term direct treatment so that research can continue. The amendment will do nothing except alter the Bill, which has the support of a large majority in the House.

Mr. Field: That is the point of this stage of the Bill. That is why we have parliamentary procedures that allow us to amend legislation. We have heard two arguments tonight. My hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) argues that we should not table amendments to the Bill because we would change the Bill. But that is why we have this opportunity to table amendments. The other argument is the Pontius Pilate view that we should not give instructions to outside bodies, in this case the licensing authority. We are the supreme body that lays down guidelines about what should be done. The licensing authority will be the receptive organisation. While those arguments are good debating points, they are separate from and inferior to the major issue that we must decide.

I hope that I have convinced at least some hon. Members that by tabling the amendment I do not take the absolutist position that I held previously. If I have the chance, I shall vote accordingly tomorrow. I accept that there is a clear difference of opinion on whether embryos should be created for research or whether only spare embryos not used for fertilisation should be used. I beg the House to believe that in tabling the amendment I did not wish to restrict the nature of research that can be carried out. If the House wishes to place restrictions on research it must vote on other amendments.

Tonight, we are not deciding to undo the substance of the debates on Second Reading a few weeks ago, which received overwhelming support. Tonight, we are deciding a different issue.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 208, Noes 246.

Division No. 237] **[6.39 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Anderson, Donald
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Conway, Derek
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Graham, Thomas
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Sir Charles
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McFall, John
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Maginnis, Ken
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mudd, David
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon

O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Robertson, George
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. A. E. P. Duffy and
Mrs. Ann Winterton.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blunkett, David
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Grocott, Bruce
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclean, David
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Madel, David
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morley, Elliot
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Needham, Richard
Nellist, Dave
Nelson, Anthony
Oppenheim, Phillip
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trotter, Neville
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Maria Fyfe and
Mr. Robert Key.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 4

PROHIBITION IN CONNECTION WITH GAMETES

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I beg to move amendment No. 39, in page 3, line 10, at end insert—

'(2A) No person shall place sperm and eggs in a woman in any circumstances specified in regulations except in pursuance of a licence.

(2B) Regulations made by virtue of subsection (2A) above may provide that, in relation to licences only to place sperm and eggs in a woman in such circumstances, sections 12 to 22 of this Act shall have effect with such modifications as may be specified in the regulations.'.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this, it will be convenient to take the following: Amendment No. 23, in page 3, line 10, at end insert—

'(2A) No person shall provide gamete intra fallopian transfer treatment services unless and until—

(a) notification of such provision has been given to the Authority, and

(b) a written undertaking has been given to provide annually to the Authority such information concerning the provision of the treatment services as the Authority may specify in directions.'.

Amendment No. 24, in schedule 2, page 29, line 22, at end insert—

'(6) In the case of gamete intra fallopian transfer, if it appears to the Authority that there is cause for concern about the provision of treatment services in any centre, the Authority may require that an application be made for that centre to be licensed, and may further require that no new patients be treated at that centre until a licence has been granted.'.

Government amendments Nos. 41 and 51.

Mrs. Bottomley: In Committee, considerable attention was given to gamete intra-fallopian transfer. Government amendments Nos. 39, 41 and 51 seek to provide redress for those who have been concerned about the technique. The statutory control of any medical technique is an unprecedented measure and, following the debates in the other place—*[Interruption.]*

Dame Jill Knight: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am so sorry, but I am directly behind my hon. Friend and I cannot hear a word that she is saying.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Lady is quite right. I am directly in front of the Minister, but I can hardly hear her either. Please may we have order while the Minister speaks to the amendment.

Mrs. Bottomley: Government amendments Nos. 39, 41 and 51 cover a matter that caused considerable concern in Committee.

The Bill is primarily concerned to control fertility treatments that consist of the creation of an embryo outside the body and those which involve donated gametes or embryos. However, the technique of gamete intra-fallopian transfer and a number of other treatments that involve the use of super-ovulatory drugs caused concern in Committee, and reservations have been expressed by many in the field. We took advice from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and others, which felt strongly that it was not right for the full controls of the Bill to cover GIFT.

The amendments seek to ensure that powers are available so that we can bring forward regulations——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I should be grateful if the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) would take his seat. Mrs. Bottomley.

Mrs. Bottomley: The amendments would ensure that it was possible for us to bring forward regulations, subject to the affirmative resolution procedure, to ensure that the placing of sperm and eggs in a woman fell within the licensing system should the Government consider that necessary in future.

Miss Widdecombe: I am anxious to ask my hon. Friend for one clear assurance before she concludes her remarks. Can we please be assured that, if GIFT is to be brought within the control of the Bill, those who do not wish to practise other methods and who only wish to practise GIFT will not, under any circumstances, be discriminated against for that reason?

Mrs. Bottomley: That is certainly the case. As my hon. Friend will know, one of the purposes of the counselling techniques is to ensure that people are properly advised in other techniques that will not come within the purview of the authority.

In addition to introducing a regulation-making power to bring GIFT within the control of the authority if necessary, we have tabled Government amendment No. 51, which would ensure that, should any activity take place in breach of those regulations, it would then be an offence.

Government amendment No. 41 would ensure that the authority could give guidance in its code of practice on the use of any technique involving the placing of sperm and eggs in women, whether or not the technique is covered by the Bill by virtue of regulations.

In Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) suggested that we might exert pressure on the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to ensure that it provided further guidance and encouragement to its members—which had already expressed views on this subject—to ensure that they adhered strictly to the guidelines that are already available from the licensing authorities. I wrote to the president, Sir George Pinker, and took up the Committee's concerns. He replied to me by making it clear that the royal college continues to think it right that GIFT should not be subject to the full regulation procedure under the Bill. It is more than happy to write to its members to reinforce the advice given by the authority on counselling, the use of super-ovulatory drugs, the number of embryos or eggs to be transferred and other matters relating to the practice of GIFT. The advantage of our amendments is that it could also cover other techniques such as post-peritoneal oocyte and sperm tranfer. I hope that hon. Members will feel that that satisfies the understandable concern and that we are taking the necessary steps, and that they will support the Government amendments.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): The Minister will recall Labour Members raising their concerns about these matters because of their anxiety about the risks to the mother and to any resulting children. We are glad to accept the Minister's assurance——

It being Seven o'clock, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order [2 April] and the Resolution this day, to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

[Mrs. Maria Fyfe]

Amendment agreed to.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am now required to put the Question on any amendment moved by a member of the Government to the end of schedule 2. Will the Secretary of State make clear the amendments that he is moving?

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I propose to move amendments Nos. 14, 8, 48 and 10. I wish to make it clear that, to facilitate a vote, there will be a free vote for Conservative Members on the non-Government amendments.

Madam Deputy Speaker *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on amendments, moved by a member of the Government, of which notice had been given, to that part of the Bill to be concluded at Seven o'clock.*

Schedule 1

The Authority: Supplementary Provisions

Amendment proposed: No. 14, in page 26, line 21, after 'informed' insert

'by the views of persons having wide knowledge or experience in the fields of law, social work, philosophy and religion as well as medicine or science and'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 205, Noes 236.

Division No. 238] **[7.01 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Anderson, Donald
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Graham, Thomas
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grocott, Bruce
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCrea, Rev William
McFall, John
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Maginnis, Ken
Malins, Humfrey
Marek, Dr John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Reid, Dr John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Robertson, George
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, Sir William
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blunkett, David
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*

Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hannam, John
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Irvine, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
McCrindle, Robert
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclean, David
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Madel, David
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliot
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Needham, Richard
Nellist, Dave
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter L.
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rogers, Allan
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trotter, Neville
Turner, Dennis
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Maria Fyfe and
Mr. Robert Key.

Question accordingly negatived.

Schedule 2

ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH LICENCES MAY BE GRANTED

Amendment proposed: No. 8, in page 29, line 41, leave out paragraph (d).—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 167, Noes 271.

Division No. 239] **[7.13 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Canavan, Dennis
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James

Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irving, Sir Charles
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCrea, Rev William
McFall, John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNamara, Kevin
Maginnis, Ken
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Reid, Dr John
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George J.
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Graham, Thomas
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kennedy, Charles
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclean, David
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
Madden, Max
Madel, David
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morley, Elliot
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Mullin, Chris
Needham, Richard
Nellist, Dave
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Norris, Steve
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rogers, Allan
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis

Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steen, Anthony
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trotter, Neville
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Wood, Timothy
Worthington, Tony
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody and Mr. Robert Key.

Question accordingly negatived.

Amendment made: No. 48, in page 29, line 44, leave out from 'or' to 'such' in line 45 and insert

'for such other purposes as may be specified in regulations.

(2A) Purposes may only be so specified with a view to the authorisation of projects of research which increase knowledge about the creation and development of embryos, or about disease, or enable.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Amendment proposed: No. 10, in page 30, line 1, after 'authorise,' insert—

'(a) the administration of a substance to an embryo for the purpose of ascertaining the properties of that substance in relation to the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of disease, or

(b) '.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 167, Noes 254.

Division No. 240] **[7.26 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Anderson, Donald
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Conway, Derek
Cormack, Patrick
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irving, Sir Charles
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCrea, Rev William
McFall, John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNamara, Kevin
Maginnis, Ken
Malins, Humfrey
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Price, Sir David
Reid, Dr John
Robertson, George
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, Sir William
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael

Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
McKelvey, William
Maclean, David
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Madel, David
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morley, Elliot
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Needham, Richard
Nellist, Dave
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rogers, Allan
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steen, Anthony
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trotter, Neville
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody and Mr. Robert Key.

Question accordingly negatived.

SCHEDULE 3

CONSENTS TO USE OF GAMETES OR EMBRYOS.

Amendment made: No. 49, in page 32, line 8, at end insert—

'(4) Any consent required by this paragraph is in addition to any consent that may be required by paragraph 5 above.'. —*[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley.]*

Clause 13

CONDITIONS OF LICENCES FOR TREATMENT

Mr. Thurnham: I beg to move amendment No. 56, in page 6, line 31, at end add

'including information about their physical characteristics, family background, education, skills and interests and health history.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this, it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 57, in page 7, line 14, at end add

"including information recorded under subsection (2)(c) above.'.

No. 33, in clause 30, page 17, line 17, at end insert—

'(aa) giving the applicant all information including identifying information relating to the person concerned, if the applicant, the person treated by virtue of sections 27 to 29 of this Act as the parents of the applicant and, before the information was recorded, the person concerned, have all recorded in writing their consent to the identity of the person concerned being made known to the applicant.'.

Government amendment No. 60.

No. 31A, in page 17, line 21, at end insert—

'( ) A person who has attained the age of eighteen ("the applicant") and who has received the opportunity for proper counselling required to be provided under section 30(3)(b) may by notice to the Authority require the Authority to comply with a request to give the applicant all the information relating to the applicant which is held by the Authority."

Government amendments Nos. 59 and 58.

Government new clause 11—*Civil liability to child with disability.*

Government new clause 12—*Disclosure in interests of justice.*

Government new clause 13—*Disclosure in interests of justice: congenital disabilities, etc.*

Mr. Thurnham: It is not my intention to divide the House on this amendment, but I take this opportunity to

raise the point at issue: the very difficult question of anonymity and striking a balance when talking about personal secrets. Should a mother tell her child that her apparent father is not her father? This is an area of family secrets for which it is most difficult to decide how the House should legislate. Apart from the issue of donor children, I understand that between 5 and 20 per cent. of the population have a father who is not their true father. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that those hon. Members who are not listening to the debate will carry on their conversations elsewhere.

Mr. Thurnham: Approximately 60 per cent. of donor parents do not tell anyone—the child or their relatives and friends—that the child is a donor child, but some 40 per cent. of donor parents are happy to tell their families and friends, and, in due course, the child that the child is a donor child.

The Swedish Government decided that it was wrong to allow such secrets to be kept and legislated that donor children must be told the identity of their true fathers and mothers, but in Britain there is a strong weight of feeling that we should allow anonymity to continue. Some people feel that we should not force a family to burden a child —as they see it—with the details of his or her parents. So the Government are in a dilemma as to how to legislate to allow anonymity to continue but to allow for possible changes in future as has happened with the adoption laws which allowed it retrospectively.

We have to consider whether donors who donated anonymously could retrospectively lose that anonymity. Some people in the medical world believe that the supply of donors would dry up without anonymity, but others tell me that that is not the case. King's College hospital in London carried out a survey among donors. Only one third of the donors were opposed to identification. The other two thirds were either in favour of it or reserved their position on any disclosure of identity. I understand that Hammersmith hospital is also in favour of the identification of donors on the basis that dark secrets within the family are not the best way to bring up a child. The British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, the British Association of Social Workers, the Association of Directors of Social Services and the British Infertility Counselling Association are all in favour of moving away from anonymity and towards identification.

I tabled amendment No. 33 with a view to finding out whether any middle ground exists. If donors are agreeable to identification at the time of donation and the parents agree to identification at the time of treatment and, in due course, the child is in favour of identification, the child could discover the identity of his or her true genetic mother or father. That is not always clear, and no doubt one would have to have a DNA genetic blood test to establish a sure identification. Although I put forward amendment No. 33 to establish whether there is any middle ground, I feel that people are on one side or the other.

I should like the Government to make it clear whether they consider that there is any possibility of a retrospective change in the law and, if they wanted to change the law to allow identification, how they would go about it and how they would assess what people's feelings really were. If they do not want to accept amendment No. 33 as part of the Bill, perhaps they will accept the wording as part of regulations so that we could have regulations now to allow children to be born who would be able to identify their genetic parents at a later date.

There is an argument that that might create two classes of children, but later tonight we shall discuss an amendment that concerns another place dealing with whether donor children should be allowed to inherit titles and sit in another place. If we are to allow two classes of children in those circumstances, surely it cannot be wrong to enable at least some children to have a legal right to establish the identity of their father or mother.

Amendments Nos. 56 and 57 do not go quite as far as amendment No. 33. Amendment No. 57 seeks to ensure that information about donors is given to prospective parents at the time of treatment. There may be good reasons not to disclose the identity of the donor to the parents, but the rest of the information about the donor needs to be given to them so that they can pass it on to the child when he or she is ready to receive it. Children's curiosity about their genetic origins may arise at any time and the best people to attempt to satisfy it are likely to be their parents. The information may also help the parents in bringing up the child.

7.45 pm

It is worth noting that the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 require adoption agencies to give prospective adopters details of the child's personal history and background before placement and, as the Government's circular accompanying the regulations points out:

"it should be explained to the adopters that the information is provided not only to help them to bring up the child but also on behalf of the child himself."

Counsellors working with couples receiving infertility treatment have found that the lack of information about donors is frequently the cause of much disquiet and distress to their clients.

Amendment No. 56 seeks to ensure that where gametes or embryos are provided by donors to be used for treatment services, sufficient information about the donor is obtained at the time of donation and recorded. The purpose of recording such information is chiefly to enable any child born as a result of the treatment services to have some knowledge about his or her genetic parents.

Although, without the amendment, it would be open to the licensing authority to specify in regulations that such information should be recorded, it is too important a matter to be left to directions. The Warnock committee talked only of recording particulars of the ethnic origin and genetic health of donors. There are problems concerning the ethnic community involving infertility treatment and attention should be paid to helping ethnic minorities in that connection.

The Warnock committee also spoke of a view among some of its members that there should be a move towards gathering more information and making it available to prospective parents. In the six years since the Warnock committee reported, there has been a considerable shift in views among those with experience in these matters, and it seems important to ensure that as much information as it is reasonable to seek should be gathered from the donors. Even if the current legislation does not make provision for that information to be made available in its entirety to any resulting child, it is more likely that well within the lifetime of such a child there will be a change in the law which will permit children access to further information about their

genetic parents. It is important therefore that the information should be recorded now to allow for that future possibility.

Other points have been put to me by people working with these issues. I understand that there is a legal case which may have some relevance. My attention was drawn to the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Gaskin *v.* The United Kingdom in 1989. That case centred on Graham Gaskin's demand for access to records held by Liverpool city council in whose care he had been as a child. The court, finding in favour of Gaskin, held that

"respect for his private . . . life",

as outlined in article 8 of the European convention on human rights, requires that

"everyone should be able to establish details of their identity as individual human beings".

I have covered the main points that I wish to raise. I do not wish to push the amendments to a Division, but I should like the Government to consider them, answer fully and, if they intend to leave it to regulations, to make sure that those regulations cover the points that I have raised.

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): This group of amendments is concerned with anonymity, and there are two competing arguments about anonymity of the donor. The first argument is that put forward by the British Association of Social Workers and the Association of Directors of Social Services. Their argument is compelling in that it advocates that the identity of the donor should be revealed, including characteristics, and they draw a direct analogy with adopted children. While we accept the strength of their case in respect of adopted children, only 5 per cent. of those children, when they reach the age of 18, take the opportunity of finding out the identity of their natural mothers. Obviously it is impossible for many of them to discover the identity of their natural fathers. We do not accept that there is a direct and fair comparison with the possibility of young adults, created as a result of infertility treatments, seeking the identity of their natural parents. It is not a sensible comparison.

We accept and understand that the clinics, and the licensing authority eventually, will collect information and know the identity of donors. If, for medical reasons, it is necessary to identify a donor at a subsequent stage, that will be possible. However, we do not believe that it is necessary for a person on reaching the age of 18 to be given information identifying the donor.

Those of us who are parents and who care for children and understand their needs, and those of us who wish to create a caring and supporting environment in which children are valued, would not want to create circumstances in the Bill that would allow children to be distinguished or separated from each other on the basis of whether they were adopted children, the issue of their natural parents or children produced as the result of infertility treatments. We should aim to create an environment in which all children are loved, supported, cared for and respected. To try to develop divisions and to distinguish between types of children because of infertility treatments is unacceptable.

The information and views of those who put forward the opposite argument—for the non-identification of the donor—stem from the experience in Sweden. We received submissions, which we discussed in Committee, to the effect that identifying the donor will restrict the number of donors who come forward to take part in research programmes. It is also argued that the parents of children produced as the result of IVF do not want the donor to be identified.

I do not believe that children's curiosity about themselves and their attributes extends to them wanting to know about their genetic origins or the characteristics of their donor mother or father. Amendment No. 56 suggests that the information that should be made available to children is

"physical characteristics, family background, education, skills and interests".

Those are very emotive characteristics and we could have long debates about the definitions of those characteristics.

Who would want to discover that one's donor was dull and uninteresting, but well meaning? Who would want to discover that the family background of one's donor was that he was the only son of a family that was now deceased? Who would want to learn that one's donor's education amounted to five GCSEs at grade D? What if the donor's skills were clerical and his interests were bird keeping and being a wireless ham?

While I have nothing against those interests, I believe that people would rather see the following attributes about the donor: physical characteristics—tall, slim, blond and blue-eyed; family background—athlete and astronaut; education—Cambridge PhD; skills—astrophysicist; interests—opera, theatre and sport.

I do not mean to be flippant; I just want to show that providing such information would be exceedingly difficult and would not be in the best interests of the child. It would not help the child to understand himself or herself or to develop in society. The Bill should do nothing to threaten the possibility of people coming forward as donors. It should do nothing to undermine the programmes.

There is evidence that those seeking treatment are opposed to any possibility of a child having access to information about the donor. We believe that at this stage the donor should remain anonymous and no information about the donor should be available.

In that sense, the Bill as it is currently drafted makes no commitment to either camp. It does not commit itself to making the identity available, nor does it commit itself to not making that information available eventually. We believe that perhaps there is no other way to satisfy both views and we support the view expressed in the Bill.

Amendment No. 56 relates to clause 13 and in no other part of the Bill is the tension between biological and social more explicit. None of us can honestly say that we know the effects of the Bill on children who are born as a result of donated gametes. We cannot say whether it will matter to those children to know that they have been born as a result of that process. Although the approach of the Department of Health will not satisfy the competing arguments, we believe that the Bill advances the best way to proceed bearing in mind the Swedish experience.

According to the notes on clauses, new clauses 11, 12 and 13 provide for the suing of the donor parent and the parents who have undertaken the infertility treatment by a child who has suffered a disability as a result of the treatment. Those provisions refer to the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liabilities) Act 1976, which is

"An Act to make provision as to civil liability in the case of children born disabled in consequence of some person's fault".

We are surprised, indeed stunned, that such a serious addition to the Bill should be produced at this late stage,

making it impossible for hon. Members adequately to consider the proposal. We are not happy about the new clauses because they open up dangerous questions. Unless the Minister can give us various assurances, we believe that the House would be making a dreadful mistake if it were to include that material in the legislation. We shall vote against the new clauses.

Mr. Alton: I entirely agree with the hon. Lady. I very much welcome her statement and can assure her that many of us will be in the Lobby with her on that matter. Does she accept that the provisions would do two undesirable things? First, they would place pressures on doctors who would then feel unable to carry out IVF, and they would place on doctors the pressure to destroy an embryo that they think might in any way result in a disabled person. Both those things are highly undesirable and unacceptable. It is appalling that at this late stage—at the very fag end of our deliberations on the Bill—such provisions, involving enormously important principles, should be introduced so cavalierly.

Ms. Primarolo: I am in some sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's point. I shall be interested to hear the Secretary of State's reply on this matter—as I am sure the whole House will be.

8 pm

It is ludicrous to include in the Bill such highly emotive and contentious words as

"information about their physical characteristics, family background, education, skills and interests and health history."

We are pleased that amendment No. 56 will not be pushed to a Division. We believe that anonymity must remain to protect both the donor service and the possibility of infertility treatment. Any changes to the legislation must be made by the House only after a full debate, if that is what the House subsequently decides to do. As currently drafted, the new clauses give rise to considerable concern and we look forward to hearing the Secretary of State's justification for them.

Mr. Key: I wish to speak to amendment No. 60. It was a pleasant surprise to find, on coming to the House early this morning, that my amendment had been hijacked by none other than the Secretary of State himself.

I agree with much of what has been said about anonymity by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) and the hon. Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo). We had a good debate about that in Committee when it was debated with great care and not a little feeling on both sides of the argument. My hon. Friend the Minister restated the Government's position, which had been set out in paragraph 83 of the White Paper, which stated:

"all adults over the age of 18 should have a legal right to find out whether they were born following gamete or embryo donation and that those who were should have a right of access to certain non-identifying information about the donor to be prescribed in regulations."

I am sure that the Government were right. That position reflects the way in which the majority of those involved see the situation.

The Government were also right to leave open the possibility that the public perception of what is right may change over the years. It may, in future, be right to take advantage of the regulatory provision in the Bill to make available information that will identify the donor to the young person. However, that presents a real difficulty here and now for clinicians, donors and potential donors. Up to now, clinicians have told donors that donations are given on the clear and categorical understanding that their identity will not be made known to any young person who might subsequently be born as a result of the donation. Now, clinicians will have to say to donors, "At present your identity will not be disclosed"—the new legislation makes that clear—"but a future Government may change the rules".

I draw the attention of the House yet again to the Swedish experience. Legislation introduced in Sweden in 1985 stated that when a child is of "sufficient maturity" —in practice that means around the age of 18—he or she has the right to know the identity of the donor. There were some beneficial and some damaging consequences of that move. As I understand it, the number of donors fell, donations had to be sought from a wider recruitment base —this may have been beneficial—partly in the hope of securing donations from men in stable relationships for whom later identification would not prove an embarrassment, and the number of couples seeking help fell. That was because of the overwhelming desire of the prospective parents to feel that the child would be fully theirs, and because of the social stigma that still attaches to infertility.

The Government's intention to provide legislation that will be responsive to future changes is wholly admirable. However, as the Bill stands, the effect will be the same as if they had legislated not to retain the anonymity of the donor—hence my amendment, which is designed to make it as sure as possible that all who donate under the present rules are protected if the rules change in the future. My amendment seeks to outlaw the retrospective identification of donors. It is in line with the Government's express intent and would enhance the viability of their approach in this sensitive area.

Mr. Alton: I do not intend to pursue the points made by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key).

I listened carefully to what the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) said about Graham Gaskin case. I raised that case in the House at the time because Graham Gaskin lived in Liverpool and his family had been my constituents. I was, therefore, well aware of the case which raised the issue of a person's identity and right to know about decisions that are made concerning his or her life. It was partly as a result of that case that my hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) introduced his Bill about the right of access to medical records.

It is vital that people should know how and why decisions about their lives have been made, and that they should know about the people who created them. I believe that we face great dangers subsequently in life if we are unaware of the identity of our parents. If that knowledge is not made available, its absence can cause complex problems in the life of the person concerned. It is far better to be as honest, open and up-front as we possibly can.

The hon. Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo) referred to new clause 11. I register my concern that such provisions have been tabled at such a late stage. I hope that the Secretary of State and the Solicitor-General will reconsider whether it is right to press the matter tonight or whether they should take the provisions away for further consideration. The new clause raises important new

[Mr. Alton]

questions, which were not debated in the Lords, in Committee or on Second Reading. It has been brought in with only 24 hours notice.

Only a few hon. Members spotted that it introduces a wholly new principle into our law. It means that if a doctor fails to remove and discard an embryo that may in some way be disabled, the doctor can subsequently be sued. That will place pressure on the medical profession to destroy embryos and to incorporate eugenics into medical ethics. That is wholly unacceptable.

The new clause will also result in the wrong kind of pressures on IVF treatment. Obviously, some doctors will feel great fear about proceeding with such methods if they think that they might be open to prosecution subsequently. It is hard to read the provisions in any other way. New clause 11(1)(1A)(1) states:

> "(b) the disability results from an act or omission in the course of the selection, or the keeping or use outside the body,"—

presumably, that means the freezing of embryos—

> "of the embryo carried by her or of the gametes used to bring about the creation of the embryo, and
>
> (c) a person is under this section answerable to the child in respect of the act or omission,

the child's disabilities are to be regarded as damage resulting from the wrongful act of that person and actionable accordingly at the suit of the child."

The House should note the words, "the wrongful act".

If during the delivery of a child in a maternity unit a mistake was made—we are all familiar with disabilities caused as a result of the use of forceps, for example—and there was an accident, we would all accept that there would be a case to answer in court. However, to build into the Bill at this stage in its consideration the provisions that are set out in the new clauses is to send out all the wrong signals.

Many disabled people are left wondering. Serious handicap is not specified. The doctor may have doubts about cosmetic disability. I have in mind a cleft palate, a club foot or a hare lip. As the clause is drawn, that will be a reason why the doctor will have to remove and discard the embryo. If the doctor fails to do that, he will be open to prosecution. The House is being asked to follow a repugnant course and I hope that more thought will be given to it. The introduction of provisions with profound moral implications at such a late stage in our consideration of the Bill needs to be given much more thought before we can enact them.

There are many hon. Members present with whom I do not necessarily agree on all occasions, and that can be said of their response to my arguments. There is, however, unanimity among many Opposition Members on this issue, and I suspect that that is the position on the Government Benches. I hope that the Secretary of State will feel able to give much more consideration to the provisions that he has presented to us and, if necessary, to bring them back in the form of Lords amendments.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I did not rise at the beginning of the debate because my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) had tabled the first amendment in the group and because I did not anticipate any serious controversy on the Government's three new clauses. I intervene at this stage because it is clear that hon. Members are anxious for an explanation of the new clauses. I hope that I shall be able to persuade the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) that he has misunderstod the purport of them. New clause 11 is the only one that appears to be arousing controversy, but it is designed to afford protection to the children in question. It presents no threat to them and it does not raise the great moral issues with which, as we all know, the hon. Gentleman is consistenly concerned.

The selection of amendments and new clauses turns on the nature of the information about the donors of sperm that is to be kept on the authority's register and on the circumstances in which certain information might or might not be released to certain people. We should remind ourselves that clause 30 requires the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to keep a register of information if it relates, first, to the provision of treatment services for any identifiable individual or, secondly, the keeping or use of the gametes of identifiable individuals, or if it is shown that an identifiable individual was or may have been born as a result of treatment services. Treatment services for these purposes really mean infertility treatment involving donations of sperm, eggs or embryos.

That information is confidential, and it must be. Clause 32 provides that save in certain specified circumstances it will be a criminal offence for a member or an employee of the authority to disclose information kept on the register.

The new clauses are all designed to cover three circumstances where the Government, including my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, have upon reflection thought that there should be cases where the courts must have access to the information in the interests of the child concerned and in the interests of justice. Amendment No. 59 provides an exception to the normal rule where the courts may order disclosure of information on the register in specified circumstances.

I shall deal first with the two new clauses that I think will not cause a great deal of trouble. New clause 12 deals with the position where a question arises in a court of law whether a person is or is not to be treated as a parent by virtue of clauses 27 or 28. There are various circumstances in which that might arise, such as certain orders under the Children Act 1989 and declarations of parentage under the Family Law Act 1986. A good example might be an application for a maintenance order for the child where paternity is disputed. I am talking about a situation where a man and a woman have gone together for infertility treatment, in circumstances where the man should thereafter carry the legal liabilities of a father for maintenance. Let us suppose that subsequently an argument arises about whether the man was a party to the treatment. The court might have no evidence upon which to base its decision other than the word of the parties. Those circumstances would contrast rather sharply with an ordinary case where the child has been conceived naturally.

8.15 pm

The best evidence of the legal relationship between the persons concerned may be contained in the authority's register. The information held may show, for example, that the two named persons did receive treatment together. Without that information, the court may have insufficient evidence to reach a decision. The result may be the making of no maintenance order where the man was, in fact, the legal father. That would be an injustice to the mother and to the child. We believe that it would be wrong to deny courts access to that information.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Clarke: I shall finish my explanation and then I shall give way to my hon. Friend.

We must ensure that the only information that is released under a court order is that which is relevant to the issue before the court. New clause 12 cases would involve facts relevant to the question whether a person is or is not the parent. In none of these cases will the court require information about donors. What is needed to determine who is to be treated as the parent is information about the persons who receive treatment services and persons who were born as a result. New clause 12(1) expressly prevents information about donors being disclosed because the physical characteristics of the donor are irrelevant. It is necessary only to know whether it was an AID case in which the man was a party to the treatment being received.

Mrs. Currie *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall give way to my hon. Friend after I have completed my explanation of the new clause.

There are two further safeguards. First, subsection (2) provides that a court must not make such an order unless it is satisfied that the interests of justice require it. Secondly, it gives a court dealing with a civil case where such disclosure has been made the power to sit in camera. In common with other matrimonial proceedings, this is not something that should be on public record.

I would not anticipate that anyone would be opposed to new clause 12. At this stage, I give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie).

Mrs. Currie: It would help those of us who have struggled to understand at short notice the principle of the new clauses if my right hon. and learned Friend will confirm that they are not intended to create a situation in which claims can be made by the child against the donor. We wish to be assured that donors can donate freely, as we would want them to do, and to be sure that in years to come they will not have someone appear out of the blue and say, "I am after your house, your property and your name".

Mr. Clarke: That issue arises under new clause 11. It is the one which has alarmed the hon. Members for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo) and the hon. Member for Mossley Hill. The answer is that those circumstances will not arise. There is no intention to give the child any general right of action against the donor.

New clause 13 is non-controversial but I shall deal with new clause 11 first before turning to it. New clause 11 is designed essentially to give children born as a result of these treatments the same rights against people who have caused him or her injury as a result of some default or negligence as those that have been given to children born naturally. The rights of children born naturally were given to them by the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976. That measure was passed to give children legal remedies in respect of wrongful action or omissions that took place before the child was born or, perhaps, even conceived. It deals with wrongful acts or omissions where the negligence of those carrying out the treatment has led to the child being born disabled.

The Act was not required to give the parents a remedy. If parents suffer injury, under common law they can sue those who gave the treatment for the injury from which they suffer. Before the 1976 Act, there was serious doubt whether, in cases where the parents could not demonstrate that they had suffered from an injury, the child had a right of action in respect of acts that took place before birth or even conception. Clearly, in 1976 the House thought it right to extend to a child the right to take civil action in those circumstances. New clause 11 is merely trying to ensure that that protection is given to children born as a result of AID. It would put them on the same footing as children born naturally.

Ms. Primarolo: As the Secretary of State outlined the new clause as giving the same protection to children born by IVF as exists for those born naturally, we accept the principle. Clause 1 of the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976 states:

> "If a child is born disabled as the result of such an occurrence before its birth as is mentioned in subsection (2) below . . . a person (other than the child's own mother) is under this subsection answerable to the child."

Who could perform the wrongful act?

Mr. Clarke: The people administering the treatment. If someone responsible for IVF was negligent with the result that injury was caused to the child, the new clause would give the child a legal remedy. The action would be similar to that which a child would have against an obstetrician in natural childbirth. Nobody would wish to take away the remedies provided in the 1976 Act to a child who is damaged during a natural delivery by negligence, which, inevitably, occasionally occurs.

Ms. Primarolo: What about the donor?

Mr. Clarke: I can conceive of no circumstances in which the donor of sperm for the treatment could conceivably be accused of a wrongful act which gives rise to injury to the child, unless there were a deliberate failure or refusal to disclose a transmittable disease. If a donor wilfully donates what he knows to be contaminated or genetically defective sperm, such an action could possibly arise, but that is to go into the realms of fantasy. *[Interruption.]* If somebody willingly donates sperm which he knows to be HIV positive, I am not sure why he should be protected from an action brought by the child. On the other hand, I do not think that a child would do that because those who administered the treatment who had failed to screen for HIV positive or to detect that the embryo was not developing normally through some other congenital abnormality would be the obvious choice.

I am in danger of speaking off the cuff and I am glad that my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General is sitting behind me because he has been in practice more recently. One reason for having a properly licensed and regulated treatment is that a responsible treatment centre should screen for HIV positive sperm and should take steps to ensure that there is no genetic defect in the embryo in the early stages of development.

I do not believe that we are giving any extra incentive to doctors to abort children or anything of that sort. There is no difference between these cases and cases of natural childbirth. The hon. Member for Mossley Hill presupposes that anybody who is responsible for the supervision of a case and who discovers that something is wrong will kill his or her mistakes. That is not likely to happen. With respect to the hon. Gentleman, that is to get the wrong end of the stick.

[Mr. Clarke]

The new clause is designed to give these children the same legal remedies as those that are available to children born as a result of natural childbirth. I know perfectly well that the hon. Gentleman would not intend to put children born as a result of IVF in a weaker legal position than those born as a result of natural childbirth.

Mr. Alton: Obviously, the Secretary of State accepts that because this involves establishing new principles and and a new birth procedure—not natural childbirth—the law must be considered differently. Presumably, once a child is born, whether through natural childbirth or IVF, the same remedies will exist in law, so the opportunities that he has just described would all be available. What happens if a child is born HIV positive? The parents may not know of the possibility because not everyone is screened in advance. What happens where some congenital disorder occurs subsequently, which the parents did not know about—perhaps caused by a strain which appears from time to time in the family? What happens if a disability occurs after freezing embryos? Everybody knows that the risks of disability in those circumstances are far greater, according to Professor Ronald Taylor and others. If that is true, what remedies will be open to a disabled person in those circumstances?

Mr. Clarke: I see no negligence or cause of action that could arise in any of those circumstances. I am not sure about the failure to screen for HIV. I understand that it is usual regularly to screen the donors of sperm to make sure that sperm is not being taken from an HIV-positive individual. It almost certainly would be negligent to do so. Certainly the other circumstances do not give rise to a cause of action.

Mr. Alton: What about freezing embryos?

Mr. Clarke: If the hon. Gentleman accepts the opinion of those who say that frozen sperm are more liable to have defects, he should appreciate that the new clause could give a child possible cause of action against the person who uses frozen sperm. It may give rise to litigation which the hon. Gentleman, presumably, would welcome, although, personally, I think that it would fail.

This possibility arises in few cases. It was an obscure change of the law in 1976. The parents in such circumstances always have the right to sue, but sometimes parents can demonstrate no particular damage, for example in financial terms, to themselves. Until 1976 the child was in an ambiguous position, not so much that he or she definitely had no right to sue as that it was unclear that the child had a right to sue for damages, relying on facts that occurred before he or she was born or even conceived. The law was changed for natural childbirth. If the new clause is accepted, the law will be changed for those born as a result of IVF. I imagine that the number of cases that would occur would be about the same. If the new clause is not accepted, the old legal problem would arise if a child conceived through IVF brought an action.

I accept that the provision is being introduced at a late stage. The point was not noticed previously. The House will recall that the Bill started in another place. If we do not introduce this provision on Report, we shall not be able to do so ever. If the Bill were at an earlier stage, I should probably undertake to withdraw the new clause and give hon. Members more time for reflection, confident that they would accept it. If I do that this evening, we shall end up with a gap in the law and will deprive these children of a protection which other children have.

Mr. Wigley: I understand that if this provision is to be included, it must be inserted now and that it cannot be introduced in another place, unless as an amendment from this House. Can the Secretary of State clarify whether we shall have some opportunity to return to this matter, if the Bill is amended in another place? If so, could that opportunity be used to give hon. Members a chance to get into the guts of this a little more? Many of us feel that, although the Government may be right, we have not had an opportunity to take advice as we should like to do. We should be happier if we knew that the House of Lords could be encouraged to make amendments to allow us to return to this later.

Mr. Clarke: If the House carries the new clause, it will return to another place and their Lordships will have to decide whether they agree with it. I have no doubt that the case I am arguing will be argued with greater eloquence by my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, whose amendment it is in origin, I am assured by the Solicitor-General. I imagine that the Lord Chancellor has a fair chance of persuading their Lordships. Unlike me, he has an audience of Law Lords who will doubtless take an interest in the subject as well.

8.30 pm

I am speaking off the cuff, but I think that it is true that if their Lordships agree with the new clause it will not return here. However, it means that there will be an interval within which hon. Members can make representations to the Lord Chancellor while the new clause is returning to another place and being debated there.

The Government are not proposing to impose on the House something that, in our opinion, raises serious ethical issues of the sort that we normally expect to concern the hon. Member for Mossley Hill and members of the pro-life group—or members of the pro-women's choice group such as the hon. Member for Bristol, South. I think that my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor believes that he is merely filling a gap in the law that had been overlooked at an earlier stage of drafting.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): The Secretary of State was saying categorically that he could not think of any circumstances in which there could be a cause of action against the donor with relation to the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976. Will he assure the House that there will be no cause of action running on the following lines. The child would say that the donor clearly had a duty of care towards the child. The donor may not have known that the sperm was defective, but his duty of care would have run to having had all the tests and personally satisfying himself that he knew that the sperm was not defective. Why could not a cause of action in negligence run against the donor, operated partly by taking on those giving the treatment, who would then join the donor? By an act of omission, could an action for negligence be taken out against the donor?

Mr. Clarke: This debate is becoming closer to a moot than a debate on the Floor of the House. I do not know about the hon. Gentleman, but I am out of practice at

moots. My instant reaction would be that, unless the donor knew that he was carrying a transmittable disease —in which case, he could be liable—he could ordinarily say that he had discharged his reasonable duty of care by relying on the expertise and precautions of the medical staff at the centre where the IVF treatment was given. He would expect something of which he was unaware to be detected by people with much more expertise to whom he gave the sperm that was to be donated.

It would be most unlikely for there to be a claim against the donor. I can think of no circumstances in which the child could have a claim against the parents—a point that was raised earlier. The wording of the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act, which looked alarming to the hon. Member for Mossley Hill, already exists for children born naturally. It covers the range of causes of action that might arise before a child is born and for which a child might wish to bring an action.

Ms. Harman: I wish to follow up the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) about the duty of care. We must do everything we can to reassure donors, who provide a helpful service, that they will not be liable, because that would be a major deterrent for people donating sperm. They could sue the people responsible for treatment—the clinic. The clinic staff could look up the files to identify the donor and fish around to discover that he had worked at Sellafield but had not disclosed that. The position is not as clear as somebody knowing that they have AIDS. They might know that they had unprotected intercourse with someone who might have had other partners. Possibilities are opened up, and it is not necessarily good enough for the Secretary of State to say that he cannot, at present, think of any likely scenario. We have clearly identified that the possibility is very much there.

Mr. Clarke: It strikes me in retrospect that the possibility is exceedingly remote. I am prepared to concede that it is arguable that the donor owes the normal duty of care towards the child who is eventually born. However, he is only expected to take reasonable care and disclose the facts that he would expect an ordinary layman or medical student to have to give to those in the clinic giving the treatment, who have all the expertise and facilities at their disposal.

The primary duty is on the clinic staff to satisfy themselves, by questions of the donor and medical tests and screening of the semen, that the semen used is satisfactory. If a genetic abnormality is occurring it is in the nature of IVF that observation of the embryo's development and proper handling of the case is an important part of the treatment. Causes of action—I do not think that there will be many of them—are far more likely to arise against the clinic. There are only remote circumstances in which the donor could be at risk. He would be at risk only if there had been negligence on his part.

Mr. Alton: Is the Secretary of State saying that it would be a matter of negligence and the clinic would be open to be sued if it had failed to detect an embryo that went on to become a Down's syndrome child, and that failure to destroy that embryo would open the way for an action?

Mr. Clarke: It would do so no more than the failure to destroy a foetus carrying Down's syndrome could be the cause of action with natural childbirth. I am glad that the hon. Gentleman returned to that point, because I did not deal with it fully before. The hon. Gentleman believes that there will be a cause of action against doctors for failing to terminate a pregnancy likely to produce a disabled child, but I do not believe that. There is no distinction between an IVF pregnancy and a natural pregnancy for the purpose. It can happen with a natural pregnancy and, conceivably—although it is slightly less likely—happen with an IVF pregnancy.

We have not reached the position in this country—I hope that we never will—where a failure on the part of the doctor to pressurise a mother, against her will, to abort a handicapped child would be a cause of action. That is not the case. There is absolutely no difference between an IVF case and a natural childbirth case. Nothing new is being created here.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): New clause 11(3) states:

> "The defendant is not under this section answerable to the child if at the time the embryo, or the sperm and eggs, are placed in the woman or the time of her insemination (as the case may be) either or both of the parents knew the risk of their child being born disabled."

The clinic, to cover the possibility of an action for damages being brought against it, might wish to make a blanket statement about any possible risks as a result of the treatment. It could be argued in future that the parent knew of the risk of his or her child being born disabled. Would not it be a way of insulating the clinic and the doctor against the possibility of damages if the clinic gave a general statement of the risks that might arise from such treatment?

Mr. Clarke: I did not completely follow the hon. Gentleman's argument, but I think that the answer is no. No action arises automatically because a child is born disabled, whether it is born as a result of IVF or natural birth. It does not automatically follow that anyone has been negligent or liable for a civil cause of action because a disabled child has been born. The only cause of action that arises under either circumstances is if the disability arises as a result of somebody's negligence.

We are all accustomed to the cases where the parents, and, under the 1976 Act, the child, have an action brought on their behalf against the obstetrician in natural childbirth because the obstetrician's actions have, through negligence, unfortunately caused the disability. The same action would arise against the clinic. All that the House will ensure by rejecting the new clause is that, whereas a child born naturally can sue the obstetrician for negligence, a child born as a result of IVF cannot sue the people who run the clinic and the doctors there for negligence. For that reason my noble Friend is correct to say that the logic of the 1976 Act means that we should put IVF children on all fours with those born naturally.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: I am getting more confused as the minutes roll by. Is not it true that a child conceived and born naturally will not be screened in the first part of its life? However, a child conceived by IVF will be screened because no gynaecologist or doctor would want to reimplant a woman with an embryo that was not perfect.

[Mrs. Ann Winterton]

If by any mischance a disabled child was born, would it have the right to sue the clinic or the doctor for having been born?

Mr. Clarke: I query the beginning of my hon. Friend's statement because, at least nowadays, in natural childbirth screening is carried out for handicap. Amniocentesis is becoming a regular practice. Nobody claims that an action for negligence could be brought by the child because the child was not aborted, presumably on the decision of the mother. I cannot imagine an action being brought because a child was allowed to be born when screening showed that it was disabled. If the child is not born because the defective embryo has been removed, no question of this kind arises. The parents might sue, but I cannot see how on earth a child would bring an action to obtain compensation for the fact that it was not destroyed at the embryonic stage. I could not put together a claim for loss or damages in such circumstances.

I do not think that we can take the matter much further. I have done my best to explain the new clause. We have not had long to look at the matter and it is understandable that some hon. Members are worried and suspicious and trying to find circumstances that might give rise to problems. They are mistaken to object to new clause 11 because, by doing so, they will be putting a child born as a result of IVF in an inferior position in law to a child born naturally. No doubt the other place will return to that.

Ms. Primarolo *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall give way just twice more and then move to new clause 13 in the fond belief that it will present no difficulties.

Ms. Primarolo: I understand the Minister's arguments, but there are still difficulties about clarification. As the Solicitor-General has entered the Chamber, perhaps he could give us a legal clarification. That could help us because, while we have much sympathy with the Secretary of State's argument and support it in principle, we are worried about the drafting of the new clause.

Mr. Clarke: I should be glad to ask my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General whether he would be interested in taking part in the debate. I trust that he will deploy the same arguments. I think that I took silk on the same day as my right hon. and learned Friend, but by that time I had ceased practising and he has practised regularly ever since. He has heard the hon. Lady and may consider having a second go on new clause 11.

8.45 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I am listening carefully to the Secretary of State. There are two solutions. I understand the logic of wanting to make sure that children born as a result of one procedure have the same rights as children born as a result of another. We could have amending legislation later if the matter is controversial. It might be better to proceed down that road if it is not possible to resolve the problems now. New clause 11(1)1A(1)(a) and (b) must, as a matter of drafting and logic, leave open a course of action by the child in relation to an argument that the selection process at the beginning of the child's gestation was in some way defective. The Secretary of State put an extreme case, but I am arguing not that the option is that the child would not have been born but that it would have been born able bodied rather than disabled. There must be that cause of action and I agree that it would be taken by the parents. Perhaps it would be better to take this matter separately and remedy the law soon.

Mr. Clarke: An action could arise in such circumstances. An action could arise in a case where a child would have been born able bodied if someone had not been negligent. It would arise where the embryo was healthy and developing normally, but, as a result of some default on the part of someone responsible for the care of that child, it was damaged and the child was born disabled. In precisely such a case new clause 11 could give rise to an action. I do not think that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) is worried about that.

If a child is born disabled because the embryo was naturally damaged from the beginning and everybody behaved properly, no cause of action arises. I am not sure whether my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General is persuaded to intervene. He may intervene later. He and I are perfectly prepared to undertake to ask the Lord Chancellor and the Law Officers to look at all this between now and the Bill going to the House of Lords to consider the points that have been made and to consider again whether the Government are unintentionally introducing an amendment that gives rise to the kind of moral and ethical issues that worry hon. Members. I do not think that that is the case, but no doubt after the debate the matter will be canvassed thoroughly and carefully in another place.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Minister says that he is trying to ensure that children born under these procedures would have the same rights under the 1976 Act as children born naturally. There is a distinction. Under the 1976 Act, as it has been explained by the Minister, a child would be able to sue back to the point of fertilisation and responsibility would be placed on the doctor during the period from fertilisation to birth. However, under what we are now discussing children would have an additional right to sue for procedures that were carried out to the embryo prior to fertilisation.

Mr. Clarke: I am subject to correction by my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, but my understanding is that under the 1976 Act the law merely gives the child a right of action based on facts that have occurred before birth or before conception. I have already mentioned cases of negligence by the obstetrician with which we are all familiar. Other circumstances are where a car accident occurs and a pregnant woman is one of those injured and the foetus is damaged by a negligent driver. I can think of cases where a woman has been injured by the negligence of someone before conception and the nature of the injury is such that, when she conceives, the child is damaged. The 1976 Act is designed for such cases.

New clause 11 merely says that the same remedies are available to an IVF child so that where there is fault on the part of some person that causes injury to the child, and the fault occurs as a result of facts that occurred before the child's birth or conception and injures the parents, the child will have a cause of action.

I hope that the House and another place are satisfied that all we are doing is putting the law on all fours for children, however they may be born.

Mrs. Fyfe: I thank the Secretary of State for his patience. What would happen in a case in which no clinic was involved, but a woman had simply come to an informal arrangement with a man and inserted the sperm herself? That is perfectly possible, and I hear that it is being done already. Obviously, it is an unsafe and undesirable procedure, but it happens.

Mr. Clarke: I do not think that anything arises from such a case because the provisions in new clause 11 affect those responsible for

"the keeping or use outside the body, of the embryo . . . or of the gametes used"

to create the child—usually the licence holders. The 1976 Act gives no right of action to the child against a parent. I cannot conceive of any action arising in the circumstances that the hon. Lady has described, which would be included in the provisions of new clause 11, and which would give rise to any action.

I suggest to the House that I proceed to new clause 13. If my advisers and my right hon. and learned Friend the Solictor-General believe that I have gone off the rails and have misled the House, there will be an opportunity for hon. Members to collect their thoughts and for them to intervene and to correct me. I think that my right hon. and learned Friend is with me so far. We cannot continue this viva voce on new clause 11 this evening.

I shall read a note, which has been passed to me, concerning the issue raised by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe). It says that it is not possible to sue the mother, except when she injured herself, for example in a motor accident, as a result of her own negligent driving. That is the provision of the 1976 Act. Therefore, except when the mother has injured herself by her own negligent act, and as a result has injured the child that she is carrying, the child cannot sue.

New clause 12 deals with the disclosure of information about donors or gametes to the courts, and it will not allow the disclosure of information about donors, because it is more sensitive than information about people who receive treatment. All hon. Members who have spoken have said that the anonymity of the donor should be preserved in all cases in present circumstances, which I shall return to in a moment.

New clause 13 contains the only case in which we propose that the courts should have the power to order disclosure of information about donors. Section 1 of the 1976 Act, which we have just been describing, provides a remedy for a child against a person who caused harm to his or her parent, which affected the parent's ability to have a normal, healthy child. An example might be the wrongful exposure of the parent to radiation or to a genetic disease which might be passed on to the offspring. When a child is born as a result of natural conception, the 1976 Act would enable the child to seek redress directly againt the third party who caused the injury to the parent, which was one of the issues raised in an intervention. When a child is born as a result of donation, the person whose injury led to the child's disability must be the genetic parent—the donor. Unless the child has the means of knowing who the donor is, in practice, it would be impossible for him to start such an action.

We have given careful consideration to whether we should allow disclosure of identifying information about the donor in that case. We have decided that the main guide to policy must in principle be that children born by donation must have the same legal rights as children conceived in the usual way. Therefore, in that one case the privacy of the donor must take second place to the rights of disabled children to seek compensation against those people whom the law provides must be answerable to them. Under the 1976 Act that person is not the donor, but the person who injured the donor.

Mr. Wigley: Clearly, there is a danger that the donor's identity will become known when it otherwise would not be known. Is not there a possibility that the donor's identity will become known, but the donor may not be guilty of any trespass? Although he may not have done anything to warrant disclosure, he may find that his identity has been disclosed because an action has started, and the confidentiality, which we originally thought would exist, would therefore be taken away from him through no fault of his own.

Mr. Clarke: Yes, that is the case. In the circumstances that I have just described, which new clause 13 is designed to provide for, the donor would be innocent. He would have been injured before he donated the sperm—for example, by exposure to radiation—in such a way that his natural child, born later as a result of IVF, was injured.

The Government have decided that the right of the child, suffering as a result of the exposure of the natural parent, to bring an action should justify the courts making such an order. The extent to which information is disclosed would be restricted, but obviously it would be important to know who the person is before the child can have the chance to take any action.

I shall deal briefly with the other amendments, although I expected to speak about them more fully, but I cannot speak for much longer.

Ms. Harman: I presume that the Secretary of State meant that it would be for the court to decide the extent to which information was disclosed. Does he envisage some protection to prevent the publication of the name of a donor whose identity is revealed to the court? Would there be a prohibition on the name of the donor being given to the press? Would the information be given to the court, where there would be a barrier, and it would then leapfrog over the barrier of the person who has committed negligence to the donor? Or would the information be disclosed and be completely open from then on? For example, could we have the case of, "The Infant W v. Sellafield and Mr. Y," or would more information be given? What would be the procedure?

Mr. Clarke: The identity of the donor would have to be disclosed to all those people taking part in the action because the defendant would obviously have to know the name and identity of the person that the defendant is accused of having injured. At the moment, there is no express provision in the new clause for hearing in camera —*[Interruption.]* My right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General assures me that the court could sit in camera if the anonymity of the donor in the case might otherwise be threatened, and the court could restrict reporting.

[Mr. Clarke]

Before I rose to answer the attacks on new clause 11 we were debating—at some length—the nature of information recorded about a donor and a donor's anonymity.

I am not surprised to see that my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East has abandoned the Chamber during discussions of the Government new clauses, but I am sure that he will be back. I must answer his comments about amendments Nos. 56 and 57, which I think he said that he was not proposing to press if the Government prefer to rely on regulations to determine the exact nature of the information to be kept. We must rely on regulations if only to keep the arrangements flexible and change them in the light of evolving opinion.

It seems undesirable to include in the Bill the type of information suggested by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East in amendments Nos. 56 and 57. As the hon. Member for Bristol, South rightly said, if such information were available to those seeking treatment, people could select or join a waiting list for particularly desirable donors.

9 pm

I shall deal more briefly than I intended with amendments Nos. 33, 31(A) and 60. They deal with the extent to which the information available to applicants might be changed in future. The Bill provides that the authority must give applicants certain information which will be specified in regulations to be made by the Secretary of State. It is the firm intention of the Government that the information given will tell the applicant something about the genetic parent, but not enough for him or her to be identified. The information given might include that which might be important for medical purposes or, where an applicant intends to marry, that which enables the authority to tell the applicant whether he or she is genetically related to the fiance or fiancee.

We strongly support the anonymity of donors for the reasons given by the hon. Member for Bristol, South and my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key). We have no intention of introducing regulations to allow that anonymity to be breached. It is true that circumstances may alter, so the Bill provides that the regulations can be changed. A later amendment provides that any regulations under clause 30 should be subject to affirmative rather than negative resolution. That will mean that both Houses of Parliament will have to give the matter thorough debate before regulations are made.

My hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) has yet to speak to his amendment. I apologise to him. I intended to wait until he had made his speech before I made mine. I thought that I had better stop the debate on new clause 11 before it went much further. My hon. Friend's amendment deals with the argument about whether people born as a result of IVF should have the right to know who their genetic parents are. To give them that right entails giving them information to enable them to identify the donor father. I have already said that we do not propose to provide that right in the regulations.

Although attitudes may change, I believe that it would be wrong to give people born as a result of IVF the right to know their genetic parents. In order to be brief, I shall not be repeating the arguments used by the hon. Member for Bristol, South and my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury. I strongly agree with both of them. I do not believe that it would be right to provide that right, although we shall leave it open to future alteration.

I agree with the hon. Member for Bristol, South that the circumstances of adoption, in which the House has agreed to allow access to information, are different from those of IVF. The relationship between someone who has been adopted and the natural parents who had to request that the child be adopted is different from the relationship, which in emotional terms is non-existent, between a child and a donor of sperm where the child was born by IVF.

I strongly believe that in the present climate most people accept that anonymity should be preserved. I emphasise that the House will decide the matter by a free vote. However, I believe that, although we are leaving the matter open to be changed in future, it would be wrong, as my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury said, to leave everyone who acts as a donor to proceed on the basis that the law might eventually be changed retrospectively.

Reference has already been made to the Swedish experience. It has been said that donors will be deterred by the possibility that at some time in future their names will be disclosed. I accept that, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East said, there is evidence that some donors would not be deterred. However, that does not alter the position. It is not just a practical matter of whether one could persuade people to become donors. One must consider the interests of all the parties. I understand that some children may feel a compelling desire to know the man who donated the sperm. But that cannot be conclusive. One must visualise the position of the donor. Whatever he said when he donated the sperm, 20 years later he may have a family of his own. He may not wish to have a child, about whom he knows nothing, present himself or herself to him.

We must also consider the parents of the child. The mother probably did not want to have another man's child or to have any emotional relationship with some unknown medical student who donated the sperm. It could create fraught situations if a child who for some reason becomes excessively worried about his or her parentage in teenage or adult years is suddenly enabled to obtain information about the identity of the donor of the sperm many years before to the acute distress of parents, donor and everyone else involved.

For that reason, I am happy for the Bill to be drafted in such a way that if my opinion is rejected or the House changes its opinion by affirmative resolution, the anonymity of donors could be lifted. However, if we do not pass the amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury, to which I added my name last night, there will be an element of doubt from now on. Everyone will have to be told that it is possible that a future Government could change the law by regulations or by primary law. I should feel happier if a Government were obliged to go through that hoop, but that is only my view.

I intervened at an earlier stage than I intended, and I shall now listen to other contributions, particularly that of my hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne who appears from his amendment to take a flatly contrary view. In the end, the House will have to make up its mind by, I am sure, a free vote on both sides.

Mr. Wigley: I am glad that the Secretary of State made his intervention before my brief contribution because he clarified the new clauses, yet I should have been happier if

there had been an opportunity to study certain aspects of them more fully. It is unfortunate that the new clauses come before us at a late point in the proceedings, denying us the opportunity to take advice, and that they have been grouped with amendment No. 56. That led to the Secretary of State having to make two speeches. I understand the difficulty that he is in, and I understand also the objectives of the new clauses. One can sympathise with them while at the same time being uncertain about how they will work out in practice.

Perhaps the Secretary of State will at least nod if I am right in saying that in no way do new clauses 11 and 12 mean that someone who has been inseminated to avoid giving birth to a disabled child, but whose embryo is then found to carry a disability that the recipient did not imagine it would carry by virtue of the screening, will be able to bring an action.

Mr. Clarke: While my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General applies his mind to that point, perhaps I may ascertain whether I have understood the hon. Gentleman's argument. Perhaps he is contemplating a case in which a carrier of haemophilia undergoes fertilisation treatment to ensure the selection of an embryo that is not carrying haemophilia. We discussed earlier the situation in which only female embryos are reimplanted. If a mistake were made, a male embryo was reimplanted and a child having haemophilia was born, I suspect that the parents would have a right of action. That is my off-the-cuff reaction. I do not think that the child would have a case. We are up against the same problem that was discussed earlier, of the child bringing an action to the effect that it should not have been allowed to be born.

Mr. Alton: That is what the Bill says.

Mr. Clarke: That is not what it says, with respect.

I cannot perceive of any action that could be brought on that basis. If the hon. Gentleman will proceed with his speech, perhaps my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General will take a hand.

Mr. Wigley: I am sorry for raising such a difficult point so early, but perhaps it helps to do so. It appears that the clauses do not concern actions to be brought by the parents in respect of negligence against them but relate to negligence against the child itself. We are talking about different children—the handicapped and the non-handicapped foetus. Presumably they would be different entities in law, and would therefore involve different possibilities for action.

Mr. Clarke: We are dealing with actions brought by the child against the licence holders and the others named in the clause in respect of actions that they took which injured the parents and which in turn damaged the child.

Mr. Wigley: Quite so. Therefore, action can be taken only on behalf of a child who has had the opportunity to grow and develop from the early embryo or pre-embryo —a different child from the child who might have been born had a different embryo been selected in those early stages. An embryo that has not been selected clearly has no rights in law. That leads us to a fraught state of affairs in which it would appear that some embryos have rights in law, and we need to think the matter through carefully before we legislate. I am sure that the Government are introducing the proposals with the best of intentions, but I wonder whether they have thought them through properly. Perhaps at a later stage we may be given the assurance that, by virtue of other provisions, parents will have a remedy in law if a mistake has been made in the selection of an embryo.

Mr. Clarke: Parents have all sorts of common law remedies against anybody who causes them injury, and the Bill does not affect that. Parents will certainly have the common law right of action against anyone who gives them medical treatment that causes them damage. There is no need for legislation to clarify that.

Mr. Wigley: The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) raised another matter connected with new clause 11. He asked about the interpretation of the words:

"the parents knew the risk of their child being born disabled".

I suggest that knowledge of a risk is difficult to establish, and difficult to make the basis of action in law. Two questions arise. The first concerns the degree of risk; parents may have been led to believe that there is only an outside chance, for example. The second has to do with whether the parents understand the implications of the risk to which they are open. In the difficult world of medicine and disability, doctors may point out to parents, perhaps using a technical term of which they may never have heard, that there is a risk that their child may contract a certain condition—perhaps a fairly small risk, which may not have far-reaching implications. Suppose that the parents do not take that on board. In their desperate enthusiasm to have the child, they may not fully evaluate the risk, and that fact may exclude the possibility of an action later on.

Mr. Alton: I am following the argument closely and I strongly support much of what the hon. Gentleman is saying. Suppose that parents are told that they run a risk of having a disabled child following IVF and subsequently refuse to have an amniocentesis test, because they know that that, too, might endanger the unborn child. Where does the negligence lie if the parents refuse to have that test?

Mr. Wigley: That raises interesting questions, not least because the amniocentesis test can, of course, endanger the mother as well as the child. The various factors will have to be balanced against each other. I hope that the Lords will be able to pursue those matters in considerable depth; we are clearly in difficulties tonight.

I had intended to refer mainly to rights of information —one of the most difficult questions that we have dealt with so far. Two important and conflicting interests arise and we cannot meet both fully: the first is the right of the child and the second is the right of the donor. I suspect that most people's instinct would be that we should give the child all the rights that we can. But if we try to give the child all possible rights, that child may not come into existence because the donor might be frightened away. We know of that from the experience in Sweden and it has been suggested in much of the correspondence that we have received. As the Secretary of State said, we must strike a balance. At what point do we accept that there is a limit, and up to what limit should we give information to the child about his or her background?

The Secretary of State tried to address a question that worries the House, although I must say that I am still not absolutely clear about it. Suppose that we leave the door open, by way of the regulations on which the Secretary of

[Mr. Wigley]

State proposes to rely, for further action to be taken on this matter in future. Is my interpretation of the Secretary of State's remarks correct? Am I right in thinking that if there is a change—by way of affirmative resolution or in primary legislation—there is no way in which we shall be able to guarantee that it will not have a retrospective effect? After all, if such backdating occurred, it could affect those who have already acted as donors or those who might act as donors between now and the time at which that change is made. The Secretary of State would say that the House cannot bind itself, so there will always be a risk. But I hope that he will find means of giving the maximum assurance to donors that they will not find themselves in a retroactive position, whereby their identity is made known.

9.15 pm

Mr. Clarke: Amendment No. 60 gives the maximum assurance because it provides that regulations cannot be retrospective. For the reasons that the hon. Gentleman has given, we simply cannot say that no subsequent House will not pass retrospective primary legislation. We cannot guarantee that a future House will not pass legislation saying that one red-headed man in three should be beheaded, but it is highly unlikely. By passing the amendment, we are making it clear that we do not contemplate regulations under the Bill being retrospective; indeed, we shall rule that out. If a future Parliament wanted to make the Bill retrospective, it would have to start from square one.

Mr. Wigley: I hope that it will be understood that the maximum safeguard is being given.

I revert to new clause 12 and the courts dealing with cases in which identification may be necessary to a limited extent. I hope that potential donors can be assured that, although it may be necessary for their identity to be known to certain people within the courts, there will be provision for hearings in camera and for reporting restrictions to safeguard their identity. This is a difficult issue—I suspect that the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) will put an opposite viewpoint in a moment—in which the interests of the child must be paramount to the interests of the donor.

I rest on the point that I made a moment ago: unless we have donors we shall not have children. We must be careful not to allow this matter to start drying up, if that is not an unfortunate phrase, to ensure that those who want children can have them and that, in our anxiety to safeguard the rights of the child to information, we do not, inadvertently perhaps, lead to fewer children being born and fewer parents being helped by IVF treatment.

Mr. Wilshire: As you have been elsewhere on your duties, Mr. Speaker, when you read *Hansard* in the morning you will discover that you have missed one of the better seminars on the more obscure parts of legal liability. Whether you will find it helpful I leave you to judge when you read it.

Hon. Members who are mere mortals rather than lawyers tend to stick to things that we think we understand. I therefore have nothing to say about the niceties of the new clauses. I want to speak to the amendment that I tabled—amendment No. 31A—which, as the Secretary of State rightly predicted, seeks to give those who have reached the age of 18, once they have been given a chance to receive counselling, the absolute right to all the information held about them on a register.

I find myself in an unfortunate position. I disagree with the hon. Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo), and having spent about an hour in the same Lobby as her earlier, that grieves me somewhat. I also disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), and that upsets me equally because I spent much time helping him with the admirable work that he has done on other parts of the Bill.

It is probably foolhardy of me to disagree with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, but nevertheless I shall. My case is essentially simple: I cannot accept that it is right to withhold from people information about themselves that others know, especially when that information concerns the unique genetic identity of the seeker.

The hon. Member for Bristol, South said that people's curiosity did not go that far, but, if the amendment were accepted, I believe that there would be ample evidence that it does—and such curiosity should be satisfied. People seeking information about themselves will quickly discover that the information is obtainable—after all, others will know. In certain circumstances, the Bill will give people the right to ask whether they have been produced as a result of treatment, and whether they are related to someone whom they are going to marry. Ergo, they will know that there is information about their genetic parents.

If I understood the seminar correctly, new clause 12 confirms the argument that I am making: that it may be necessary—albeit in only one case—to tell one group of people who are their genetic parents. If it is good for one person, in my book it is good enough for everyone.

Ms. Harman: How far would the hon. Gentleman take that argument? If a child were the result of incest, one group of people would know that. In those circumstances, does the hon. Gentleman think that that child should be told? Let us suppose that the child was not the child of its apparent father, and that the mother knew but the "father" did not. Should the child be told? It is a complicated issue. The way in which the hon. Gentleman is dealing with the question makes it seem simpler than it is.

Mr. Wilshire: I believe that all children should be told the truth, whatever that may be.

Mrs. Currie: No, you do not.

Mr. Wilshire: Yes, I do.

Mrs. Currie: What my hon. Friend is suggesting is horrendous: that, whatever the truth about a child—however grievous and whatever the pain that it might cause to the child—the child should still be told the truth. Does not that elevate the truth above everything else in society, including people's happiness?

Mr. Wilshire: My hon. Friend makes an interesting point, but not a good one. The problem is that, if people choose not to tell a child the truth, some may assume that that is the end of the matter. If one does not tell a child the truth, and it then finds out, one compounds the lie when the child asks why it was deceived in the first place.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Is not it sufficient, from the point of view of truthfulness, to be told that one's birth was the result of a donation by an unknown man who—for humanitarian reasons—never had a relationship with one's mother, and who then vanished from the scene? I find it impossible to argue that the child has a compelling right to know more than that and to trace the anonymous figure who carried out that humanitarian act many years before.

Mr. Wilshire: I do not think that that is adequate. We are referring to the origins of the unique genetic characteristics of a person. Simply to be told that there is someone who was one's genetic mother or father does not go far enough.

I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East because the information that I want disclosed is that which is already provided for. I should be unhappy if additional information were put into the register. It is sufficient to say that a child can find out who its genetic parents are and leave that child to make its own inquiries if it wants. My hon. Friend's amendment does not appeal to me.

I should like to face up to the objections, which are coming thick and fast. There might have been a legal seminar before, but I now think that I am perhaps in the dock being examined with a view to being found innocent, or guilty, of being naive. If I have a chance to force my amendment to a Division, no doubt the House will tell me its judgment.

The objection that harm will be caused to the child has been raised already. What are we saying will cause that harm? The truth? The child will know easily enough that its social parents are not its genetic parents. Knowing one's social parents is only half the equation. The experience with adoption has been cited. I accept the comment of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State that there are some significant differences between adoption and being born as a result of donation. But the experience of the child who is adopted is relevant.

Not many children who have been adopted want to know about their parents, so we are not necessarily saying that everyone's curiosity will be aroused. To that extent, the hon. Member for Bristol, South is correct. However, a significant minority of children who are adopted wish to know about their parents. All the evidence that I have seen suggests that the children who seek that information are not harmed by knowing more about themselves, but would appear to benefit from it. What evidence there is is a plus to my argument, not a minus.

Mr. Alton: I hope that I do not do the hon. Gentleman's case too much harm by saying that I, for one, certainly agree with much of what he said. Does he accept that it is important that those who donate the sperm accept that they are entering into something other than the type of irresponsible relationship that some have suggested? The Secretary of State talked about a medical student being able to clear off for the rest of his life and never thinking about what he did. Does not that reduce the position of parenthood?

Mr. Wilshire: The hon. Gentleman is not harming my case; he is just stealing part of my speech. I totally agree with him.

It has been suggested that children might not know what they are doing when they ask about their parents. That is why my amendment states that they should be offered counselling first. The potential risk would be explained. That is exactly the position taken with adopted children who seek more information. I believe that that is how the risk should be approached.

Another objection that has been voiced concerns the wishes of the parents. It was suggested that if parents knew that the genetic origins of the child were known, the numbers of parents seeking this treatment might fall. I do not believe that that is sufficient justification. People have a choice. If we elevate the wishes and preferences of parents above those of the child, we have the whole matter out of balance.

I said earlier that the child should know the truth. What would parents be afraid of in allowing the child to have the information? Would they be afraid of a child's knowing the truth? Would parents wish the state to help them live a lie?

Mrs. Currie: It happens all the time.

Mr. Wilshire: My hon. Friend says that it happens all the time. Yes, but it is not a function of the state to legislate to help that happen. If individual families want to do that, I should defend their right to do so, while disagreeing with them. But we in the House should not be legislating to enable people to live lies and withhold information from children. It is as straightforward as that.

Mr. Thurnham: There is a very real difficulty in that. The National Association for the Childless has said that many of its members would not wish to have a child if they had to divulge the fact that the child was a donor child and reveal its identity, as my hon. Friend's amendment provides. Does not he feel that that is a factor and that it might lead to some couples going abroad to obtain treatment and then returning to this country so as to avoid being caught by this legislation?

9.30 pm

Mr. Wilshire: Happily, we do not legislate for what happens elsewhere. If people decide to leave the country for treatment, I defend their right to do so. The fact that others may have legislation that I do not like is no reason for allowing that to occur here. Points of order were raised in the House this afternoon in a different context—on the sovereignty of the House and the right of this nation to have its own laws.

Would fewer parents take advantage of this? As for myself, due to certain events, I have had cause in my family life to regret what has happened to me. I should not wish that on anyone else. It is a rough world in which we live. Some people cannot have children unless they take advantage of this treatment. It has physical, social, moral and theological implications. We cannot escape from them. We should not allow people to escape from facing up to the responsibilities of the treatment. If couples decide that the only way to have a child is to have treatment but they are unable to face up to the child knowing about it, then—in the rough old world in which we live—I fear that they have to live with it. I say that, having had a rough time myself, not out of callousness for other people. It is a matter of fact.

The other argument that parents may advance is that children may feel that they are unwanted and unloved,

[Mr. Wilshire]

should they discover the truth. The exact opposite would be the case. If one's social parents have gone to all the trouble, expense, pain and anguish to have a child, what greater demonstration could there be of being wanted and loved than that? That is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. One could be proud to be able to tell one's child about his or her background.

As for the donors, the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) said that it all comes down to the question of the rights of the donor as against the rights of the child. It is not as simple as that. The donor can choose to be a donor. However, the resulting child has no choice. When there is choice on one side but not on the other, I come down firmly on the side of the person who has no choice: the child.

The question of whether there will be fewer or no donors does not stand up to critical examination. I have seen both sides of the case deduced from the experience in Sweden and New Zealand. I do not know what to make of that. What is relevant is research that has been done by King's College hospital. In 1989 that hospital received 100 inquiries from would-be sperm donors. Of the 100, 30 were accepted on clinical grounds. Of those accepted, 12 were happy to be identified and eight felt that they would be willing to consider it further, if a request were made.

That does not suggest to me that it would be impossible to maintain a sperm bank if my amendment were passed. If there were fewer donors, the important question to ask is: why? The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) made that point. Is it that people do not want publicity? Do they want it to be a secret? If so, it might be thought that they are ashamed of what they are doing. Should we legislate for that? It also means that those people do not want the consequences of their action turning up on the doorstep 20 years later. However, that is admitting that there are consequences. We are talking not about blood donation, but about the donation of the unique individuality of a child.

Donors cannot say, "I do not want to know anything about that", because it is there for the future. If that child were to find out—even if we legislated against it—there could still be a knock on the door, so the person who is the source of the gametes should be proud enough to say, "I was not ashamed of what I was doing. I knew what I was doing and I would do it again. I am in no way socially involved, but I am your genetic parent." If someone cannot face up to that, he should not be encouraged to become involved in the process.

Dame Jill Knight: My hon. Friend may recall that the House gave adopted children that right, whether or not their parents cared about them turning up on the doorstep. It seems odd to force parents who have given up their child for adoption to face the fact that that child might one day turn up, yet we do not give a child produced by artificial medical means the same right. Surely that is a strange thing for the House to fail to do.

Mr. Wilshire: My hon. Friend and I have had many discussions about why we keep voting in different Lobbies. Therefore, it is a pleasure to say that I agree 100 per cent. with the point that she is making. My hon. Friend is absolutely right that we should not make such a distinction because in both cases we are dealing with an individual child who should have the right to know. Whether parents are giving up a child for adoption or donating gametes, some of those people will one day have to face the consequences of that, whether they like it or not. I do not believe that we should be legislating for those people to live a lie.

I heard again the argument that several years later a donor may have a partner and may not wish that partner to know. If we allowed for that we should be legislating for that donor to live a lie and conceal information. If someone is planning to become a donor, he should be counselled that that might happen and then he should take a positive decision one way or the other. If he is prepared for a partner to know, he should go ahead, and if he does not feel that he could share that knowledge with a partner, he should not become involved in donation. The donors should have to make that choice and we should not legislate to help people live a lie.

Having gone through all the arguments, I fall back on my first point, which clinches it for me whatever other people may say—how would I feel if I discovered that people somewhere had information about me which the state said I was not entitled to have? I should feel a deep sense of outrage, that information which is personal and unique to me was not available to me. What right have doctors or Members of Parliament to withhold such information?

Mrs. Currie: First, let me express my unease about the amendments on the anonymity of donors tabled by my hon. Friends the Members for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) and for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) and my approval of amendment No. 60 tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), which would be an excellent improvement to the Bill. The amendments that have been debated would change the Bill quite radically. I consider that the parts of the Bill dealing with the anonymity of donors are extremely good, and emerged from Committee unchanged.

In my view, only limited information should be recorded and made available to satisfy one important problem which overrides the issue of anonymity—the question of possible genetic linkage between future potential partners. It seems sensible, therefore, that a person should be able to ask the authorities which are holding that information in future two questions: "Am I the product of assisted fertilisation under the provisions of this Bill?—answer yes or no"; and: "Am I related to the person whom I wish to marry or have as my partner?—answer yes or no." That means that the information must be kept, and of course it is possible that the procedure might be changed in future. That is why amendment No. 60 should be accepted, because it protects the people operating under the law as it stands.

However, there are serious practical considerations which we must bear in mind if we are to change the law in the way proposed by the amendments tabled by my hon. Friends the Members for Spelthorne and for Bolton, North-East. The number of donors would be cut. If anonymity is not guaranteed and is not the norm, many people will simply not come forward. My hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne was right to talk about accepting responsibility and facing consequences. If we were to insist that donors had to accept responsibility and face

consequences, large numbers of donors would say, "Thank you very much, but no thank you." They would not be available.

I accept that the hospitals are rather divided on the issue of anonymity. I know that at least one of our most senior advanced and experienced hospitals in the area has said that at least as many as a dozen of its donors would be perfectly content to have details recorded. However, I feel uneasy at the thought that we might then be relying on a much smaller donor bank or a smaller group of people who would be prepared to act as donors.

As IVF becomes more successful, as I am sure it will be now that research will be permitted under the Bill, so many thousands more people will come forward requiring that care and treatment. Perhaps as many as 4,000 patients passing through two or three major clinics might take their gametes from only a handful of donors—who we must remember will include women donors as well as men—and that is what we are trying to avoid by encouraging and enabling assisted fertilisation, particularly for families who have problems with handicap. We should not amend the Bill in that way, because that would be a great risk.

Mr. Thurnham: It is accepted practice that no donor should be used for the creation of more than 10 children, and no one is suggesting that that should change. In practice, King's College hospital and Hammersmith hospital have found that the kind of donors who would come forward if identification were allowed would be middle-aged married people who had already had children, rather than medical students. I do not believe that there are fewer middle-aged, married people than medical students. In fact, there are probably more of them.

Mrs. Currie: I read the correspondence that was offered to members of the Committee. However, I do not believe that we should do anything that would reduce the number of donors who would come forward. If there was a well publicised case in which a donor was identified and appeared on the front page of *The Sun* and everywhere else, the number of donors would drop sharply. That would reduce the assistance to infertile families that the Bill is designed to create. I do not believe that that is a good idea.

My hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne, when speaking to amendment No. 31A, was kind enough to allow me to intervene and put the case for harmony rather than absolute truth. We are bound to disagree on that point. However, one of the essences of the argument about the anonymity of donors is the question of what the child would do with the information. Why does the child want that information? The state should take a view that a child should not go on a fishing expedition. The child should simply not be allowed to satisfy its curiosity. That is not in the public interest. It may not be in the child's interest either, or in the interests of the donor. It is not in the public interest for a child to embark on that type of curiosity-satisfying exercise.

Mr. Wilshire: I suggest that my hon. Friend and I might just fundamentally disagree on my next point: I do not accept that it is for people like me to prove that a child should have the information; it is for my hon. Friend to prove that the child should not have it. If she is going to argue that the House knows best what is good for a child, we will be pursuing the nanny state avenue once more.

9.45 pm

Mrs. Currie: That is what we are elected to decide; that is what we are here to vote on, and it places a great burden on us all.

Another point leads me to think that my hon. Friend's amendment would open up another minefield of difficulties. There are people who would seek that information for reasons that none of us would find palatable. Let us suppose that the amendment is accepted and that a child born as a result of a donation finds that his father or mother is very wealthy. That may lead to financial and moral blackmail for the donor.

There are people who wish to perform humanitarian acts, but to do so anonymously. They do not wish to see news of what they have done spread all over the front pages—for very good reasons. That applies especially to women who may donate eggs at a time of great distress. If, for example, a woman is being sterilised, she may wish to donate her remaining eggs. However, that does not mean that, 20 years on, she wants somebody rolling up on the doorstep saying, "I know all about what happened and I am going to tell everybody."

Sir Hugh Rossi (Hornsey and Wood Green): I wish to raise a small legal point which I hope is not facetious. The identity of the natural parent—the donor—can be important in certain circumstances. The Bill deals clearly with inheritance, stating that there is no legal right against the estate of the donor, whoever that donor may be. However, perhaps my hon. Friend will consider what happens with life insurance. An applicant has to answer whether there is any history of heart disease or of other diseases on either his father's or mother's side of the family. That has nothing to do with the inheritance of the legal estate; it relates to the inheritance of one's genes. How, eventually, does such a child—in adulthood—answer such questions directly and honestly so as to receive the right cover?

Mrs. Currie: Given that one third of all men in this country have heart attacks before the age of 65, the odds are that the answer is "yes" without the applicant having to look up the identity of his or her father.

Sir Hugh Rossi: It was not a facetious question, but that is a facetious answer.

Mrs. Currie: It is not a facetious answer.

However, that point brings me to the new clauses. My hon. Friend is right that there are circumstances in which a child may wish to know about his birth, over and above questions 1 and 2 that I outlined earlier. That principle —anonymity—is breached in the new clauses. Broadly speaking, the House has already accepted that it is entirely appropriate that such a child should have the same rights as other children to sue negligent doctors. The circumstances are covered by new clauses 11 and 12 and seem entirely sensible.

The provisions mean that doctors involved in IVF are not protected by anonymity from any case of negligence that is brought against them. I would not wish those doctors to receive that protection, any more than I want other doctors to receive such protection. I am content with that. In such cases, there is a higher obligation than absolute anonymity. However, if the current legislation is so obscure, one wonders how many times it has been used since 1976 and whether it is worth all this hassle tonight.

[Mrs. Currie]

New clause 13 also opens up difficult questions. I was glad that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State said that the provisions will be considered in some detail and that more comments may be made in another place. New clause 13 presents the possibility of the donor being sued by a disabled child. I heard what my right hon. and learned Friend said about not being able to conceive of any circumstances in which that might happen, but in that case, why bother with new clause 13? If something cannot happen, do not include a new clause about it.

However, this could happen under new clause 13—I can think of several circumstances. We now know that alcoholism can produce handicap in an unborn child. Supposing the questions asked by the clinic relate to genetic defects and the donor does not realise that he or she is an alcoholic, under new clause 13 would it be possible at some point in the future for the handicapped child to sue the donor? I believe that it might. That issue needs to be clarified.

As far as I understand it, there is no principle in English law—I cannot speak for Scottish law, but there is no principle in the law that covers my constituency—that a child can sue his ordinary parents for the genes passed on to him. None of us are responsible for our genes, but the act of donation is a different matter because it is a conscious decision. As I understand new clause 13, there might be grounds for regarding that as a case where suing would be possible.

It may be that there are good grounds for new clause 13, and I think that there are. It will mean that there is a tremendous obligation on donors not to donate unless they are sure that they carry no genetic problems. That is probably a very good thing. It may push IVF families to go to good licensed premises where donors are screened. That too is a good thing. It will certainly mean that clinics must have excellent procedures for screening and asking the right sort of questions. That is also a good thing.

I can see that there may be circumstances in which it may be appropriate to ask questions where a genetic defect has turned up much later which is not life-threatening. There are many examples, and perhaps glaucoma is a good one. The defect may be present in other related members of the genetic family, and it might be appropriate for that information to be made available. It is right that that information should be available through the courts, and it is right that there should be circumstances in which we can put on record our slight uneasiness that the clause could leave open the possibility of other types of case arising that are not so much in the public interest.

The tragedy of proving or disproving negligence in such cases is that the facts and information would have to be produced in court. When that happens, the damage is done. Even in cases which are thrown out because there is no case, the damage is done and anonymity is breached. That is the position even if the case is heard in camera and there are reporting restrictions. Although I am content with new clauses 11 and 12, I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench will take a careful look at new clause 13 to decide whether it does what the Government want it to do in precisely the circumstances that they have in mind.

My hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) and the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), who is no longer in the Chamber, talked about whether doctors would be deterred from implanting damaged embryos. I offer the House my personal view. I hope that doctors do not implant damaged embryos——

Mrs. Ann Winterton: Will my hon. Friend give way on that point?

Mrs. Currie: I shall finish my sentence first.

I hope that doctors do not implant damaged embryos, precisely because many families that come for IVF have been through the misery of having handicapped children already. One of the reasons that they come for IVF is to try to ensure that they have the chance of a healthy child in future. To say that we should encourage doctors to implant damaged embryos is something that most people would find difficult to accept.

Mrs. Winterton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way, because it is plain that what I said in an intervention was not clear. My hon. Friend has misread the point that I was trying to make.

I appreciate that, because of IVF, no one will implant a damaged embryo that will grow to become a handicapped child. That part of the screening-out process is obvious for one and all. What happens, however, if the foetus develops a handicap naturally, and it is not possible to prove or disprove where it came from? Will that child, when it is born or later in life, not have the right to sue the doctor who, by the technique of IVF, gave it life in the first place? I think that my hon. Friend will find that it is a difficult question to answer and that the issue is unclear.

Mrs. Currie: That is not what I understood my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Mossley Hill to be saying. I reiterate that it seems that, to have a sound and successful IVF service, which many of us want, there must be really good screening of donors, excellent keeping of records—that is entirely right and appropriate—and the taking of every aspect of care.

Mrs. Winterton *indicated dissent.*

Mrs. Currie: My hon. Friend shakes her head at me, but I am offering my point of view, as she offered the House hers.

It seems that damaged children at some stage in the future should, by the new clauses, have the right to sue those who were responsible in the clinics for their creation, and would have to prove that there was some negligence. I do not think that chance would give the right to sue in the way that my hon. Friend has described. I am not a lawyer, and I am not introducing the new clauses. I am content to make comments on the amendments and new clauses.

I am reluctant to do anything which makes life harder for donors or for families needing donation. That should be the principle behind the Bill and the way in which we vote tonight.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: This has been an absolutely fascinating debate. There have been some good speeches representing both sides of the argument. Because the hour is late and I hope to speak on another of my amendments, I shall be brief. I shall comment on some of the amendments tabled, but not on the new clauses on which I have already said enough.

It gives me great pleasure to gallop down the aisle on my bright charger to the aid of my hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) and to share the

high moral ground with him on his amendment about divulging information to children who are conceived by the medical technique of artificial insemination. I agree with the line taken in amendments Nos. 56, 57 and 33.

The child should have the right to the information recorded by the authority. The child should have a right to know its genetic background for insurance or health reasons. The child should have the right to know that when he or she marries it will not be to his half sister or her half brother. The child should have the right to know the identity of its donor father, just as an adoptive child does. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) made a pertinent intervention on just that matter.

All those good arguments fall on stony ground because of one pertinent omission: how is the child conceived by artificial insemination to know that it has been conceived in that way? There is no reason whatever why the parents should tell the child. An adopted child knows that it is adopted. The best advice given to adoptive parents is to tell the child as soon as possible that it has been adopted. The child accepts that and all is well. In the fullness of time he or she may wish to trace the natural parents, but few do because most accept the parents with whom they have grown up as their parents.

The child conceived by artificial insemination will never know that, for the simple reason that the name of his or her social father will appear on the birth certificate under the heading "Father", whereas the words "By donor" should appear. Therefore, there is no reason why parents should tell the child. That is wrong. Yet in its wisdom or otherwise, the Committee rejected the proposition that that should be on the birth certificate.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne said in his powerful speech, that means that the child is living a lie. All the amendments are as of nothing because they cannot be sprung into life for the simple reason that the child will not necessarily be told how it was brought into the world. That is a sad omission.

Miss Widdecombe: This is not a speech so much as a request to the Secretary of State for clarification. May I please have a verbal communication from him about whether I have understood his position on new clause 11 correctly? I understand that he believes that the new clause does not mean that if a defective embryo is implanted, that, per se, means that the child can sue if it is born disabled. There must be some compounding act of negligence.

Secondly, will the Secretary of State look again at the clause, and if there is the slightest chance of ambiguity —bearing in mind that it is not Parliament's intentions but the wording of the law that is taken into account in the courts—will it be put right in another place? Have I correctly understood those two points?

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My answer to the first point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) is yes, that is my belief, which I think is shared by my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, who sat through the debate. If, on reflection, we discover that we are wrong, we shall write and tell my hon. Friend immediately. I also give the undertaking she calls for that we shall readdress ourselves to the drafting with an open mind. I give that undertaking on behalf of my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, who will handle the matter when it returns to the other place.

Amendment negatived.

It being Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *interrupted the proceedings.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Lords Amendments to the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill, the Motion relating to Procedure (Future Taxation) (No. 2) and the Ways and Means Motions relating to Gifts to charity, Paired shares and Levy on port privatisations may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill

[Lords.]

Mr. Thurnham: I beg to move amendment No. 34, in page 6, line 43, at end insert

'but the person responsible for maintaining the records may apply to the Authority for records maintained in pursuance of a licence to be lodged with the Authority before the expiry of such period'.

I shall comment only briefly on the amendment, and I do not wish to press it to a Division. We raised the issue in Committee. People involved in running clinics have raised with me the problems that might arise if their clinics had to go out of business or they had problems with keeping records for a long period. The Bill places the responsibility for keeping records on the individual clinic, but there could be circumstances in which the clinic found that it was unable to carry out that duty and was fearful of being liable for large financial and other consequences.

This is an administrative item that could be dealt with in regulations. If my hon. Friend the Minister for Health could state that this will be satisfactorily dealt with in regulations, it would allay the fears of those people running clinics. They are worried that they would face responsibilities that they could not easily fulfil if the licensing authority were to adhere strictly to the words of the Bill. It would be better if we could keep the Bill simple and leave those points to be dealt with in regulations.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I am happy to reassure my hon. Friend. Clause 13(4) states:

"No information shall be removed from any records maintained in pursuance of the licence before the expiry of such period as may be specified"

by the authority. The amendment seeks to ensure that the person responsible for maintaining the records may apply to the authority for the records to be lodged with it before the expiry of the period stated in the direction.

I understand that clinics seeking licences may be concerned lest they are required physically to retain records about patients who have received licensed treatments for an unreasonably long time. When a centre wishes to close, that may pose problems. When considering the amendment it will be helpful to draw a distinction between the physical records and information contained in them. The authority will not necessarily wish to receive the physical records, but it will wish to receive the information contained in them. The Bill makes it clear that it is necessary for the authority to be provided with information about treatment. It can also issue directions about the information about storage and research that must be retained.

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

Under clause 24(2) it is a condition of every licence that information should be recorded and given to the authority about each of the matters listed in clause 13(2)(a) to (e). It will be for the authority to decide how frequently it wishes to receive the information. The fact that information is passed to the authority will not mean that the information ceases to exist at a licensed centre. We envisage that a centre will keep its physical records and pass the information contained in them to the authority. Therefore, the information would continue to exist in two places unless the centre were to close. That is what concerns my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham).

The provisions of the Bill are already sufficient to ensure that the authority can obtain all the information that it needs. If a centre wishes to apply to the authority for information before the time laid down in directions, perhaps because the centre is having difficulty with the storage of its records, it will be free to do so.

There is no need for an amendment on this matter. It will be dealt with through administrative arrangements between the authority and the various centres. If a centre were to close there would be no difficulty about passing the physical records to another centre or to the authority itself. I hope that I have reassured my hon. Friend and those who have raised this matter with me. We do not think that further safeguards are necessary.

Amendment negatived.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: I beg to move amendment No. 20, in page 6, leave out lines 45 to 47 and insert—

'(a) any child who may be born as a result of the treatment will have a father by virtue of section 28 of this Act, and

(b) account has been taken of the welfare of any such child, and of any other child who may be affected by the birth.'.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 18, in page 6, line 46, after 'treatment', insert

'(including the need of that child for a father).

No. 19, in clause 25, page 14, line 19, after 'services', insert

'(including a child's need for a father)'.

Mrs. Winterton: I shall not delay the House for long because there is still much business before us. I have tabled the amendment because the interests of the child in matters of artificial insemination should be paramount. That term has been used most successfully in the Children Act 1989.

I welcome the possible initiatives that have been announced by the Government to ensure that divorced fathers or fathers who have deserted the family are made responsible for supporting their children. It is right that fathers should pay towards the support of the children they have sired.

A child who is born as a result of a technique such as artificial insemination will obviously have the benefit of a mother, but should also have the benefit of a father. In my heart of hearts, I should prefer it if those coming forward for this treatment were married couples or couples in a long-standing stable relationship. However, I understand that the definition is extremely difficult. Single women who present themselves for artificial insemination by donor should not be allowed to be inseminated unless they are prepared to bring forward a man who will stand as the social father.

At the time of the treatment, that social father would enter into an agreement by saying that throughout the life of the child he would be responsible for it in financial and other ways in the same way as a natural father. That would be right for the child and would give it a home and stability when it was growing up. It is extremely important that a child's sense of security and identity are assured when it has been conceived by an artificial medical technique.

For those reasons and many others which I am sure will emerge in the debate, I ask the House to support the amendment.

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): I am speaking to amendments Nos. 18 and 19: I want to make that clear so that there is no misunderstanding.

First, I must pick up some of the words used by the hon. Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) and correct a misunderstanding which appears to be prevalent throughout the country. Many single parents have been deserted by the father, who for a variety of reasons has not taken responsibility for his fatherhood. However, that does not include the vast majority of people who are separated or divorced, whatever the circumstances, but are not a single parent family—according to my definition—but a family which is separated. The father and the mother, each hopefully in the best circumstances, endeavour to provide a loving home for the children.

I want to put that on record because the hon. Lady, perhaps inadvertently, referred to them in a way that hon. Members have referred to them this week when talking about modest Government changes in the provision of maintenance. I also put it on record because, when debating amendments 18 and 19 and the associated issues, it is important to separate out what some people have said in the past on social and sexual issues—including hon. Members who tabled amendments 18, 19 and 20.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: I do not want to cast aspersions on the role of single parents bringing up families, and if I have given that impression I wish to correct it. Many single parents, as the hon. Gentleman has hinted, have been left in circumstances that they would never have wished upon themselves. They are doing a splendid job of bringing up their families. The point that I was seeking to make was that, when using technique like artificial insemination, a father should present himself along with the mother, so that a social father is provided for the child.

Mr. Blunkett: I am grateful for the hon. Lady's clarification, which leads me to my next point. I accept that fathers have a direct responsibility for the maintenance, well-being and love of their children, and that that should be achieved whenever possible. That is why I want to be absolutely sure that we avoid language or attitudes which foster discrimination or inflame hurt or prejudice.

Also, we must consider the frontiers that we are extending in the Bill, and recognise the enormous responsibility that we have for children. We must consider them as much as we consider the wishes of adults. There is also the responsibility for the stability of society and the impact that our choices will have on future generations. Those are difficult and profound issues, which cannot be dealt with by prejudiced or political stances which dub

those people who have doubts and questions as antagonistic to other rights and issues concerning relationships, sexuality or public policy.

There is nothing wrong with not having children. No stain or ignominy is involved. They are a product of love, not of science. When we are considering the issue, we have to be clear about the situation in which children are brought into the world. It is clear that, when the egg is fertilised by the husband's sperm, either by IVF or directly in the woman—that would apply also to the partner of the woman concerned—and, despite my difficulties in coming to terms with it, it is also true when there is a properly regulated and controlled fertilisation through a donor in a loving relationship, where it is the wish of both partners.

That is not the same as when past abuse by men of women as a convenience is translated by some women into the same use of men as a convenience. Reproduction is not a cold, clinical, scientific operation—nor are children the property or goods of someone for their convenience or satisfaction.

People have an absolute right to be themselves, to reject contact with men or to shun any physical contact with them. That is their choice. But that is not the same as accepting that there is some automatic or inalienable right to child bearing. Child bearing is not a right. It is part of the unfathomable life force. That is why man and woman together must take responsibility for the well-being and love of the child. In so saying, I believe that that right cannot be extended in a way that suggests to people that as individuals they can make that choice without understanding those deep, often dangerous, but difficult choices.

10.15 pm

Mr. Wilshire: I rise with some trepidation to follow the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett). Indeed, I am the person in whose name amendments Nos. 18 and 19 are tabled. The hon. Gentleman was right to make two basic points before coming to the substance of his speech. I shall deal with both of them first so that, I hope, we can agree.

I made it clear in Committee that my heart goes out to people who find themselves bringing up children as single parents through no fault of their own. I intend nothing that will hurt them and I hope that I shall say nothing that will cause offence to people who find themselves in that predicament. Equally, the hon. Gentleman was right to caution against language and attitudes that cause hurt. It was for that reason that I tabled amendments Nos. 18 and 19 and that is why I believe and hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) will understand why I could not vote for amendment No. 20.

Amendment No. 20 covers ground that we went over in Committee. I tabled an amendment along much the same lines. I wish that the Committee had accepted it, but it did not. I am prepared to accept that that was the decision of the House and I do not seek to reopen that debate. I tabled my two amendments to do something different. I tabled them not to add anything new to the Bill, which is what amendment No. 20 would do and what I attempted to do in Committee, but simply to clarify the legislation so that there is no doubt whatever about the real meaning, as claimed by the Government, of clause 13(5). That part of clause 13 was added to the Bill in another place in response to a great deal of pressure to take account of the rights and welfare of a child who will result from treatment.

As the Bill has progressed through both Houses we have heard a great deal, quite properly, about the rights of women. I fully support that. My two amendments would not automatically bar anyone from seeking treatment or being given treatment. It is important that we see the difference between these amendments and amendment No. 20 and what has been suggested elsewhere. On this occasion I seek to clarify clause 13. Before we go any further, let us be clear exactly what clause 13(5) says:

> "A woman shall not be provided with treatment services unless account has been taken of the welfare of any child who may be born as a result of the treatment".

I stress the words "account has been taken". We need to go slightly further than that to understand what amendments Nos. 18 and 19 are all about. We need not only to understand what we think is the meaning of the clause but to consider what my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor said that it meant when he was seeking to add it to the Bill in another place:

> "Among the factors that clinicians should take into account will be the material circumstances in which the child is likely to be brought up and also the stability and love which he or she is likely to enjoy. Such stability is clearly linked to the material position of the woman and in particular whether a husband or long-term partner can play a full role in providing the child with a permanent family setting in the fullest sense of that term, including financial provision."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 6 March 1990; Vol. 516, c. 1098.]

He was rightly identifying that stability and love are key considerations when considering how best to protect the welfare of the child. He equally rightly pointed out that the family unit is at the heart of that source of stability and love. We must be clear beyond all doubt—and this is the purpose of my amendment—what is meant by "family" in that context.

For me, the word "family" means three things. It means the family as a social unit, a financial unit, and a biological unit. As to the family being a social unit, I repeat the warning that I gave in Commitee that, when we talk about social units and social issues in such a context, we all need to be careful not to foist our theological views on others. When speaking of the family as a social unit, we must not drag our personal theologies into that line of thought.

When speaking of the family in this context, we are seeking to speak up for the traditional values and standards of society that have stood us in good stead for a long time. It is clear to me that the traditional social family unit in this country is, for better or worse, a unit of a mother and a father in a stable, long-term relationship. That value and standard is deeply embedded in our culture. It is not a coincidence that it is deeply embedded. It is a tried and tested way of giving a child the best possible start in his or her life. We tinker with that social unit at our peril.

As to the family being a financial unit, my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor made it clear that it is proper to consider financial background when deciding the welfare of a child. It is clear also that looking after a young child requires the combined efforts of two people. If one refers to the evidence provided by those who are often referred to as the new poor, figuring largely among them are the single mums with their young children who look desperately to the state to provide the financial security that they need to be able to cope. That should serve as a

[Mr. Wilshire]

warning if we are tempted to tinker with the family unit as we know it, and not take account of the financial arguments.

Again, the involvement of two adults is a tried and tested way of bringing up a child. I hope that no one disputes that one of the key responsibilities of a family is to provide for the child's material welfare. Again, we tinker at our peril with the concept of a family as a financial unit that needs two people.

As to the family being a biological unit, whatever else we may say, however clever we might become, and however much science might advance, we cannot avoid the facts of life. They are blindingly clear. We as a species are social animals. We require social structures in order to survive. To reproduce, we still need mothers and fathers——

Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock (Batley and Spen): Particularly mothers.

Mr. Wilshire: My hon. Friend says, "Particularly mothers," but, fortunately, fathers still have a role to play in the process somewhere. It is important that we should make it clear that the father's role does not begin and end at conception. Both biologically and socially, it goes further than that. In the human species, motherhood places a tremendous restriction on the freedom of action and freedom of movement of the mother because the child takes a long time to become independent. However much we may advance, we cannot get away from that. The father has a continuing role to play, and that must be integral to the decision about what is best for the welfare of any child who may result from one of the processes dealt with by the Bill.

The amendment seeks only to clarify what the Bill says. The Bill says that the child's welfare must be considered and it says that a father is an essential part of that consideration. What the Bill does not say, however, is what the outcome of that consideration must be. My amendments seek to make it crystal clear that a father is socially and financially desirable, that he is biologically essential at the beginning and that he remains biologically desirable for a long time after conception. The Bill should recognise that fact, as the Lord Chancellor tells us it is intended to. My amendments seek to spell it out, and I hope that they will have the full support of the whole House.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Having listened carefully to the debate, I feel that the problem is that hon. Members are trying to legislate for their own ideal worlds. But we have to legislate and know that our legislation can be implemented. It is not possible for us to lay down in law the arguments advanced by hon. Members in favour of the premise and to say, "This will happen." Some hon. Members may want it to happen but there is no way in which we could police such a law. It is not our job to put rhetoric—however nice and good we may think it is—at the centre of the law, because we could not deliver the goods and enforce such a law. It is misleading to pretend that we could achieve that in the Bill.

The structure and organisation of many families today is very different from that described by the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire). We have to legislate for families as they are and give those families the support and encouragement that they need to bring up their children as well as possible. We could say, "There ought to be a father around." But what would happen if the father disappeared before the birth—perhaps two months after conception? Where would that leave the Bill? In such circumstances, it would be wrong of us to accept the amendments. We know that we simply could not make the matters dealt with in them a serious legislative issue.

Mr. Thurnham: I am pleased to have this opportunity to intervene briefly on a subject that arose in Committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) has changed his original wording to make matters a little easier. But we still have a difficulty with the wording. The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. I am not sure that we shall succeed if we seek to go further and stipulate the precise need for a father; indeed we might achieve the reverse. We may place the woman in such a position that she says that a certain man is her partner —they might conceivably even say that they are married —just for sake of fulfilling the stipulation in my hon. Friend's amendment.

I know that the amendment does not refer to someone being married, but it places the woman in a position where she may be tempted to have a pseudo-father for her child. If the Bill were seen to be restrictive, there is the possibility of children being fathered by men with AIDS and women indulging in self-insemination rather than going for treatment.

A widow whose husband had left her some sperm may better come to terms with the loss of her husband by having the child that they both wanted and she still wants. The fact that she has lost her husband should not be a technical reason for preventing her from having treatment.

10.30 pm

Mr. Wilshire: I wanted to raise this point before the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) sat down. My hon. Friend is raising the same point, so I obviously did not make myself sufficiently clear. I am not suggesting a variation of what was discussed in Committee. Nothing that I have said about amendments Nos. 18 or 19 suggests that there is any compulsion or necessity or that a father is essential. That is why I went out of my way to distance myself from amendment No. 20, which provides compulsion. I am advancing an entirely new argument—that the welfare of the child at least requires that we give some thought to the need for a father, not legislate for compulsion.

Mr. Thurnham: I am glad that my hon. Friend is saying that he wants to distance himself from amendment No. 20, which goes further than we could accept. I am advised that it is defective and that in certain circumstances the wording could be self-defeating. We must leave amendment No. 20 to one side and stick with the amendments Nos. 18 and 19.

It was said in Committee that there are good single mothers and couples who are the worst possible parents. Deciding whether treatment should be offered on the basis of someone presenting himself as the father is not the right way to proceed. It would be better to leave it to the people concerned, bearing in mind the welfare of the child, to decide whether treatment should be offered rather than to

get into arguments about whether there is a father. A widow should not feel that she should terminate her pregnancy because she will be left as a single mother.

Mr. Blunkett: I do not think that the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) or myself suggested that, in the circumstances that the hon. Gentleman has outlined, there would be any objection or concern. He should distinguish between what he has just said and what he said earlier about a widow seeking artificial insemination following the death of her husband. I shall be corrected if I have misconstrued the hon. Gentleman's words, but he said that if the sperm were still available it could help her to get over her bereavement to have a child. No one, even in those tragic circumstances, should have a child to overcome their despair or emotional problems.

Mr. Thurnham: The hon. Gentleman put his point well earlier. A widow, bearing in mind that her husband may have wished them to have a child, may feel that it helps her to come to terms with her bereavement to go through with the wishes of herself and her late husband. Obviously, those who are giving the treatment will bear in mind whether that is in the interests or the welfare of the child. The Bill says that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Mrs. Peacock: Are not we considering the welfare of the family as well as that of the child? Is not it better for a child to have a father, as part of the family unit?

Mr. Thurnham: We all want the "ideal" family, and are considering the welfare of the child with that in mind. What we are discussing, however, is the wording of the Bill, which suggests that the child's welfare should be a matter for those giving the treatment to consider. The question is whether we should go further and try to specify the presence of a father, and what wording we should use to do so.

I think that we must provide that those giving the treatment can make a judgment, without any stipulation in the Bill that the father must be married or the relationship must be stable. Obviously I am not suggesting that a widow should have a child solely to come to terms with her bereavement, but, if it is deemed right for her to do so, it may well help. The rightness of the action must be the first consideration.

Mr. Wilshire: I fear that my hon. Friend has still not realised the essential difference between my amendments and what has been discussed before. My quote from the Lord Chancellor mentioned the factors that a clinician should take into account when reaching his judgment. If my hon. Friend reads the Bill and earlier speeches in detail, I think that he will grasp the fact that the intention of the Bill—and that of my amendments—is not to lay down hard-and-fast rules, but to give some guidance to the clinicians, who will make individual judgments about individual cases.

Mr. Thurnham: I think that, in many respects, my hon. Friend and I agree; all that we have to decide is the words that we want to see in the Bill. I should be content for it to provide that the welfare of the child should be the paramount consideration of those deciding whether to give treatment. My hon. Friend wants to go further, and insert words about the father.

Ms. Richardson: We intend to vote against amendments 18, 19 and 20, as we did in Committee.

It seems to me—particularly on the basis of the speeches of the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire)—that the one person who is not being considered is the woman. As clause 13 is now framed—we realise that it was drafted on the advice of the Lord Chancellor—the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. Now, the hon. Member for Spelthorne—going much further, I acknowledge, than his hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton), who is much more implacable—wants to insert the provision that clinicians should be given "guidance", a nod or a wink, in regard to the existence of a father. There is no mention of the wishes, views and emotions of the mother.

I freely acknowledge that, in some circumstances, a woman may simply want to have a child. I say that with special reference to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett), who said that child bearing was not a right. It is not a right, but I believe that most women would agree that, if they wanted a child, they would do everything possible to achieve that objective. I know many women—single, divorced or separated—who would go to inordinate lengths to have a child, because that is their overwhelming wish.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) said, the system proposed by the hon. Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) is totally unworkable. If we insert

"(including the need of that child for a father)",

we are ready to say that the clinician should take account of the size of that father's income and house and all sorts of other considerations which sound laughable but are not. We are inviting the clinician to act as a kind of god and to say that he must look at the whole background, instead of discussing with the patient or client her wishes and needs and then taking into account the child's welfare in the long run.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): I have been present throughout the debate on the Cross Benches, although I have only just come to my place. The hon. Lady's comments, especially her last sentence, make it clear that she sees the position of the "patient", the prospective mother, as of central importance. Surely the point, which has been stated by her hon. Friends and my hon. Friends in various amendments, is that, in asserting that the welfare of the child is paramount, we must take account of a child's need to have two parents where possible. That is not to detract from the actions of many men. A friend of mine struggles strongly to fill the part of both parties because of a tragedy——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The hon. Member must come to the point of his intervention and not make a speech.

Mr. Brazier: I was just about to finish, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I put it to the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) that, if she wants to stand by what she said at the beginning of her speech about the welfare of the child being paramount, she cannot aver that the patient's views must be paramount.

Ms. Richardson: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says. In taking account of the welfare of the child, the authority will consider the mother's circumstances.

We all acknowledge that we are feeling our way in new territory. My problem lies with the idea that we are making

[Ms. Richardson]

the clinician the one who will judge. When looking at the position of the client—let us call her that—the clinician must make a decision on her needs and the welfare of the child that she wants to bear.

Obviously, doctors and all of us would like to see a situation in which there was a mother and a father and other members of an extended family. That is the ideal, but, as the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) acknowledged, life is not always like that. Some women who want a child and could provide a good background and home for a child do not want to have a man around because they have had a particularly bad experience with a former partner. That has often happened.

The hon. Member for Canterbury looks puzzled. He must, however, have come across cases in his constituency of women being victims of domestic violence. That does not necessarily mean that those women do not want to have more children. Why should they not be allowed to have them, even if they want to have nothing further to do with men? Therefore, I shall invite my hon. Friends to vote against the amendment.

10.45 pm

In Committee, I raised another substantial point with the Minister: whether the clause, as drafted, is likely to breach the European convention on human rights. That point was put to me by the National Council for Civil Liberties. The Minister should ask the Lord Chancellor to consider the briefing commissioned by the National Council for Civil Liberties. It was written by Mr. Michael Beloff, a lawyer of renown who has won many cases in the European Court. He maintains:

"a law which either specifically or, in practice, has the effect of restricting the access of certain categories of women to have a child . . . may well be in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights under:

Article 8: the unjustified interference with a person's right to a private and family life . . .

Article 12: the denial of the right to found a family. This right is not conditional upon marriage, or being in a heterosexual relationship.

Article 14: the differentiation in treatment of certain categories of women to enjoy the rights and freedoms under the Convention without discrimination on the grounds of their status."

I accept that the Minister had had no opportunity to study the brief when she gave her reply in Committee, but it was not good enough for her just to say, "We'll have to wait and see what happens." The Government may find that they are in serious trouble. I hope that the Minister will deal with that matter, as well as with the other points that have been made. I invite my hon. Friends to vote against amendments Nos. 18, 19 and 20.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Once again, we have had a detailed and thoughtful debate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) made a strong speech about the interests of the child. She has strong reservations about some of the techniques for reproduction that have a bearing on lesbian couples and the lack of both a father and a mother in family units.

Other views have been advanced in the debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) spoke at length in Committee about the subject. Tonight he has developed further many of the points that he made at that time.

It is a complex and difficult matter and each hon. Member has to decide according to his or her own conscience. It is right and proper that the House should take a view in such special circumstances. After all, it is unprecedented for statutory controls to be made over the provision of treatment. We are debating special circumstances in which a life is being created. The Bill concerns the information, the licensing and the inspection of the premises. It seems right and proper that we should consider carefully the addition to the Bill that was incorporated in another place that the welfare of the child should be taken into consideration.

Some argue that it is wrong to permit the creation of a fatherless child. Clause 28 takes special steps to clarify the role of the father and that the husband of a woman who bears the child is the father unless he can show that he did not consent to the treatment and that if a man and a woman are treated together, the man is the father.

My hon. Friend the Member for Congleton rightly stressed the importance of fathers. *[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the Minister, but a number of meetings are taking place throughout the Chamber. I can barely hear the Minister and she is entitled to be heard.

Mrs. Bottomley: I have to tell my hon. Friend that her amendment is defective where it refers to clause 28. By prescribing that any child born as a result of the treatment is required to have a father by virtue of that clause, married couples or partners presenting for treatment where the sperm has not been donated by a third party would be prevented from obtaining treatment.

The amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne does not involve a prohibition so does not mean that unmarried couples or those not in a stable partnership shall be refused treatment. It spells out and elaborates all the factors that should be considered when the child's welfare is taken into account. That is rather a different matter. There is concern that a prohibition would encourage women who were determined to have a child not to go through the authorised treatment centres but to use unauthorised treatment centres, with all the inherent dangers in that approach.

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): I have often said that we have the delusion that somehow we can control human behaviour, but a young woman who wants a baby does not have to go to a treatment centre. Throughout history young women have become pregnant without the intervention of the state. Is it not the case that if a woman is determined to become pregnant she can do so whether or not we agree to this particular structure?

Mrs. Bottomley: That view was also expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) in Committee when she said,

"It is not for the state to decide who should or should not have children."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee B,* 15 May 1990; c.151.]

I refer my hon. Friend to the remarks of Lord Hailsham who said:

"I am sorry to say that there will always be an intelligent minority who prefers what I might call the good old-fashioned version of procreation."

We cannot regulate such matters in the general population, but there is an argument that in such special circumstances, where great care and attention is given to

create an embryo and implant that embryo to secure a life, often in extremely adverse circumstances, it must be right and proper for consideration to be given to the welfare of that child.

My hon. Friend's amendment, which refers to the need for a father, adds to our definition. He referred to the comments by the Lord Chancellor about the nature of the concept of welfare. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) tabled an amendment in Committee on whether the concept of welfare should be paramount. It is a complex concept, particularly in circumstances which involve the option of whether the child in question is born. That adds difficulties. My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor referred to the remarks of Judge Hardie Boyce of New Zealand who defined welfare most effectively. He said:

"Welfare is an all encompassing word. It includes material welfare, both in the sense of adequacy of resources to provide a pleasant home and comfortable standard of living and in the sense of adequacy of care to ensure that good health and due personal pride are maintained. However, while material considerations have their place, they are secondary matters. More important are the stability and security, the loving and understanding care and guidance, the warm compassionate relationship, that are essential for the full development of the child's own character, personality and talents."

The hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) advanced a different argument which has merit, although it is not one that I personally support. She asked specifically about the status of the European convention on human rights. I have considered carefully the concerns expressed by the National Council for Civil Liberties and my advice is that the essential object of article 8 is to protect the individual against arbitrary interference by public authorities with their private and family life.

Our legal advice is that it is unlikely that the European Court of Human Rights would consider that article 8 would impose a positive duty on the Government to ensure that single women had the same rights of access to treatment as married women. I am also advised that article 14 would not be breached if article 8 was not and that article 12 has no application in the case of single women who want to have children by means of AID or IVF.

Ms. Armstrong: Is the Minister saying that it is her interpretation that, if the amendment were accepted, only married couples would be able to opt for that treatment?

Mrs. Bottomley: I am pleased to be able to clarify precisely what the amendment means. According to amendment No. 20, a woman shall not be provided with treatment unless

"account has been taken of the welfare of any such child"

who may be born and the need of that child for a father. There is no requirement or prohibition. The licensing authority would have to consider that properly.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): Does the Minister agree that if the amendment were passed it would create a presumption in favour of the presence of a father, a presumption which in the great majority of cases might well be sensible, but which might not be sensible in some cases?

Mrs. Bottomley: Clause 25 identifies the role of the code of practice within which it will be important for the authority to spell out in more detail the way in which the concept of the welfare of the child and, if the amendment is accepted, the child's need for a father should be implemented. It will set out how the authority should consider, with respect to treatment centres, their undertaking that task. As I said, there would not be a prohibition. There would be a recognition that children need stability, continuity and the concepts that I identified earlier in my comments about welfare and the Lord Chancellor's comments in that respect.

Mr. Thurnham: My hon. Friend spoke earlier about the need for a warm and loving relationship. I remind her of an example in my constituency when a single woman was rightly allowed to have a child. Mrs. Annie Gibson was a widow and battled against many committees to be allowed to adopt a severely handicapped child. I cannot think of anyone who could be a better parent for that child, who had previously been without a family. Is not that an example of a single woman having a child and bringing it up most successfully?

Mrs. Bottomley: I am impressed to hear about my hon. Friend's constituent and her clear commitment to that child. However, when a child is in need of a home, the circumstances are rather different from the circumstances that are envisaged in the Bill when one is bringing about the creation of a life.

Although I share hon. Members' reservations about laying down precise arrangements under which children should be brought up, I feel that my hon. Friend's amendment has a sufficient level of generality, while protecting the welfare of the children, to commend it to the House for its support.

It being Eleven o'clock, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order [2 April] and the Resolution this day, to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

Mrs. Ann Winterton: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw amendment No. 20 because I wish to seek to divide the House on amendment No. 18.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

[Mrs. Ann Winterton]

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Question on amendments and new clauses, moved by a Member of the Government, of which notice had been given, to that part of the Bill to be concluded at Eleven o'clock.*

Amendment proposed: No. 18, in page 6, line 46, after 'treatment', insert

'(including the need of that child for a father).—*[Mr. Wilshire.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 226, Noes 174.

Division No. 241] **[11 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blunkett, David
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George J.
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Canavan, Dennis
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cartwright, John
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grocott, Bruce
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hinchliffe, David
Hind, Kenneth
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrea, Rev William
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclean, David
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNamara, Kevin
Maginnis, Ken
Malins, Humfrey
Mates, Michael
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
O'Brien, William
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. David Wilshire.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allen, Graham
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Boswell, Tim
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Dykes, Hugh

Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Miller, Sir Hal
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliot
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Nelson, Anthony
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Page, Richard
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Richardson, Jo
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Squire, Robin
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Turner, Dennis
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Doran and
Mrs. Teresa Gorman.

Question accordingly agreed to.

11.15 pm

Madam Deputy Speaker: We now have to consider all the Government amendments to the end of clause 44.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I wish to offer the House a Division on amendment No. 19, which raises the same issue as amendment No. 18, on which we have just voted.

Clause 24

DIRECTIONS AS TO PARTICULAR MATTERS

Amendment made: No. 40, in page 13, line 14, at end insert—

'(2A) Directions may authorise, in such circumstances and subject to such conditions as may be specified in the directions, the keeping, by or on behalf of a person to whom a licence applies, of gametes or embryos in the course of their carriage to or from any premises.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 25

CODE OF PRACTICE

Amendments made: No. 19, in page 14, line 19, after 'services', insert

'(including a child's need for a father)'.

No. 41, in page 14, line 20, at end insert—

'(2A) The code may also give guidance about the use of any technique involving the placing of sperm and eggs in a woman.' —*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 28

MEANING OF "FATHER"

Amendments made: No. 42, in page 16, line 13, leave out paragraph (a) and insert—

'(a) are to the parties to a marriage subsisting at that time, unless a judicial separation was then in force, but'.

No. 43, in page 16, line 22, at end insert—

'(9) In subsection (7)(a) above, "judicial separation" includes a legal separation obtained in a country outside the British Islands and recognised in the United Kingdom.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 29

EFFECT OF SECTIONS 27 AND 28

Amendment proposed: No. 44, in page 16, line 34, at end insert—

'(4) In relation to England and Wales and Northern Ireland, nothing in the provisions of section 27(1) or 28(2) to (4), read with this section, affects—

(a) the succession to any dignity or title of honour or renders any person capable of succeeding to or transmitting a right to succeed to any such dignity or title, or

(b) the devolution of any property limited (expressly or not) to devolve (as nearly as the law permits) along with any dignity or title of honour.

(5) In relation to Scotland—

(a) those provisions do not apply to any title, coat of arms, honour or dignity transmissible on the death of the holder thereof or affect the succession thereto or the devolution thereof, and

(b) where the terms of any deed provide that any property or interest in property shall devolve along with a title, coat of arms, honour or dignity, nothing in those provisions shall prevent that property or interest from so devolving.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 214, Noes 167.

Division No. 242] **[11.15 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry

Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrea, Rev William
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Maginnis, Ken
Malins, Humfrey
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Irvine Patnick and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carr, Michael
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John

Martlew, Eric
Mates, Michael
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliot
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Doran and
Mrs. Teresa Gorman.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 45, in page 16, leave out line 35. —*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 4

STATUS: AMENDMENTS OF ENACTMENTS

Amendment made: No. 50, in page 32, line 35, at end insert—

'Social Security Act 1975 (c. 14)

1A. In section 25(1) of the Social Security Act 1975 (widowed mother's allowance), for the words from "or" after paragraph (b) to the end there is substituted "or

(c) if the woman and her late husband were residing together immediately before the time of his death, the woman is pregnant as the result of being artificially inseminated before that time with the semen of some person other than her husband, or as the result of the placing in her before that time of an embryo, of an egg in the process of fertilisation, or of sperm and eggs."

Social Security (Northern Ireland) Act 1975 (c. 15)

1B. In section 25(1) of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Act 1975 (widowed mother's allowance), at the end there is inserted "or

(c) if the woman and her late husband were residing together immediately before the time of his death, the woman is pregnant as the result of being artificially inseminated before that time with the semen of some person other than her husband, or as the result of the placing in her before that time of an embryo, of an egg in the process of fertilisation, or of sperm and eggs."'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Ckarke.]*

Clause 30

THE AUTHORITY'S REGISTER OF INFORMATION

Amendment made: No. 60, in page 17, line 21, at end insert—

'(4A) Regulations cannot require the Authority to give any information as to the identity of a person whose gametes have been used or from whom an embryo has been taken if a person to whom a licence applied was provided with the information at a time when the Authority could not have been required to give information of the kind in question.'—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 31

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED TO REGISTRAR GENERAL

Amendments made: No. 46, in page 17, line 38, after 'man', insert 'is or'.

No. 47, in page 17, line 42, leave out from 'disclose' to end of line 44 and insert

'whether any information on the register kept in pursuance of section 30 of this Act tends to show that the man may be the father of the child by virtue of section 28 of this Act and, if it does, disclose that information'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 32

RESTRICTIONS ON DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Amendments made: No. 59, in page 18, line 16, at end insert—

'(cc) in pursuance of an order of a court under section *[Disclosure in interests of justice]* or *[Disclosure in interests of justice: congenital disabilities, etc.]* of this Act,'.

No. 58, in page 18, line 35, at end insert—

'(bb) so far as it identifies a person who, but for sections 27 to 29 of this Act, would or might be a parent of a person who instituted proceedings under section 1A of the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976, but only for the purpose of defending such proceedings, or instituting connected proceedings for compensation against that parent.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 38

OFFENCES

Amendment made: No. 51, in page 21, line 47, after 'Act' insert—

'(bb) contravenes section 4(2A) of this Act.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 40

REGULATIONS

Amendments made: No. 52, in page 23, line 26, leave out second '(3)'.

No. 53, in page 23, line 26, leave out 'or 4(2)' and insert '4(2) or (2A), *(parental orders in favour of gamete donors)*, 30(4)(a), or *(keeping and examining gametes and embryos in connection with crime, etc.)*'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 44

SHORT TITLE, COMMENCEMENT, ETC.

Amendment made: No. 55, in page 25, line 11, at end insert—

'(4A) Schedule 4 to this Act (which makes minor and consequential amendments) shall have effect.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

New clause 8

KEEPING AND EXAMINING GAMETES AND EMBRYOS IN CONNECTION WITH CRIME, ETC.

'(1) Regulations may provide—

(a) for the keeping and examination of gametes or embryos, in such manner and on such conditions (if any) as may be specified in regulations, in connection with the investigation of, or proceedings for an offence (wherever committed), or

(b) for the storage of gametes, in such manner and on such conditions (if any) as may be specified in

regulations, where they are to be used only for such purposes, other than treatment services, as may be specified in regulations.

(2) Nothing in this Act makes unlawful the keeping or examination of any gametes or embryos in pursuance of regulations made by virtue of this section.

(3) In this section "examination" includes use for the purposes of any test.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 9

PARENTAL ORDERS IN FAVOUR OF GAMETE DONORS

'(1) The court may make an order providing for a child to be treated in law as the child of the parties to a marriage (referred to in this section as "the husband" and "the wife") if—

(a) the child has been carried by a woman other than the wife as the result of the placing in her of an embryo or sperm and eggs or her artificial insemination,

(b) the gametes of the husband or the wife, or both, were used to bring about the creation of the embryo, and

(c) the conditions in subsections (2) to (7) below are satisfied.

(2) The husband and the wife must apply for the order within six months of the birth of the child.

(3) At the time of the application and of the making of the order—

(a) the child's home must be with the husband and the wife, and

(b) the husband or the wife, or both of them, must be domiciled in a part of the United Kingdom or in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

(4) At the time of the making of the order both the husband and the wife must have attained the age of eighteen.

(5) The court must be satisfied that both the father of the child (including a person who is the father by virtue of section 28 of this Act), where he is not the husband, and the woman who carried the child have freely, and with full understanding of what is involved, agreed unconditionally to the making of the order.

(6) Subsection (5) above does not require the agreement of a person who cannot be found or is incapable of giving agreement and the agreement of the woman who carried the child is ineffective for the purposes of that subsection if given by her less than six weeks after the child's birth.

(7) The court must be satisfied that no money or other benefit (other than for expenses reasonably incurred) has been given or received by the husband or the wife for or in consideration of—

(a) the making of the order,

(b) any agreement required by subsection (5) above,

(c) the handing over of the child to the husband and the wife, or

(d) the making of any arrangements with a view to the making of the order, unless authorised by the court.

(8) For the purposes of an application under this section—

(a) in relation to England and Wales, section 92(7) to (10) of, and Part I of Schedule 11 to, the Children Act 1989 (jurisdiction of courts) shall apply for the purposes of this section to determine the meaning of "the court" as they apply for the purposes of that Act and proceedings on the application shall be "family proceedings" for the purposes of that Act,

(b) in relation to Scotland, "the court" means the Court of Session or the sheriff court of the sheriffdom within which the child is, and

(c) in relation to Northern Ireland, "the court" means the High Court or any county court within whose division the child is.

(9) Regulations may provide—

(a) for any provision of the enactments about adoption to have effect, with such modifications (if any) as may be specified in the regulations, in relation to orders under this section, and applications for such orders, as it has effect in relation to adoption, and applications for adoption orders, and

(b) for references in any enactment to adoption, an adopted child or an adoptive relationship to be read (respectively) as references to the effect of an order under this section, a child to whom such an order applies and a relationship arising by virtue of the enactments about adoption, as applied by the regulations, and for similar expressions in connection with adoption to be read accordingly,

and the regulations may include such incidental or supplemental provision as appears to the Secretary of State necessary or desirable in consequence of any provision made by virtue of paragraph (a) or (b) above.

(10) In this section "the enactments about adoption" means the Adoption Act 1976, the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 and the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987.

(11) Subsection (1)(a) above applies whether the woman was in the United Kingdom or elsewhere at the time of the placing in her of the embryo or the sperm and eggs or her artificial insemination.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Motion made, and Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 231, Noes 130.

Division No. 243] **[11.28 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'f's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Couchman, James
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan

Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knox, David
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Maclean, David
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
Maginnis, Ken
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mates, Michael
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Sir Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Stevens, Lewis
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Irvine Patnick and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Carr, Michael
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morley, Elliot
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Vaz, Keith
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Doran and
Mrs. Teresa Gorman.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Clause read a Second time.

Amendment made: (a), in line 10, at end insert

'or in the case of a child born before the coming into force of this Act, within six months of such coming into force.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

New clause 11

CIVIL LIABILITY TO CHILD WITH DISABILITY

'.—(1) After section 1 of the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976 (civil liability to child born disabled) there is inserted—

"*Extension of section 1 to cover infertility treatments*

1A. (1) In any case where—

(a) a child carried by a woman as the result of the placing in her of an embryo or of sperm and eggs or her artificial insemination is born disabled,

(b) the disability results from an act or omission in the course of the selection, or the keeping or use outside the body, of the embryo carried by her or of the gametes used to bring about the creation of the embryo, and

(c) a person is under this section answerable to the child in respect of the act or omission,

the child's disabilities are to be regarded as damage resulting from the wrongful act of that person and actionable accordingly at the suit of the child.

(2) Subject to subsection (3) below and the applied provisions of section 1 of this Act, a person (here referred to as "the defendant") is answerable to the child if he was liable in tort to one or both of the parents (here referred to as "the parent or parents concerned") or would, if sued in due time, have been so; and it is no answer that there could not have been such liability because the parent or parents concerned suffered no actionable injury, if there was a breach of legal duty which, accompanied by injury, would have given rise to the liability.

(3) The defendant is not under this section answerable to the child if at the time the embryo, or the sperm and eggs, are placed in the woman or the time of her insemination (as the case may be) either or both of the parents knew the risk of their child being born disabled (that is to say, the particular risk created by the act or omission).

(4) Subsections (5) to (7) of section 1 of this Act apply for the purposes of this section as they apply for the purposes of that but as if references to the parent or the parent affected were references to the parent or parents concerned."

(2) In section 4 of that Act (interpretation, etc)—

(a) at the end of subsection (2) there is inserted—

"and references to embryos shall be construed in accordance with section 1 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990"

(b) in subsection (3), after "section 1" there is inserted "1A", and

(c) in subsection (4), for "either" there is substituted "any".'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 12

DISCLOSURE IN INTERESTS OF JUSTICE

'(1) Where in any proceedings before a court the question whether a person is or is not the parent of a child by virtue of sections 27 to 29 of this Act falls to be determined, the court may on the application of any party to the proceedings make an order requiring the Authority—

(a) to disclose whether or not any information relevant to that question is contained in the register kept in pursuance of section 30 of this Act, and

(b) if it is, to disclose so much of it as is specified in the order,

but such an order may not require the Authority to disclose any information falling within section 30(2)(b) of this Act.

(2) The court must not make an order under subsection (1) above unless it is satisfied that the interests of justice require it to do so, taking into account—

(a) any representations made by any individual who may be affected by the disclosure, and

(b) the welfare of the child, if under 18 years old, and of any other person under that age who may be affected by the disclosure.

(3) If the proceedings before the court are civil proceedings, it—

(a) may direct that the whole or any part of the proceedings on the application for an order under subsection (2) above shall be heard in camera, and

(b) if it makes such an order, may then or later direct that the whole or any part of any later stage of the proceedings shall be heard in camera.

(4) An application for a direction under subsection (3) above shall be heard in camera unless the court otherwise directs.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 13

DISCLOSURE IN INTERESTS OF JUSTICE: CONGENITAL DISABILITIES, ETC.

'(1) Where for the purpose of instituting proceedings under section 1 of the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976 (civil liability to child born disabled) it is necessary to identify a person who would or might be the parent of a child but for sections 27 to 29 of this Act, the court may, on the application of the child, make an order requiring the Authority to disclose any information contained in the register kept in pursuance of section 30 of this Act identifying that person.

(2) Where, for the purposes of any action for damages in Scotland (including any such action which is likely to be brought) in which the damages claimed consist of or include damages or solatium in respect of personal injury (including any disease and any impairment of physical or mental condition), it is necessary to identify a person who would or might be the parent of a child but for sections 27 to 29 of this Act, the court may, on the application of any party to the action or, if the proceedings have not been commenced, the prospective pursuer, make an order requiring the Authority to disclose any information contained in the register kept in pursuance of section 30 of this Act identifying that person.

(3) Subsections (2) to (4) of section [*Disclosure in interests of justice*] of this Act apply for the purposes of this section as they apply for the purposes of that.

(4) After section 4(4) of the Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability) Act 1976 there is inserted—

"(4A) In any case where a child carried by a woman as the result of the placing in her of an embryo or of sperm and eggs or her artificial insemination is born disabled, any reference in section 1 of this Act to a parent includes a reference to a person who would be a parent but for sections 27 to 29 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990."'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

Further consideration of the Bill adjourned—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Bill, as amended (in Committee and in the Standing Committee), to be further considered tomorrow.

Aviation and Maritime Security Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Clause 2

EXTENSION OF POWER TO REQUIRE PROMOTION OF SEARCHES

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 4, line 5, after "if" insert "without reasonable excuse".

11.40 pm

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping (Mr. Patrick McLoughlin): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this, it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 2, 14, 17 to 19, 23, 36 to 38.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Do I understand that the Minister is seeking the leave of the House to move amendments Nos. 1 to 38 collectively?

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. The Minister is moving Lords amendment No. 1 and, by the leave of the House, speaking to the amendments on the Amendment Paper.

Mr. Redmond: I am in order, because some of the amendments do not go far enough. May we vote against the amendments that do not go far enough?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman may divide the House on any Lords amendment he wishes. Some may go too far, some not far enough; it is entirely up to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. McLoughlin: The amendments provide for the defence of reasonable excuse for continuing failure to comply with a direction or with an enforcement notice after initial conviction for failure to comply. A person charged with failing to comply with a direction or enforcement notice can call on the defence of reasonable excuse. It therefore seems logical that a reasonable excuse defence in respect of continuing offences should be available. A person may have reasonable excuse for continuing not to comply with a direction or enforcement notice even though he had no excuse at the time when he first failed to comply. An example of that is where an aerodrome manager is convicted of not operating an automatic pass reading system. When charged subsequently with continued failure to comply he could possibly cite as a reasonable excuse defence the inability of the manufacturer to produce equipment without which he could not comply with the direction.

The amendment received support in the other place and I urge the House to support it.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): As the Minister said, the matter was debated extensively in the other place and in Committee. It appeared to Labour Members to be only reasonable that these words should be added and we agree wholeheartedly with the explanation given by the Minister.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): I am not absolutely sure that I agree entirely with my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), particularly given the illustration that the Minister gave the House. He said it is a reasonable excuse for an airport manager to say that some piece of essential equipment was not working. If that were so, it might be his duty to cancel all flights until the safety of the passengers and aircraft were guaranteed.

I support the initiative taken by my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond). Why must the words "with reasonable excuse" be inserted in the Bill? The House did not see fit to include those words in other legislation of equal importance. I had understood that the courts would decide whether an excuse was reasonable, and that the words would not necessarily be required to be inserted in the statute.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): During a recent dispute involving aircraft engineers, British Airways management allowed the use of smaller-than-usual bolts around the window fixing on a BAC 111, which led to a weakening of the window. The management could cite "industrial relations difficulties" as a reasonable excuse, which would not be acceptable. There was nearly a tragic end to the story. The bolts were supplied from Heathrow, although the window was fitted in Birmingham.

11.45 pm

Mr. Hardy: That is a very good illustration of the problem. It is right for such matters to be brought to the House's attention.

Mr. Snape: I am, as ever, reluctant to intervene in such a fascinating diversion from the Bill, but I must tell my hon. Friend that, after a fairly extensive debate in Committee, I fear that not even he—with his characteristic ingenuity—can convince me that the security duties at any airport in the United Kingdom include checking the windscreens of airliners. Perhaps he—or my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), who has an even more distinguished record in regard to revealing such cases—can convince me after all, but, with the best will in the world, I cannot see the relevance of that example.

Mr. Hardy: I join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to the sterling record of my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) in the whole sphere of security. I spent part of the morning meeting members of the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers, whose current experience—as the Minister will be well aware—does not convince me that the Government are particularly committed to the cause of safety. If my hon. Friend is right, and they are concerned about safety at airports, I can only regret that that deep concern does not extend further. But I do not want to strain your patience, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. This not in the Bill.

Mr. Hardy: Indeed, it is not; I was merely making a passing reference.

Mr. Cryer: During industrial disputes, all sorts of reasons can be adduced. Although there is no direct connection, the fact that the Bill is connected with security would not prevent the actions of security men from being invoked as being perfectly proper—even if, during an industrial dispute, there was no reasonable excuse for those actions.

Mr. Hardy: I am glad that I gave way to my hon. Friend. Although I have no wish to detain the House, I shall give way again—to my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley.

Mr. Redmond: The question of security could arise in relation to the maintenance of spare parts. As the recent incident involving the aircraft window demonstrates, aircraft work to fine tolerances. Let us suppose that someone gained access to the stores where material and spare parts are kept, and deliberately changed the bolts around. Every fitter assumes that the dimensions of a bolt —five-eights of an inch, for instance—are as they should be, and therefore will not bother to measure it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. We have had a nice tour, but I think that the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) should now return to the amendment.

Mr. Hardy: The point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley is relevant——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. It is not.

Mr. Hardy: We are talking about the phrase "without reasonable excuse". If someone interferes with the stores and the wrong screw, nut, bolt or attachment is used, many people could be maimed or killed; however, it could provide someone with an excuse which is not acceptable and which does not apply under a vast proportion of the laws of the land.

I cannot understand why the Government are prepared to take a relaxed view by seeking to maintain the view adopted in the other place that the words "without reasonable excuse" can be added to the Bill. I am amazed that the Government should want to allow such superfluity to be part of the legislation.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): My hon. Friend is getting to a serious point. The inquiries into the recent near crash of the British Airways plane, when the wrong bolts were inserted in the window fittings, may reveal that the matter comes within the parameters of security. Clearly the fitting of the wrong bolts resulted in the screen blowing out and serious injury to the pilot and could have caused serious injury to many passengers.

Mr. Hardy: This is a serious matter. It was a serious matter for the pilot and it could have been serious for a large number of passengers. It is not a matter which we should treat lightly or about which we should make frivolous speeches. I do not wish to detain the House long.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Hear, hear.

Mr. Hardy: If the hon. Gentleman thinks that we are being frivolous in referring to these matters, he should have another think. We are not detaining the House long. I asked the Minister why these words should be added to the Bill when they are not added to many pieces of statute which may be of equal or greater importance. I am sure that the House would be grateful if the Minister could give the reasons, without again quoting the example which destroyed his case and which led me to join the debate rather than simply vote with my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley. If the hon. Gentleman cannot offer a convincing and better reason, I suggest that my hon. Friend should maintain his determination to divide the House.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): My hon. Friends have raised the issue of safety, linked to security, because of a fair argument. Recently, British Airways decided to impose a 12-hour shift. In doing so, it was endangering not only safety but security. Anyone would understand that, once the decision was made to tell the 7,000 workers that they had to work 12 hours, their output would not be the same as it would be over six, seven or eight hours.

This matter brings into focus what the amendment is about. The Government are saying that not only can British Airways impose a 12-hour shift but they will give it the opportunity to say that it has a reasonable excuse. Let us not beat about the bush on this matter. Can anyone say that the two aspects are not interrelated? My hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) should make a much longer explanation because he has not convinced me.

Mr. Snape: I realise that convincing my hon. Friend of anything, particularly at 11.53 in the evening, is no easy task——

Mr. Skinner: I do not go in the bar—you do.

Hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Snape: I think that I can treat that remark by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) with the contempt that it deserves.

Mr. Skinner: That is what "late at night" means.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Snape: All I am saying to my hon. Friend, if I can retain his attention for a few more seconds before he goes out to wherever he is going, is that during the debates in Committee and in another place, these amendments referred purely to those matters that directly impinge on airport security. I admire my hon. Friend's ingenuity in raising these matters, but they do not arise directly out of our debates, or those in another place.

Mr. Skinner: But they do arise, because some people may not be wide awake after 12 hours, or at 11.53 pm. But I am. British Airways' decision to impose a 12-hour shift brings more clearly into focus what the Bill is about. Therefore, it is right to ask questions about the imposition of 12-hour shifts, which have a bearing on security. The management at Heathrow, doing somebody else's job, had to send the bolts to Birmingham. Management was trying to do the job of 7,000 people, so safety and security at Heathrow were jeopardised. The wrong bolts were sent to Birmingham and fitted to the windscreen. Somebody nearly lost his life when the windscreen blew out. The Minister must explain why it is necessary to give the power in the amendment—that of "without reasonable excuse" —when management is prepared, without reasonable excuse, to trample on the rights and conditions of workers at Heathrow and elsewhere. It is bound to affect safety and security.

We are right to draw the matter to the Minister's attention. We do not want Ministers to stand at the Dispatch Box when the next industrial dispute arises and say that people should work a 12-hour shift at Heathrow, thereby putting people's lives at risk, or that management should be allowed to do the jobs of 7,000 engineers.

Mr. Redmond: My hon. Friend referred to the Government's double standards. They claim that the

amendment will improve safety. However, the Leader of the House said that the industrial dispute to which my hon. Friend referred had not put anyone in danger. We all know of the near-tragic consequences of the Government's indifference, due to their support of and collaboration with the management of British Airways.

Mr. Skinner: Let us suppose that in the event of another industrial dispute—British Airways doing what it did the other week, with a few hundred management staff carrying out the work of 7,000 engineers—some of the management staff are connected with security. If they do the engineers' job in order to break the strike, what will happen to security? The Minister must answer that question. Is he prepared to say that in those circumstances the defence of "without reasonable excuse" will not apply? British Airways' arrogant management might be prepared to do the same again. It should not be allowed to refer to the words "without reasonable excuse" and get away with what is literally murder.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): My hon. Friend is making a valid and important point. Can he interpret the words, "reasonable excuse" as they relate to strike breaking? Is he suggesting that those words would be intepreted by a judge to mean that if management became involved in strike breaking that would represent a reasonable excuse? Does my hon. Friend agree that that is an industrial relations matter that should not be dealt with in such a Bill?

Mr. Skinner: Of course I do. That is why the Government put it in. It would allow the management of British Airways or any other company to say, "We did not really want an incident involving security to occur, but we had reasonable excuse."

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I have given the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) a long run now. I refer him to the clause that we are discussing which deals with the extension of power to require promotion of searches. I am sure that with his ingenuity he can return to the amendments before us.

12 midnight

Mr. Skinner: It is not a matter of needing ingenuity. I am trying to explain that in the event of an industrial dispute, if the management does what it did the other week, it can say to those working in security who are engaged in searches, "We are short of people here. We have 7,000 people on strike because we have tried to impose a 12-hour day. We have 400 management trying to do the jobs of those engineers, so we are asking you security people to come off your jobs, forget your searches and get involved in strike breaking." If the management can do that in one respect, as it did the other week, it can do it in another respect.

The amendment gives the nod and the wink to the judges so that in the event of an incident occurring the management would be able to say, "We had a reasonable excuse because we had to transfer security workers to do the engineers' work." That is what could happen in those circumstances. That is why we need an assurance from the Minister that those words would not apply in the event of an industrial dispute.

Mr. Redmond: It is becoming quite clear that we need to examine the amendment in a little more depth. We are all aware that when Bills are considered in Committee the Government will tolerate only a certain amount of discussion before they impose a guillotine. I listened intently to what the Minister said when he moved the amendment, but it was the usual civil service legal gobbledegook. The examples and explanations that he gave did not fill me with any confidence.

The amendment is crucial to the Bill and needs to be examined closely. I am concerned about the safety of my constituents. There is no doubt that security has been lax at our aerodromes through which people travel all over the world.

I take great objection to the argument relating to a "reasonable excuse". It gives management a blank cheque and enables managers to commit any misdemeanour or laxity in their duties and endanger security. A manager would be able to say to himself, "I shall not do it all. I shall not bother with my inspection. I shall get back to my tower and scan round the airport" because 12-hour shifts make people tired.

It is dangerous for the manager to do his job knowing that he can fall back on the "reasonable excuse". If workers do not do their jobs properly, they cannot fall back on a "reasonable excuse"; it is their problem. The management can pass the buck down the chain of command, but it stops at the poor lad on the shop floor when it could well be that the management is at fault. Over the years I have met many managers; there have been good managers and bad ones. I would not tolerate bad management and I hope that the Minister would not tolerate it either. He should remove the blank cheque—the reasonable excuse—provision in the amendment. We must make management accountable.

Much legislation since 1979 has made workers and trade unions accountable for what happens within their structure. Now, because of major accidents that have occurred for a variety of reasons, including terrorism and negligence, the Government are trying to improve security through this Bill. They have taken a tiny step instead of a gigantic leap. If they had taken a gigantic leap, this amendment, all the other amendments and the Bill itself would have fallen flat on the floor.

I shall gladly give way to the Minister if he wants to respond to me. I am not willing to accept an amendment that gives bad or slack management the opportunity to slip through the net. Management should be as accountable as anyone else and that applies to managers and blue collar workers. Even at this late stage, I hope that the Minister will consider what we have said tonight.

The Minister spoke for only about 60 seconds about the important matter of security. That was not good enough. He should give a detailed explanation of why the amendment should be passed. I care about my constituents and I will not tolerate the blank cheque approach and the Government's reasonable excuse provision. No civilised society would accept such a blank cheque on security. When the folly of the amendment becomes apparent the Opposition will be pressing for statements on incidents that will arise as a result of the reasonable excuse provision.

No doubt the Government will fetch out the troops to ensure that the amendment is passed, but the Minister should study seriously whether we are making any progress as a result of the amendment. The people who travel from or to British airports have a right to expect first-class security. They will not get that with the amendment, because it gives management, which is

[Mr. Redmond]

supposed to supervise and ensure that regulations and legislation such as this measure are carried out, a blank cheque. It is unacceptable for the House to pass a lowering of standards.

The reasonable excuse defence lets the management and the Government off the hook. If an incident occurred and the management invoked the reasonable excuse provision the Government would behave like Pontius Pilate. They would say that the Opposition accepted the situation that gave management a reasonable excuse. The management is there to manage according to the law.

The Minister cannot claim that the worker at the bottom of the ladder must accept every tiny piece of legislation that passes through the House. The worker is accountable and can be sacked or hauled before the courts for breaching the laws of this land. It will be a case of one law operating for the lad at the bottom and another for the people at the top. We should not have double standards. We should treat everyone the same. If the "reasonable excuse" provision is included, it gives the impression——

Mr. Cohen: I should like to hear my hon. Friend's interpretation of the phrase "reasonable excuse". As a result of the Government's high interest rate policy, for example, many people may not have the money to go on trips and to fly and there might not be enough bums on seats. In those circumstances, the aircraft company might not be making enough profit and might therefore cut the numbers of staff who do the security searches. Does my hon. Friend think that those not unlikely circumstances come within the "reasonable excuse" get-out?

Mr. Redmond: I am conscious of what you said previously, Madam Deputy Speaker, but my hon. Friend makes a good point. The first duty of any company is to ensure that a dividend is paid to the shareholders. Regrettably, in the past, industry has been allowed to decline and there has not been any investment. My hon. Friend's point is therefore valid because if people are frightened to use those airports and aeroplanes, financial factors begin to come into play. One of the first things that a company will do is to get shot of some staff at the bottom end to save wages. To save money, managements always say, "Let's get rid of some of the lads at the bottom." Of course, that also means that management salaries can increase as a result of that cost-efficiency exercise.

Regrettably, history shows many examples of managements refusing to invest in safety—safety comes a very poor second to profit. However, because of legislation that the House is about to pass—I am certain that the Government will not withdraw the Lords amendment—there are added implications for the future. I hope that the Minister will give a more detailed explanation of the other amendments that we are to consider and the Government's view of them. I did not serve on the Standing Committee and should like an explanation now. Perhaps if we received that, we could avoid a number of Divisions tonight, although we shall certainly seek to divide the House on this amendment.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I wish to make two brief points only. First, the "without reasonable excuse" provision appears in this bunch of amendments no fewer than 10 times. The Bill is therefore shot through with it.

However—this is my second point—it has already appeared earlier in the Bill and is of particular significance to the first amendment. It is possible that in court the "reasonable excuse" defence could be used in connection with the offences that are referred to in this clause. On summary conviction, someone could therefore be fined, in accordance with the provisions of clause 2(3). However, subsection (4) to which Lords amendment No. 1 relates, which seeks to add the "without reasonable excuse" provision, deals with further offences. That means that a person could have been convicted by a court despite using the defence that there was a "reasonable excuse" for what had been done. But that has been overturned. Following conviction, however, the same defence is available for similar occurrences. That enables excuses to be built upon excuses. There would be a serious problem where there was found to be danger, someone was convicted and the offence was repeated. These considerations apply to 10 amendments that extend throughout the Bill. As I have said, the excuse can be built upon and multiplied. This worries my hon. Friends and I a great deal.

12.15 am

Mr. McLoughlin: I find it deplorable that Opposition Members seek to link a tragic accident that is under investigation by the air accident investigation branch with a lack of care by the management about its staff and the way in which it operates. I find that approach deplorable but not surprising, because of some of the quarters that have adopted it. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the accident as it is under investigation. Anyone with close links with the aviation industry would not contemplate that management would put crew—its employees—and passengers at risk at any stage. Any suggestion to the contrary is deplorable and I dissociate myself from it. I am sure that when Opposition spokesmen think about it they will take the same view as I do.

It is ludicrous that an attempt is being made to circumvent enforcement notice legislation. I must give some praise to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) for drawing attention to current legislative provisions. It would be nonsensical for such provisions not to apply in later parts of the Bill.

At the beginning of the debate I gave the example of an aerodrome manager who is convicted of not operating an automatic reading system. If his defence is that manufacturers were unable to produce the piece of equipment that he required, I think that that would be a reasonable excuse. It is not for me, however, to say what is a reasonable excuse. That is a matter for the courts to decide once a charge is brought against an operator for failing to comply with a direction. The courts could decide that there was a reasonable excuse even if it did not apply to statute law.

I am surprised by some of the comments that have been made this evening. Until our consideration of Lords amendments there was agreement throughout the Chamber about the nature of the Bill. The House did not divide on Second Reading. Until this evening there has been a reasonable approach and agreement between both sides of the House. The Bill is vital and I deplore the way in which some hon. Members are trying to sabotage it at this late stage of its consideration.

Question put, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 111, Noes 23.

Division No. 244] **[12.18 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mates, Michael
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Timothy Wood and
Mr. John M. Taylor.

NOES

Ashton, Joe
Buckley, George J.
Canavan, Dennis
Cohen, Harry
Cryer, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Fyfe, Maria
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Hood, Jimmy
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Meale, Alan
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Redmond, Martin
Skinner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and
Mr. Jeremy Corbyn.

Question accordingly agreed to.

12.30 am

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Minister declared that for the House to scrutinise Lords amendments was sabotage. He claimed that there was agreement between the two sides of the House over the Bill in this place. Surely we cannot be accused of any such behaviour, when we are deeply concerned about safety and security at airports at all times. We are dealing with Lords amendments, and it is part of our duty to scrutinise them and to express our views on them. To regard that as sabotage is an outrageous attack on our democratic procedures.

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is hardly a point of order for me. As the hon. Member knows, every right hon. and hon. Member in the House is responsible for his or her comments.

Clause 4

ENFORCEMENT NOTICES IN RESPECT OF DIRECTIONS UNDER PART II OF AVIATION SECURITY ACT 1982

Lords amendment: No. 2, in page 7, line 14, after "if" insert "without reasonable excuse".

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 109, Noes 17.

Division No. 245] **[12.32 pm**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McLoughlin, Patrick
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael

Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raffan, Keith
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Timothy Wood and
Mr. John M. Taylor.

NOES

Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Buckley, George J.
Cohen, Harry
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Hood, Jimmy
Illsley, Eric
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Meale, Alan
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Skinner, Dennis

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Welsh and
Mr. Martin Redmond.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Clause 5

OFFENCES RELATING TO SECURITY AT AERODROMES ETC.

1982 c. 36

Lords amendment: No. 3, in page 9, line 37, leave out "or".

Mr. McLoughlin: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this, it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 4, 7, 8, 9, 25, 26 and 29 to 30.

Mr. McLoughlin: The purpose of the amendments is to add the police to the list of persons to whom it would be an offence under section 21A of the Aviation Security Act 1982 and clause 37 of the Bill to make a false statement in answer to questions relating to baggage, cargo or stores intended for carriage by a civil aircraft or by sea.

The amendments also make it an offence under section 21A—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Redmond: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sorry that I had to shout, but the Minister was in full flow. Do I take it that the Minister is attempting to shove all the Lords amendments through in one go, or will we be able to deal separately with those that are perhaps not strong enough or acceptable to the Opposition? I should be grateful if you would enlighten us.

12.45 am

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think that I can help the hon. Gentleman. We are discussing the amendments together, as suggested by the Minister in charge of the Bill. The Minister has moved Lords amendment No. 3 and is explaining the other Lords amendment grouped with it. That is the customary procedure when we deal with Lords amendments to a Bill.

Mr. Redmond: Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do I take it, then, that the Minister is speaking to Lords amendments Nos. 3 to 32?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We are discussing Lords amendment No. 3 together with the other Lords amendments grouped with it.

Mr. Redmond: Up to Lords amendment No. 32.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As on the selection list; that is right.

Mr. McLoughlin: As I was saying, the amendments also make it an offence under new section 21B of the Aviation Security Act 1982 and clause 38 of the Bill to give false information to a constable in connection with the continued holding of an identity document.

The amendments would tidy up the Bill and make it clear that it would be an offence for any person travelling through our airports to give false information to those in a position to ask for information. The amendment is wholly sensible, and the House should give it the go-ahead.

Mr. Hardy: I had not anticipated speaking again, and I should not have done so had the Minister given way in his reply to our previous debate. In any case, my point is relevant to the present group of amendments.

The Minister appeared to pay tribute to hon. Members on both sides of the House for working together to produce a splendid Bill. In many respects, the Bill is acceptable, sound and worth while. But if, as a result of the co-operation of hon. Members, the Bill was as good as the Minister claims it was when it left this House, why was it necessary for the House of Lords to table a whole lot of amendments, some of which seem to me absurd and none of which appears to be very helpful?

I am worried about the previous group of amendments, on which further votes may well be called if the Government's attitude does not improve. As far as I can see, the amendments that were carried in the other place may well persuade the Crown prosecution service that it will be virtually impossible to bring a prosecution for an offence under the Bill. I am not a lawyer, so I do not know whether that suspicion is well founded, but I have heard nothing from the Government Benches to alleviate it.

Lords amendments Nos. 3, 7 and 9 would delete the word "or". Lords amendment No. 5 would insert the word "constable", and Lords amendment No. 8 also refers to a constable. Why do we have to delete the word "or" when hon. Members on both sides of the House were firmly of the view, before the Bill went to the other place, that that word was necessary? Why did the House of Lords decide that that word should be removed, and why have the Government accepted the omission of the word without giving this House an explanation?

I am also concerned about the reference to "a person or constable". I am raising that now so as not to have to address the House on another amendment, but my point is relevant because the amendments are grouped. I see no reason why we have to use the word "constable" and the word "person" when either would suffice. A policeman is a human being, is he not? Or perhaps the Government have changed their approach to the constabulary. Do we need to insert the word "constable" when hon. Members decided that it was not necessary?

The Minister has not persuaded us at all; he has given no explanation, but he calls us saboteurs for seeking to

defend a decision that the House enthusiastically and unanimously endorsed. That is a foolish and ill-advised approach. He should consider his position a little more carefully.

Question put, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 108, Noes 18.

Division No. 246] **[12.50 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Batiste, Spencer
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McLoughlin, Patrick
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raffan, Keith
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nicholas Baker and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Ashton, Joe
Buckley, George J.
Cohen, Harry
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Hood, Jimmy
Illsley, Eric
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Meale, Alan
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Redmond, Martin
Skinner, Dennis

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and
Mr. Michael Welsh.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 4, in page 9, line 39, at end insert

"or

(iii) by a constable,"

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 107, Noes 17.

Division No. 247] **[1.02 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Batiste, Spencer
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McLoughlin, Patrick
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raffan, Keith
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Twinn, Dr Ian
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nicholas Baker and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Ashton, Joe
Buckley, George J.
Cohen, Harry
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Hood, Jimmy
Illsley, Eric
Meale, Alan
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*

Redmond, Martin
Skinner, Dennis
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Alice Mahon and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Redmond: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately, I was unable to raise this matter previously. When I was teller in the Ayes Lobby three votes ago, I noticed that an hon. Member that went through the Aye Lobby was carrying a dagger. Is it in order for an hon. Member to carry a dagger when he is going through a voting Lobby?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Offensive weapons are not allowed, but it may well have been a ceremonial one.

Mr. Redmond: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I accept what you say, but whether it was for decoration or for another purpose, it could still be used to inflict a wound. I am concerned that an hon. Member went through a Lobby carrying a decorative dagger: if he was ill, he might be tempted to use it. Whether for decoration or for some other reason, is it correct for an hon. Member to carry a dagger?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is well able to look after himself. However, I assure him that the Chair will always look after him.

1.15 am

Mr. Jimmy Hood (Clydesdale): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You may be aware that the Standing Committee to consider the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill held its first sitting on Tuesday. The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), the hon. Member who was carrying the dagger in question, was accused on Tuesday of stabbing his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn) in the back. Therefore, it might be dangerous for the hon. Member for Tayside, North to be allowed to carry such a weapon in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think that we had better proceed with the business before the House.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. What happens in a Standing Committee is a matter for the Chairman of the Standing Committee, not for me.

Mr. Nellist: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will you consider further the advice that you gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) about the wearing of ceremonial or non-ceremonial items that could be described as weapons, such as the dagger in question? I know of a case in the past few days in which a Sikh lady was dismissed from work for wearing a ceremonial Sikh dagger. If there is to be a definitive ruling about what is or is not permissible in terms of decoration and the wearing of ceremonial weapons in this Chamber, I would be grateful for a considered ruling because it may assist in other areas of employment legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am not aware of anything that is likely to cause any danger to any hon. Member. We should now proceed to consider Lords amendment No. 5 and the others grouped with it.

Lords amendment: No. 5, in page 10, line 10, leave out "course of his duty" and insert

"exercise of the power conferred by section 20(2)(aa) of this Act"

Mr. McLoughlin: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 5, 6, 11, 24, 27, 28, 33, and 41.

Mr. McLoughlin: This group of amendments would confer statutory authority on authorised persons to investigate and test the security practices and procedures operated by those to whom a direction can be given. It is important that those investigations and tests can be carried out, because they play a very important and necessary role in improving aviation and maritime security.

Mr. Redmond: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should be grateful if you would ask the Minister to speak slower instead of gabbling through his speech. I am having great difficulty in hearing what he is saying. If I cannot hear what he is saying, I am suspicious. Will you ask the Minister to speak a little more slowly and clearly?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure that the Minister will have noted the hon. Gentleman's request.

Mr. McLoughlin: However, we cannot afford to ignore the fact that they might, in exceptional circumstances, have a harmful effect on commercial operations. Therefore, the Government consider it necessary to have statutory authority so that checks to secure adherence to security procedures are not inhibited. Anyone who votes against this amendment would be putting profit before security—something that the Government would not contemplate.

Although the tests will be planned to avoid causing delays at airports and ports, it is not beyond the realms of possibility, for example, that an inspector carrying out a test on baggage reconciliation might cause delay to the aircraft and its passengers. That might lead to those affected claiming for damages for financial loss against those carrying out the tests, or against the Department of Transport for negligence or interference with contractual relations. It therefore seems a sensible precaution to have explicit statutory powers relating to the investigation and testing of security practices and procedures. Such powers should avoid claims being laid, provided the tests or the investigations were properly carried out for the purposes described in the enabling provision.

I repeat that hon. Members who vote against the Lords amendments will be putting profit before security, which is something that Conservative Members will not do.

Mr. Snape: The House listened to the Minister with interest, but we might have been slightly more impressed if he had made that speech at an earlier stage of our proceedings, when it was tentatively suggested that in its then form the Bill might well give rise to accusations that the Government were putting profit before safety——

Mr. McLoughlin *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Snape: The Minister shakes his head, but if he reads the *Official Report* of our previous deliberations, he will see that that was pointed out. We are grateful at least that, even at the 11th hour, the Bill, which my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) described as "perfect" when it left this place on its mission to another, has been amended in the way that it has. We have always felt that the Bill should make statutory provision for security checks at Britain's air and sea ports. No one would suggest that, in the Bill as it now stands, the Government would put profit before safety. Indeed, they have now established the principle that that is the last thing in their mind. We look forward to them allowing that principle to be extended so that it can embrace the other forms of transport over which the Department of Transport is charged with statutory responsibilities, because many of my hon. Friends feel that the Department has put profit before safety all too tragically often for other modes of transport.

Mr. Hardy: I am sure that the Minister will recall what my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) has just said, when he quoted me saying that when the Bill left this House it was perfect.

Lords amendment No. 5 presents an interesting situation. It relates to clause 5, which states:

"a person commits an offence if, in answer to a question . . . he makes a statement which he knows to be false".

However, if someone makes a false statement under the provisions of subsection (3), which is covered by the amendment, he does not commit an offence if he makes that false statement as an "authorised person". Therefore, if a man is an "authorised person", he can make as many false statements as he likes.

I am glad to hear that the Government are today more concerned about safety than about profit, but their record suggests that they have a great deal of sympathy with people who make false statements. That is beyond all doubt.

I want to know under what circumstances a person in an authorised position would be required to tell lies, to make false statements and—presumably—to be relieved of responsibility in the course of his duty. I note that the House of Lords wants to remove the words, "course of his duty", and to replace them with

"exercise of the power conferred by section 20(2)(aa)",

but for the life of me I cannot see why we have to legislate to allow people to tell lies. Yet that is clearly what the amendment seeks to provide. The Minister must explain that, otherwise my earlier assessment of the Bill as commendable will have to be dramatically reviewed.

Mr. McLoughlin *rose*——

Mr. Hardy: I have finished.

Mr. McLoughlin: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am not clear whether the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) is giving way to the Minister.

Mr. Hardy: I was sitting down and had concluded, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I shall give way.

Mr. McLoughlin: The amendment is simple. It means that those who are required to test the security measures have the power to do so. If they were not allowed to give false information, they could not check the procedures. The provisions relate only to someone authorised under subsection (1). I am sure that that makes logical sense.

Mr. Hardy: Obviously I shall have to resume my speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One is well aware that people operating in defence of society and of the consumer will require such protection, but if the Minister reads clause 5, he will see that a person commits an offence if he makes such a statement

"in answer to a question".

If the question is asked by a suspect or a terrorist, fair enough, the individual charged with protecting society will clearly give a false statement, but that is not the offence that would be committed. The offence would be committed if the authorised person gave a false answer to someone who was authorised to ask him the question. He would not be charged with committing an offence if he misled a terrorist. The Bill will give him the power to be protected if he makes a false statement to an authorised person what was entitled to ask him the question. The Minister needs to reconsider that part of the Bill, or at least to ensure that the amendment which stood before the other place when it interfered with the Bill receives the disapproval of the Government rather than their approval..

Mr. Cryer: The House is exercising its right and its duty to examine legislation. The fact that the Government have brought the Bill before us at a late hour—they have been overloading the legislature with a great deal of legislation —is not the fault of Opposition Members who are in their place tonight. The fault lies with the Government, whom the Minister was so eager to join. It does not add lustre to the House if the Minister, after gabbling through a speech written and typed out for him by civil servants, sits down with a smirk on his face to an organised chorus of assent from Tory Members who want the Lords amendments to go through on the nod so that the Government are not subject to any inconvenience such as explaining what the Bill is about.

We have before us a curious amendment. It removes the final six words from:

"subsection (1) above does not apply . . . to any statement made by an authorised person in the course of his duty."

That is done to relate to the Aviation Security Act 1982. The deletion of those words removes the offence committed by a person who answers a question levelled at him or her by an authorised person, if the person who responds provides information about baggage, cargo or stores in a reckless way, or knowingly in such a manner that the statement

"is false in a material particular."

In what circumstances would any person in an airport, carrying out his duty under section 22A of the Aviation Security Act 1982—it relates to the inspection of aeroplanes—be authorised to have removed from him the obligation of providing truthful information in relation to baggage, cargo or stores?

The hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) is muttering that the Minister will have the information. That is all well and good. If he has, it would have been prudent for him to provide it, without gabbling, when he introduced the amendment.

There is no merit in saying that the House is being inconvenienced. I remind the House that we are being inconvenienced not because Opposition Members are

[Mr. Cryer]

raising issues but because the Government are abusing the legislature to the extent that they cannot get this stage of the consideration of the Bill through the House in 24 hours unless they have hon. Members nodding in assent. It is disgraceful that the Government should adopt a complacent attitude and decide to keep about 100 of their troops in the House. It is deplorable that they mutter and grumble because we are spending more than the five or 10 minutes that the Government Whips expected would be the time spent considering the Lords amendments to the Bill. That is what it boils down to, and the Whips even had the effrontry to table other motions following that long list of complicated amendments, knowing full well that we started debating a complicated piece of legislation in the middle of the afternoon and finished discussing it at 11 pm.

Let us not have any more little smirks from the Minister after he has concluded his gabbling and got through his speeches in record time in order to justify his presence at the Dispatch Box. He is there to provide the House with some sort of explanation, which, by common consent, he has failed to do—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] If I am wrong, I am sure that Conservative Members will be only too eager to spring to their feet and give an explanation to back up the Minister.

1.30 am

When I started my brief comments, not a single Tory was rising, so I find it remarkable that they make muttered comments, as they sit on their backside, nodding their heads in eager anticipation that this legislation will slide through. They have not been leaping to their feet in order to give the Minister the help that he so clearly needs.

It worries me that, under the Aviation Security Act 1982, section 20(2)(aa) states:

"An authorised person inspecting an aircraft or any part of an aerodrome under subsection (1) above"—

—a direction given by the Secretary of State—

"(a) Shall have power—to subject any property found by him in the aircraft (but not the aircraft itself or any apparatus or equipment installed in it) or, as the case may be, to subject that part of the aerodrome or any property found by him there, to such tests".

That person is clearly taking part in the organised security operation of the airport, which we welcome and encourage by this legislation.

What are the circumstances in which a person, engaged in a security operation, should fail to give information that, according to clause 5 of the Bill

"relates to any baggage, cargo or stores (whether belonging to him or to another) that is or are intended for carriage by a civil aircraft registered or operating in the United Kingdom"?

The effect of the amendment is to remove that obligation. That leads to a reasonable amount of questioning.

I do not suppose that the civil servants who drafted the Minister's speeches, and probably the amendments, are trying to produce confused legislation. It will be used by people and refers to another Act that has to be brought into operation. People must understand the legislation to enforce it, but it is not the clearest, and it will help if the Minister gives a clear—not necessarily lengthy, but not gabbled—explanation to the House of what the legislation means.

If the Minister does that, our deliberations are on record, and it assists people in the operation of legislation if there is a clear explanation so that they can refer to other legislation before employing the services of a solicitor or barrister. We legislate for the common use of ordinary citizens. We should bear it in mind that the legislation that goes out from this place should be as simple, comprehensive and comprehensible as we can make it.

I make a plea to the Minister to give an explanation that the citizen can read, learn, inwardly digest and of which we can take advantage. By common consent, certainly of Opposition Members, and, I suspect, of Conservative Members, that has not, so far, been provided tonight.

Mr. Redmond: Earlier I raised a point of order about the way in which the Minister for Aviation and Shipping delivered his speech on the amendments. I asked that he be requested to speak a little more slowly and clearly so that we could understand what he was saying. Unfortunately, his arrogance and conceit prohibited him from doing that.

I oppose the amendment because it would authorise people to lie. One should tell the truth and fear nowt. The Bill contains ways to promote security at aerodromes without telling lies. Airport security is breached many times. Some lads invaded Heathrow airport and tried to board a plane and took photographs to show how easy it was. This is not a good Bill. If the Minister had introduced a good Bill all these Lords amendments would not be needed. He is saying that airport security cannot be tested without lying. I do not accept that, nor do I accept that by voting against the amendment we will be voting for profit rather than safety. That is no way to proceed.

The Minister engaged in bombast in trying to push through the amendment and that showed his arrogance. The amendments should be discussed in depth and explained in a rational and logical way. The fact that we are here at this time is perhaps the fault of the Minister. If he had behaved in a proper manner, perhaps we would understand a little more clearly what is going on. The Minister is trying to stampede us into accepting the amendment.

I will not endorse any legislation that permits people to lie. Someone could sneak in somewhere, tell great lies, and point the finger of suspicion at some poor person who works in the establishment. Regretfully, cases are now before the courts because people have told lies and other people have been sent to prison. I cannot understand why the Minister supports the principle of people telling lies, but unfortunately the Government appear to be quite happy about that. They have misled the House and have been economical with the truth on many occasions since 1979. I cannot say that the Government tell lies because that would not be in order, but they have certainly misled the House. They may be used to that sort of practice, but I do not condone lying.

As I have said, without making the amendment, the Government could easily introduce practices which would tighten up security and which are so desperately needed if we are to guard the citizens residing in these islands. Obviously it is important when tourists come to this country that they know that security is good and tight. What will people in America and Europe think that we are doing if we pass legislation saying that we endorse people who tell lies? They will laugh us out of court. In view of the recent EC legislation, I feel sure that the Bill would be challenged to see whether it was acceptable under EC legislation. The Government have already accepted EC regulations.

So the Minister, no matter how he wraps it up, or how he sneers and smirks at the Dispatch Box, means that he

is condoning people telling lies. What would he do if the court said, "I'm sorry, Joe Bloggs, there's nowt we can do, the Minister condones it and we're only here to interpret the law"? That is unfortunate. I shall give some credit to the Government, because they have learnt some lessons since 1979 about how to tighten up. There is an old saying that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. I do not suggest for one minute that the Government are corrupt—far from it. I am not saying that —although I might well think it. Power means that one can tell lies and get away with it. It is not on for us to pass legislation which says that people can tell lies to test security because people are too idle to think of alternative systems to test it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has said a good deal in his preamble. I am sure that he will now address his remarks to the amendments that we are discussing.

Mr. Redmond: I am trying to make my point. If it is correct, why did the Government wait until the Lords put the amendment in? Why did not the vast array of civil servants that the Minister has at his beck and call or all the alleged brains on the Conservative Benches think of the amendment? Why leave it to the other place to table amendments, which have such a deep effect on society? How can we expect people to tell the truth if we condone lies?

If we vote against the amendment it is not a question of our supporting profit against safety. As far as I am concerned, one has to tell the truth . I am happy to inform the Minister that if he continues in the same arrogant and conceited manner when he speaks on the other amendments before us tonight, we shall vote against every one. I cannot understand what he is saying when he rattles off ten to the dozen——

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the debate be now adjourned.—*[Mr. McLoughlin.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Question is, That the debate be now adjourned. Those of that opinion, say Aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: To the contrary, No.

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Clear the Lobbies.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have put the Question. I shall hear the point of order afterwards.

Mr. Nellist: The point of order is about the Division. You are not deaf, Sir Paul. You could hear me when I shouted. The Minister was on his feet. It is no good you looking the other way and trying to ignore people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have said that I shall take the hon. Gentleman's question after the Division has taken place.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order. I do not want a stupid hat on—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I want to be quite clear that the House knows what we are doing. There was a certain amount of noise. I shall put the Question once more. The Question is, That the debate be now adjourned—*[Interruption.]*

1.45 am

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This motion is debatable and we demand the right to debate it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is correct. This motion is debatable.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can we assume that as you have now recognised me we can open the debate on the motion that you called? The motion is about whether we should terminate the debate on this group of amendments at this point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman wishes to speak to the motion, he may do so.

Mr. Nellist: It is unfortunate that sometimes tempers have to rise in order to reach the point that we have now reached. It is a perfectly correct procedural point——

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household): The hon. Gentleman should have spoken earlier.

Mr. Nellist: You may have heard the deputy Chief Whip remark from beside the Chair that I should have risen to speak. That was precisely what I was trying to do when I shouted, "On a point of order", at the top of my voice. I wanted to draw to your attention and that of the House what we now know to be correct—the motion is debatable. I am speaking to the motion on whether we should curtail the debate. My hon. Friends may have other reasons, but I have a couple of pertinent reasons why I do not want the debate on this group of amendments to finish now.

The first reason is the simple one that, when the Minister introduced the eight-strong group of amendments, I attempted to intervene to ask him a particular question. He refused, so I am left with no choice but to make a speech to ask my question. In future, the Minister might like to remember the lesson that he could save himself and his colleagues a great deal of time if occasionally he gave way.

The first point that I want to raise is that the group of amendments contains eight amendments, three of which —Nos. 5, 27 and 33—refer to earlier legislation. They refer to the Aviation Security Act 1982. While my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) was on his feet, I went to the Vote Office to obtain a copy of that Act. It occurred to me, as it may have occurred to other hon. Members, that it is a little difficult to decide whether a group of amendments should be allowed to go through on the nod or whether we should vote on each one if we do not know exactly how they relate to other legislation which is not readily available.

My point to the Minister—if I may have his attention; he might like to think about it—is that amendments Nos. 5, 27 and 33 seek to remove the words

"in the course of his duties"

and insert

"exercise the power conferred by"

[Mr. Nellist]

in the amendment No. 5—section 20(2)(aa)—and in amendments Nos. 27 and 33—section 36(2)(aa). I have a reasonable question to put to the Minister. What is the difference between a general instruction such as
"in the course of his duties"
and the specific powers mentioned in the sections of the Act to which I referred?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is now debating the amendments. I must remind him that we are debating whether the debate should be adjourned. His remarks must be restricted to that comparatively narrow motion before the House.

Mr. Nellist: I do not accept that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My problem is that, unless I tell you why I wanted the Minister to continue the debate and give me answers, I cannot make my case for allowing the debate to continue. I have questions on that group of amendments that I want the Minister to answer. I should have thought that that was reasonably in order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister cannot answer to amendments on a debate about whether or not the House should adjourn. I repeat, the hon. Gentleman must restrict his remarks to the motion that is now before the House.

Mr. Nellist: I fully accept that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The motion we are debating is whether or not we should pack up and go home. That is what it means in layman's language. If we pack up and go home, my hon. Friends and I will be unable to ask the Minister questions about the Bill. I have a particular question to ask the Minister, which is why I want the debate to continue.

I also want it to continue so that we can discuss an issue that was mentioned in passing by the Minister in his rapid opening speech. The accusation has been made that, if we vote against the amendments, we will be putting profit before safety. I would happily stay here until four or five o'clock in the morning debating that aspect.

Mr. Harry Barnes: I am not sure that it is correct to say that the motion is about whether or not we should pack up and go home. Even if the House agrees to it, there remain many other items on the Order Paper to be dealt with, including a very important measure concerning the Finance Act 1990, on which many right hon. and hon. Members may wish to speak. However, I take my hon. Friend's point that, if the motion is carried, it will destroy debate on the Bill, so we would have to return to it on another occasion.

Mr. Nellist: My hon. Friend is right to pull me up, but when I referred to packing up, I meant that in respect of the current debate, not the whole evening's business. My hon. Friend rightly drew attention to the fact that there is plenty of meat left on the Order Paper, and I am sure that my right hon. and hon. Friends have much of value to say in respect of those other items.

If the debate concludes now, we will be unable to discuss a number of important safety matters. I take particular umbrage at the suggestion that we are uninterested in such matters, as would my hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), because only 13 days ago we demanded during business questions more debates on transport safety.

I refer also to the dispute lasting two or three weeks at Heathrow airport, involving British Airways maintenance and repair engineers and members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Transport and General Workers Union and the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians. Right hon. and hon. Members might also wish to raise the question of the aircraft repaired in the midlands, the windscreen of which blew out on a subsequent flight. That plane had to be landed on the south coast, and the heroic air crew hung on to the pilot's legs to make sure he was kept alive to tell the tale.

The afternoon after that incident, I watched an American television programme called "They Walked Away". It was all about horrific car crashes at formula 1 race meetings and the like. Apparently racing cars can be reduced to 4 ft square and the driver can still get out and walk away. When one sees such programmes, one thinks, "Obviously it happened. It has been filmed." But it is amazing then to turn on the news and hear of an equally astonishing event that has happened on the same day—in this case, of the pilot being held by the legs for all those miles and living to tell the tale.

I do not want to prejudge investigations or inquiries that may take place into that incident, but I must emphasise that there was a link with Heathrow. The bolts that came to the midlands for use in the window were sent from somewhere. Somebody made the decision to send them, and that decision was made when those who would normally have made it were out on strike. These are matters of transport safety, and they are germane to the Bill.

I know that a number of my hon Friends will have comments to make in the debate so let me make one final point. If we do not continue our deliberations on the Bill this evening, I shall be unable to ask the Minister a question arising from his opening remarks. He said that, if anybody wanted to discuss, or even vote against, the amendments that we were debating before the motion, which you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, accepted, was moved, that would destroy the possibility for statutory authority to be conferred on an authorised person to tell lies in the course of his duties or, if the amendments were carried, in the course of implementing sections of other Acts.

I am completely unclear as to who is doing the authorising. Numerous statutory bodies, such as security defence establishments, are being given out to cowboy private security firms, whose employees are on a couple of quid an hour. I wonder whether airports will follow suit. We know what has happened in one or two instances when lax security in defence establishments has caused almost tragic consequences. We must ask who is doing the authorisation.

The Minister gabbled his way through his opening remarks, trying to get through a few scrappy bits of paper as fast as he possibly could because he and the Whips had promised the troops, "We'll have this lot through in 10 minutes and then we'll go home." But there are questions that we must ask. Many of our constituents travel on planes, both to work and during their holidays. They want to know that, every time they get on a plane, they are in safe hands. They want to know that the airport is secure and that they are travelling on an aeroplane that has been well maintained and properly repaired.

All those questions are germane to the Bill, and if we are not allowed to continue to discuss them tonight, many of our constituents will not think that we earn the high salaries that many Members of Parliament are paid to scrutinise legislation. We should not go home until we have discussed those points fully.

Mr. Hardy: I shall not take long, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although I remind the Minister that when we began debates on the Bill we were not making long speeches and that he may have been responsible for extending the length of Opposition Members' speeches tonight.

I believe that we should stay here and finish discussing the Bill, and I want to put two arguments in support of my case. First, the Minister told us that the Bill was urgently needed and that it was very important from the point of view of passenger safety. If it is so important, the Government should ensure that it completes its passage through the House before we adjourn. It may well be our duty to consider the safety of passengers, and therefore to ensure that the Bill completes its passage and it would have been completed by now had the Government taken a more conciliatory and courteous view.

The second reason why I want us to complete our proceedings on the Bill is that I am extremely anxious that the House should thoroughly debate a number of other major issues. I know that my hon. Friends from the Barnsley and Doncaster areas, as well as those from the Rotherham metropolitan borough, are most anxious to have a proper debate about the appalling, dishonourable and corrupt action of the Government in poll tax capping our local authorities. I want the Bill out of the way so that we can deal with that matter properly. Now the Government have run for cover. They have offended the House and insulted the Opposition. They have treated the House with a degree of contempt to annoy us into making speeches so that they could come up with an excuse to adjourn the House. No doubt they will now say, "Because you delayed matters on 20 June we do not want to give you time to debate the dishonest and corrupt decision to poll tax cap at least four authorities in Yorkshire."

If the Government had been fair and reasonable, they would have given us guarantees that there would be opportunities for us to put the powerful cases that can be advanced in support of our constituencies. Unfortunately, we have seen no evidence from the Government that that proper consideration will apply. That shows that we should scrutinise the Government's legislation carefully. I am glad that we did so tonight because we have had a preposterous example of lying, to the point where we could call the Bill the Aviation, Maritime Security and Falsehoods Bill. That would be appropriate to clause 5.

I said that I did not want to speak for long, and I made short contributions to the earlier debates. I deeply regret that the Government are so careless about the security of passengers on ships and aircraft that they want to rush away without fulfilling their responsibilities.

2 am

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): My hon. Friend referred briefly to the Government's undemocratic decision to poll tax cap councils. Is he aware that they based their criteria for capping on information that they received from authorities? They sought information about Calderdale, and we have evidence that they received it in two parts. First, the Tory manifesto——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I cannot think that that intervention has anything to do with the motion before the House.

Mr. Hardy: I extracted from the Government—and it was published in the *Official Report* the other day——

Mrs. Mahon: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Hardy: May I finish the point, after which I shall give way?

I extracted from the Government the other day—and it was published in the *Official Report*—a statement that listed the deprived areas of Britain in order of deprivation. Right at the bottom of the list are the metropolitan boroughs of Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster, which have suffered from the economic policies of this Government more than most parts of Britain. Given the danger that my hon. Friends and I see in that corrupt and unjust act, I hope that we shall subject every jot, tittle, comma, i and t in the Government's legislative programme to the scrutiny that we have given the Bill.

Mrs. Mahon: As I was saying, the Government obtained their information on poll tax capping in two parts—first, from a Tory manifesto in a local election, which clearly stated to the people of Calderdale that the Tories would reduce the poll tax by 50 per cent. The second source was a letter in the *Halifax Evening Courier*. The Government accepted that as information by which to set the poll tax cap.

Mr. Hardy: If we get time to debate those serious matters, I hope that the House will give them the same attention as it has given the Bill in the little time with which we have been provided to consider it.

I do not think that we should rise; the House should go on. It would have been possible for the Opposition to be persuaded to be a little more helpful and succinct, but we were not given that encouragement and the Government have run for cover at an excessively early hour. I am sorry that we have had to have this debate. We could have finished the Bill before now, but this simply illustrates the careless, arrogant and corrupt approach that the Government demonstrate almost every day.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesborough): I am grateful to you for calling me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I am sure that the House will appreciate your decision to allow us to continue this debate.

First, we should understand how today's business was decided. We all know that the Cabinet meets on Thursdays to decide the business; we all know that, earlier tonight, we had a long debate—which was guillotined, and therefore ended at 11 pm—on the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. The Government knew that that debate would finish at 11 pm, leaving time for a full debate on Lords amendments to the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill. They also provided time for a debate on a motion entitled "Finance Bill *[Money]* (No. 2)", and another entitled "Procedure (Future Taxation) (No. 2)".

When the Government ordered tonight's business, they were well aware that both debates were open, with no time limit. They also knew that a series of amendments had been tabled to the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill, and that each amendment was likely to prompt Labour opposition and consequent votes. They must have known

[Mr. Stuart Bell]

—particularly given that the motion entitled "Procedure (Future Taxation) (No. 2)" is a departure from the practice of the House, referring as it does to

"anything to the contrary in the practice of the House relating to matters which may be included in Finance Bills"—

that, if the Opposition were doing their job, they would question Ministers. The Government must have been prepared for a lengthy debate, and it does not seem reasonable for the Opposition to be told at this time of night that the Minister proposes to move to adjourn the debate.

I have some sympathy with the Minister for Aviation and Shipping. He was very honest when he led the House on Second Reading of the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill—a privatisation Bill. He gave specific reasons for the separation between the public Bill that should have been considered by the House and the private Bill that was considered, and about the fact that the House would have to meet to discuss a money resolution concerning why the Government would seek to claw back some of the assets by way of a measure in the Finance Bill.

I am glad to see the right hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) in his place. The right hon. Gentleman began the proceedings that led to the Tees and Hartlepool Bill: in a 1988 speech, he suggested that the ports should privatise themselves. Although he did not tell them that we should be sitting here at this time of the morning to discuss a money resolution whereby 50 per cent. of their assets would be taken from them, he has played an indirect part in tonight's proceedings.

Many Opposition Members—certainly, my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes)—and the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) have come here, notwithstanding the early hour, to debate the Finance Bill money resolution. But we cannot debate it until we complete the debate on the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill. There is a series of wider considerations: the two motions are part and parcel of the Finance Bill, which must go back into Committee. A variety of new clauses are on the agenda, which would be debated as part of the money resolution and can only proceed if the resolution is passed tonight.

The Finance Bill motion has important ramifications which must not have escaped the Government or their business managers. Later today, the Leader of the House will make a business statement and deal with private Bill procedures. He will do so having studied reports on how to treat private legislation. By then, he should be aware of the mood of the House, as expressed in the debate on the money motion, of the fact that a private Bill is being used to privatise the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. By means of the motion, some 50 per cent. of the port's assets will be taken. It will be interesting to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether that legislation should proceed. If we do not continue the debate on the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill, we will not be able to put our points to him. Unless the Government rearrange the business of the House for tomorrow or other days, they will face difficulties in continuing with the proceedings on the Finance Bill.

A number of hon. Members are in the Chamber. I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East is back, because I know that he wants to contribute. When there are Opposition Members who are prepared, ready and willing to speak, why are we deprived of that opportunity because of the Minister's motion? It is worrying that the Government seem to feel that they can ride roughshod over the Opposition. After 11 years of Conservative government, we have seen a certain subversion of the rules of the House.

In relation to the Tees and Hartlepool privatisation, the Government used a private Bill route for public legislation. They used the Finance Bill to prevent legislation being hybrid. The Government are using the House of Commons for its convenience in relation to public Bills and hybrid Bills. Because of the difficulties with the Lords amendments to the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill, we end up with aggravation and short tempers.

The Government show a lack of consideration for the Opposition, who seek to do their constitutional duty in checking and challenging the Government and holding the Executive accountable.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): I wonder whether my hon. Friend will elaborate. He criticised the Minister for moving the adjournment motion. On checking the times, I found that the Minister spoke for two minutes on Lords amendment No. 5 and allowed only four hon. Members to speak before standing up to move that the debate be adjourned. Has my hon. Friend ever seen that happen before? It was rather dramatic of the Minister to speak for two minutes and allow only four speakers to contribute before he moved the motion. Some pressure must have been put on him.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Last night, when speaking to an amendment, the Secretary of State for Health spoke for 45 minutes. The Minister for Aviation and Shipping spoke for two minutes on the Lords amendment. We can therefore see the contrast between the approaches to this important subject. I was not present for that debate, but I wanted to refer to the Minister's honesty in an earlier debate, when he fully accepted that the Government were using the private Bill route to carry out public policy.

The result of that offhand treatment is that, later today, the Leader of the House is to explain how in future the Government intend to handle private Bills. However, we shall be unable to discuss the matter properly unless the Minister withdraws his motion and allows the House to continue the debate. I referred to the Minister's honesty when he accepted that the Government were using the private Bill route to carry out public policy, and that, in order to prevent the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill from becoming a hybrid Bill, 50 per cent. of the port authority's assets would be taken by the Treasury and added to the Finance Bill.

2.15 am

After 11 years in power, the Government have become offhand, with the result that, in the early hours of the morning, the Minister moves that consideration of Lords amendments should be adjourned. Hon. Members should be treated with greater courtesy. This is an open-ended debate. The House is entitled to hold a full debate on each amendment, to question the Minister and to elicit responses that last longer than the two minutes to which my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) referred.

The Opposition are ready to participate in the debate in an attempt to improve the Bill. It passed through all its stages in this House, went to the other place and has returned with amendments. It is now stranded on the beach. That amounts to further subversion of the House and to further offhand treatment by the Government of the conduct of business in the House. In a democracy, that cannot be right. The Chamber of the House of Commons is part of the legislature. We hold the Executive accountable, but we cannot do that if the Executive seek to use their powers arbitrarily.

The House of Commons evolved over many years, first by resisting the arbitrary powers of monarchs and, secondly, by resisting the arbitrary power of Governments. If the debate is not to be allowed to continue, that will be yet another arbitrary use of power by the Executive. The Government will be put to great inconvenience. They will have to arrange a date for the continuation of consideration of the Lords amendments and for debates on the two motions relating to finance. The entire legislative process will be slowed up.

Those hon. Members who wish to participate in the debate on the Bill ought to be allowed to do so. Those hon. Members who wish to take part in the debates on the Finance Bill *[Money]* (No. 2) and the Procedure (Future Taxation) (No. 2) motions should also be allowed to do so. If we were allowed to complete our business, we should be able to put questions later today to the Leader of the House on the private Bill routes that have been adopted by the Government. Everything would be in perspective. Such an arbitrary manner of bringing the debate to an end when hon. Members are anxious to speak is not in the best interests of the House.

Mr. Michael Welsh (Doncaster, North): I speak against the motion for two reasons. First, I should like to get the measure through, so we shall be asking for one and a half hours' debate for each of the poll tax measures. That will take up a tremendous amount of Government time. It is vital that we should finish discussing the Bill tonight, so that we have plenty of time to discuss the poll tax. That is reasonable, as it involves a tremendous number of people in our constituencies and we are asking for only one and a half hours for each authority. That is a fair and reasonable request. It shows how sincere we are about trying to help the Government fill their time.

I shall be brief, so my second and final point relates to amendment No. 5. The Minister, on behalf of the Government, is promoting legislation that will allow people to tell lies. I was under the impression that only a totalitarian state could give the power to tell lies. Under the rule of law, I do not consider that this Chamber can possibly pass an Act that allowed anybody to tell lies in the name of the Government. I do not think that that is allowed. It would not stand up in any British court, let alone the European Court.

I do not suppose that any hon. Member from either side of the House would choose to pass legislation allowing people to tell untruths under the umbrella of the House. It is immoral, and it is wrong: I should like the debate to continue so that the Minister can justify trying to pass legislation enabling individuals to tell untruths on behalf of the Government. If he is, he is in the wrong country —he is not in a democratic society but a totalitarian state.

Therefore, it is vital that the debate should continue so that the Minister can explain why he would give permission for our citizens to tell lies.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Despite the self-righteous speeches from Opposition Members, I want to put on record the true purpose of their operation tonight. Everyone knows that late night legislation appears on the Order Paper only after the business managers of both sides of the House and the usual channels have looked at the matter and reached a general conclusion that there will be little opposition. Obviously such an agreement has not been reached tonight.

I want to put on record a point which I feel most strongly as one who has seen an aircraft destroyed by terrorism. Opposition Members are delaying the Bill through extended debate tonight, despite the possibility of such incidents occurring again. Let it be on their heads that they are delaying a Bill that will provide security for the aircraft that fly over our country. It has been a proper disgrace that the hon. Gentlemen who set out purely to make the point that they do not like the community charge are prepared to risk the security of our aircraft and airports. They should all be ashamed of that and it is on record that that is why they have delayed the Bill tonight.

Mr. Ray Powell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) wants to contribute to the debate, despite the early hour of 2.24 am, he should get his facts right.

The Minister spoke in support of Lords amendment No. 5 for only two minutes. After 25 minutes of debate, he decided to move the closure. The hon. Member for Dumfries has accused the Opposition of closing the debate when it is actually the Minister who is delaying the Bill. If the closure motion is carried, the Bill will be delayed. The hon. Member for Dumfries should get his facts right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I take that to be a contribution to the debate, and not a point of order.

Mr. Hood: I am sure that we all have visited schools in our constituencies and talked to the young kids explaining how Parliament works, its procedures and how we are the bastions of democracy. There are 42 Lords amendments to the Aviation and Maritime Security Bill, and before the motion to adjourn was moved we had spent only two hours discussing that important Bill.

I was sad to hear the comments of the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro). I am sure that after he has considered what he said, he will regret his comments. To criticise the House for wanting to spend a little longer than two hours to discuss the 42 Lords amendments is wrong. I do not need to tell the hon. Member for Dumfries or anyone else about the real dangers of terrorism at our airports and ports.

Mr. Steve Norris (Epping Forest): If the hon. Gentleman is so seized of the importance of this measure, can he point to any word in *Hansard* that he has uttered on this so-called vital Bill in which he professes such great interest at any stage of the proceedings on the Bill so far? If he cannot do that, is not the hon. Gentleman expressing appalling humbug?

Mr. Hood: I have been accused of many things and I suppose that many hon. Members have been accused of humbug. However, there has been more humbug from the

[Mr. Hood]

Government Benches. We should be discussing the Lords amendments. I am taking the opportunity given to an elected Member of this House to take part in our process.

If hon. Members believe that because an hon. Member has not spoken previously in debates on Bill he cannot speak now, the public will not understand that. I have heard Mr. Speaker say from the Chair that hon. Members should be careful about the image that they project to the public. Conservative Members are now claiming that any hon. Member who does not agree with the Government or has not spoken in opposition earlier is now not allowed to do so. That is the humbug that the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) accuses me of.

Mr. Harry Barnes: Is it not peculiar that, in a House of 650 Members, hon. Members should be criticised for speaking when they have not spoken earlier? If we followed that logic, no one would be able to speak in the House.

Mr. Hood: We all know how difficult it is for humble Back Benchers to speak in this place. Perhaps I have this opportunity to speak tonight because there are not many hon. Members present. I strongly oppose the motion.

It is the duty of the Opposition to scrutinise legislation. When we have 42 Lords amendments to consider and only two hours elapse before a closure motion is moved, it is unsatisfactory and——

2.30 am

Mr. Barnes: On the point about hon. Members choosing to speak in this debate, I confess that I came into the Chamber for this debate because I was interested in what was due to be considered after this Bill—I refer to the motions relating to the Finance Bill—but having listened, I began to be interested in these proceedings. I have made only one speech on this matter, lasting three minutes, and about three interventions.

However, I believe that I am entitled to be interested in our proceedings and that later, If I catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am also entitled to take part in this debate about why we should not adjourn our consideration now. That is the nature of the Chamber—an hon. Member can come in, pick up a debate, follow it, and become interested, and make his own contribution or listen to those of other hon. Members. One can thus learn and advance one's knowledge of the procedures. The trouble with Conservative Members is that they do not understand the procedures of democracy.

Mr. Hood: I fully agree with my hon. Friend—*[Interruption.]* I am about to conclude my remarks, but the hon. Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) is intervening from a sedentary position. I shall give way to him if he would like me to do so.

Mr. Alistair Burt (Bury, North): I was simply saying that the biggest humbug in this place at the moment is that Opposition Members will not admit that this is a row about timing and procedure. They will not put that on the record in *Hansard*. Why will not Opposition Members say what is going on and what this is all about?

Mr. Hood: I do not deny that this is an argument about timing and procedure. We object to the amount of time that the House has been given to discuss 42 Lords amendments——

Mr. Burt: That is not true.

Mr. Hood: That is what I am objecting to. That is what this debate is about.

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): Is not the truth that all the noise that is coming from Conservative Members is because they are whingeing about why they are having to stay tonight, to do the job for which they are paid? They all want to go home to bed. That is why we are hearing whingeing from the other side of the Chamber.

Mr. Hood: My hon. Friend makes a point—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Some of these Labour Members did not even turn up for Third Reading or Report.

Mr. Harry Barnes: So what?

Mr. Hood: If I may take a prompt——

Mr. Redmond: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I feel sure that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will not allow sub-committees in the Chamber to chat back and forth among themselves. Will you ask hon. Members who want to speak on the important issue of the closure to seek to catch your eye?

Mr. Hood: I shall resume my seat when I have made my final points. I refer back to what Mr. Speaker has told us to do in connection with how we project our image outside this place and about the way in which we are supposed to encourage people to have faith in the democratic process. I take my prompt on this from the hon. Member for Bury, North. If we are talking about what is prompting hon. Members to speak, I must advise the House that Opposition Members are concerned about acts of terrorism. There is nothing wrong with our wanting to debate that in great detail.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) has said, we often hear things in the Chamber of which we were not previously aware and to which we want to respond. That is perfectly fair. Depriving Opposition Members of making their contributions may help the Government to win in the short term, but they should think about what they are doing to the democratic process in the long term. Far too often in the past 11 years this House of democracy—we tell the whole world that we are the mother of democracy—has had its democratic rights removed. The Government may be using their majority to further that process now, but as long as we are the Opposition, we shall use our time and our rights to object to that.

Mr. Redmond: I oppose the closure motion, and I am surprised that it was moved after our short consideration of the Lords amendments. I am interested in the security of my constituents, of the people of Great Britain and of people throughout the world, and it is a tragedy that our debates have been interrupted. Some of the controversy that seems to be developing could have been avoided if a more reasonable attitude had been adopted by the

Minister. It is disgusting to speak for only two minutes on a large group of Lords amendments. It seems that the Minister seeks to treat the House with contempt.

I believe that we can complete our consideration of the Lords amendments tonight. If Conservative Members are interested in security for their constituents and for the constituents of other hon. Members, they should vote against the closure motion. There is no reason why we should not continue to discuss the Lords amendments. We could make progress in another two or two-and-a-half hours of debate. I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you can recall many occasions when far less progress was made than that which has been achieved tonight.

It seems that the Government are not prepared to listen to arguments that are directed against Government legislation. That is a tragedy. The Government are not prepared to practise what they preach to the rest of the world. They should remember that they tell others to follow the example set by the Mother of Parliaments. They are setting a disgusting example tonight.

It appears that hon. Members want to go to bed instead of discussing safety and security. Surely they recognise that important issues are before us and—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) wishes to intervene, I shall give way to him.

Mr. Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes): The hon. Gentleman talks about hon. Members going home to bed. The Labour party has 200-plus Members in this place, yet only 17 of them participated in the previous Division. About 95 per cent. of Labour Members are now tucked up in bed.

Mr. Redmond: I listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman's intervention. There is an old saying about "all wind" and so on. The hon. Gentleman yapped about the number of Labour Members currently in the House and the number of Conservative Members who are present. He should understand that the Government are keeping up their lads for their nightcaps. There is an important difference between quality and quantity. If the hon. Gentleman is interested in the safety and security of his constituents, he should support the Opposition when we vote against the closure. He should have paid more attention to our proceedings and taken his place a little earlier to listen to some of our discussions.

Perhaps the hon. Gentleman likes people to tell lies on behalf of the state. Many things come to light because people have told lies. People have been put in prison as a result of telling lies. He may be prepared to tolerate the telling of lies, but I am not. I want honesty. I want truthfulness.

The hon. Gentleman wants to give management a blank cheque with which to get out of its predicament, but the same hon. Gentleman has voted time and again to withdraw the rights for which people have fought over the years. I dare say that, given the chance, he would introduce legislation to take away the vote from the good women of this country. That is the typical, arrogant attitude of the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes.

Mr. Hood: The hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown), with whom my hon. Friend disagreed, was probably influenced by his trips to South Africa, which my hon. Friend and I both know quite a lot about.

Has my hon. Friend noticed—obviously Conservative Members have not—that while the motion to adjourn is being debated, the Whips have disappeared? I wonder where they are.

Mr. Nellist: On the phone.

Mr. Hood: Yes, on the phone. We shall see the Minister come back with wax in his eyes. A Minister walked through the Chamber five minutes ago who had been pulled out of his bed. There have been so many Tories in the House tonight—the Whips are on the phone now getting them back so that they have 100 Members to win the closure motion. That is how confident the Tory Whips are of the number of Tory Members present.

Mr. Redmond: It could well be that the Whips had wax in their eyes, but I should have liked to see a tear or two. It takes emotions to create tears and, unfortunately, Conservative Whips do not have the sort of emotions to bring tears to their eyes.

Mr. Nellist: I will. I wonder if my hon. Friend agrees that the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown), who does such a wonderful impersonation of B'stard that it amazes me every time—[HON. MEMBERS: "Of what?"]—of B'stard, a character on television with which you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, may not be familiar——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that I heard the hon. Gentleman use an unparliamentary expression in relation to another hon. Member. Can he assure me that that is not so?

Mr. Nellist: B'stard is a character in a television serial, with which you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, may be unfamiliar. There is an apostrophe in the word, which is not "bastard" but "B'stard"—the name of a Tory Member of Parliament in a television series, which I can highly recommend and which most of my hon. Friends enjoy watching.

I was going to ask my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) whether he thought that the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes was wrong to complain that only 17 Labour Members were present for the debate. Does not he agree that if 17 of us can keep in the Chamber nearly 100 Members from a party that always tries to give us lectures about productivity, we must be doing something right?

Mr. Redmond: I am not sure whether to continue along those lines, but I should have hoped that hon. Members would be in the Chamber listening. I had better not repeat the name of the television character because I have a lisp and might not pronounce it correctly. I should not want you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to jump down my throat. It is an excellent show, but unfortunately, because of your onerous duties in the Chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you do not get the opportunity to see it. You should because the character represents one or two Conservative Members. I am sure that the public, having seen what has taken place here this evening on the Bill, will draw similarities between that show and what is going on here.

Mr. Bell: My hon. Friend is making an interesting and important contribution on why the debate should continue. However, when the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) made his interesting contribution and talked of 17 Opposition Members voting on the previous amendment, was not he misdirected? I made it

[Mr. Bell]

clear that my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes), the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) and I were in the Chamber so that when this debate came to its proper conclusion we could then debate the Finance Bill provisions which are important to my constituents, and the constituents of the hon. Member for Stockton, South. The hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes was under a misapprehension when he referred to 17 Labour Members voting on the previous amendment.

Mr. Redmond: Unfortunately, young lads have a tendency not to listen, and when they do not listen they do not understand what is going on around them. One of the reasons——

2.45 am

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Tim Renton) *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 112, Noes 17.

Division No. 248] **[2.46 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Batiste, Spencer
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raffan, Keith
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Wallace, James
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nicholas Baker and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Bell, Stuart
Buckley, George J.
Cryer, Bob
Dixon, Don
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Illsley, Eric
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Meale, Alan
Nellist, Dave
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Redmond, Martin
Skinner, Dennis
Snape, Peter
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Jimmy Hood and
Mr. Harry Cohen.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Bell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must first put the next Question. I shall take the point of order after that.

Question put accordingly, That the debate be now adjourned:—

The House divided: Ayes 112, Noes 19.

Division No. 249] **[2.57 am**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Batiste, Spencer
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steve
Page, Richard
Paice, James

Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey	Thurnham, Peter
Porter, David *(Waveney)*	Twinn, Dr Ian
Raffan, Keith	Wallace, James
Renton, Rt Hon Tim	Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*	Watts, John
Sackville, Hon Tom	Wells, Bowen
Shaw, David *(Dover)*	Wheeler, Sir John
Shelton, Sir William	Widdecombe, Ann
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*	Wilkinson, John
Stevens, Lewis	Winterton, Mrs Ann
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*	Wood, Timothy
Summerson, Hugo	
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*	**Tellers for the Ayes:**
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*	**Mr. Nicholas Baker and**
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*	**Mr. Irvine Patnick.**

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Bell, Stuart	Meale, Alan
Buckley, George J.	Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Cohen, Harry	Skinner, Dennis
Cryer, Bob	Snape, Peter
Dixon, Don	Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Fisher, Mark	
Foster, Derek	**Tellers for the Noes:**
Haynes, Frank	**Mr. Dave Nellist and**
Hood, Jimmy	**Mr. Martin Redmond.**
Illsley, Eric	

Question accordingly agreed to.

Debate to be resumed this day.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you will have seen tonight from your own observations, the business of the House, as conducted by the Government, has been a complete shambles. The Government Chief Whip has had to organise telephone communications to 60 or 70 Members.

In view of that, I wonder whether you, Sir, have had a request from a senior Minister—perhaps the Prime Minister—to make a statement on the disorganisation of the Government business and the possibility of an early dissolution so that we can get a Government to organise the business and get some decent legislation through.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There has been no such request.

Mr. Bell: Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I understand it, we shall not now be debating the Finance Bill *[Money]* (No. 2) motion or the Procedure (Future Taxation) (No. 2) motion. If that is so, have the Government notified you of any business statement to put the business of the House, which has been so disrupted and disjointed tonight, back on the rails? Has a senior Minister told you that there will be a business statement on when we will be able to debate these orders?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is jumping the gun a bit because I have not put the Question on those motions, which must be moved by a member of the Government. If they are not, the hon. Gentleman will be aware that tomorrow—or is it today?—a business statement will be made and he may have an opportunity to ask a question about that.

We now move to motion No. 4, Finance Bill *[Money]* (No. 2).

Lords Commissioner to the Treasury (Mr. John M. Taylor): Not moved.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I shall complete the motions on the Order Paper. Motion No. 5, Procedure (Future Taxation) (No. 2).

Mr. Taylor: Not moved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Motion No. 6, Ways and Means.

Mr. Taylor: Not moved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Motion No. 7, Ways and Means.

Mr. Taylor: Not moved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Motion No. 8, Ways and Means.

Mr. Taylor: Not moved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Motion No. 9, Organic Food.

Mr. Taylor: Not moved.

Mr. Norris: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. May I seek your guidance on the parliamentary use of the term unutterable humbug? Tonight, a series of appallingly inept speeches were made by Opposition Members, manufacturing the most ludicrous arguments on issues about which they had not expressed the slightest interest at any other stage of the Bill. They have caused a measure dealing with the extremely serious issue of international terrorism to be postponed. Is it appropriate for me to place on the record that such conduct by the Opposition, who cannot be controlled by their party Whips, is evidence of unutterable humbug?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has used the phrase, which sometimes is regarded as rather endearing.

Mr. Nellist: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do not you agree that the Government have postponed the legislation? They have moved the closure and a progress motion that the debate stand over to a further day. The Opposition were prepared, if necessary, to scrutinise the Bill through the night. If not all of us, certainly one or two of us would not accept the accusation made by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) that we are not concerned about matters such as safety. For seven years, I have brought before Parliament safety issues affecting air and other forms of transport.

Mr. Michael Brown: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall take the hon. Gentleman's point of order, but the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is sitting patiently and I am anxious to hear what he wants to say.

Mr. Brown: I do not know what the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) and his colleagues were doing tonight. The Bill was passed on Second and Third Reading without a Division, presumably because it was regarded by all hon. Members as vital to air and maritime safety. Is it in order for one or two hon. Members who did not speak on Second or Third Reading to seek, for reasons other than the safety of passengers travelling on aeroplanes, to disrupt the safety of passengers in the way that has been done tonight?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We cannot return to debate a matter that the House has already decided. We must get on with the Adjournment.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it a different point of order?

Mr. Skinner: Yes.

Speeches come in all shapes and sizes, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker—you have to hear a lot of them. But I take great exception to the behaviour of the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris). He should not come here and lecture us about making speeches. He made one last week when he had been to a dinner party with Mr. Speaker, who offended him—very slightly, but it upset him. He spoke against the Government for a quarter of an hour or so, and then, when we had a Division, he ran away.

If hon. Members wish to talk about wasting time, there is a prime example. If anyone was engaging in humbug, the hon. Gentleman was doing so last week.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is high time that we got on with the Adjournment.

Natural History Museum

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. John M. Taylor.]*

3.15 am

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): This is the first debate on the problems of the natural history museum since the time of Victoria and Albert. The director and senior curators were in the Gallery until 2 am, when, naturally —having a day's work to do—they went to their beds. They could be forgiven for thinking that the House of Commons contains some very curious and unusual specimens.

I spent some 10 hours attending the recent defence debates, and, indeed, participated. I say that to put the problems of the natural history museum in context. I argued the case for ending our main battle tank programme. Getting rid of one tank would alleviate the cost of the crisis in south Kensington; getting rid of two would restore south Kensington to its former level of ability to carry out its programmes. Getting rid of three would, it is reckoned, fulfil the obligations of south Kensington and Britain to the world: in this context, they are very real.

The armies of Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Yeltsin, rolling across the north German plain, are not now the main threat to this country. The real peril posed to Britain—and Europe—is global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer, acid rain and other environmental problems. South Kensington can provide the crucial raw material for the battle against that threat.

The Minister has received a number of letters from all around the world—from Paris, Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki and Washington—all pleading the case for the natural history museum. Let me quote just one, from Cardiff: as a former beekeeper, I think it appropriate. Dr. Paxton writes:

> "I wish to bring to your attention my deep concern over the proposed course of action detailed in the Corporate Plan concerning the termination of taxonomic work on bees and wasps at the Natural History Museum.
>
> Bees and wasps are important components of our fauna, not only as entities in their own rights but also as vital pollinators of a wide range of wild plants. In addition, there are growing agricultural industries based upon the uses of bees and wasps (e.g. honey production, pollination of agricultural crops). Over the past 8 years, whist a PhD student and subesequently whilst lecturing at UWC Cardiff in the Bee Research Unit, I have often required the taxonomic skills of those at the Natural History Museum concerned with bees and wasps for my personal researches. The Bee Research Unit at Cardiff has a growing number of students, a product of the increased awareness of the role and importance of bees both in agriculture and conservation throughout the world. They, too, have made good use of the excellent and unique expertise in bees and wasps at the Natural History Museum. I feel that this expertise is well worth maintaining."

One of the hardest-hit sections in entomology is hymenoptera where research on most of the aculeate forms would be closed down under the plan. Bees, of course, are the most important of insect pollinators and stinging wasps, which are the bird of prey of the insect world, are important predators. Both groups are therefore of first-class environmental significance.

The hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) will bear out the fact, because he was with me at

the post office, that this evening I opened two letters from a small collection of mail. Professor Exley of the university of Queensland wrote:

"As an entomologist, I am fully aware of the enormous contribution the Museum has made to our knowledge of insects. Its significance is that the collections contain specimens from all over the world so that international workers need only travel to one place to gain a perspective of the world fauna. The acquisition of specimens is not very useful unless they are made accessible and how can that be if staff is cut too drastically?"

He continued:

"I can't understand how you can have an aim concerning quality of the environment and simultaneously stop research on bees, wasps, bugs, weevils, lacewings and spiders. Lacewings, spiders and wasps are major predators and bees are largely responsible for the pollination of flowering plants. All these insect groups have enormous impact on the environment.

It seems especially ridiculous that just when the world seems to be growing aware of the ecological importance of aculeate Hymenoptera, the largest world collection of these insects is to be kept on a care and maintenance basis only."

Dr. Packer of York university in Ontario, Canada, wrote:

"It is sheer sacrilege to consider defiling such a globally important institution in this manner—an act of governmental vandalism that will shame the nation as much as the acts of football barbarians, but with far more serious long term repercussions."

That concerned view among informed people can be repeated time and again.

Last Monday, 11 June, I spoke for 18 minutes, setting out the whole case. This evening, it is more important to hear the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) and the Minister.

3.23 am

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Does the hon. Member have the agreement of the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) and the Minister to speak?

Mr. Dalyell: Yes.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Mark Fisher.

Mr. Fisher: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) and to the Minister for allowing me to intervene in this short debate. I am sure that all those people in this country and elsewhere who care about the natural history museum, Britain's scientific heritage and the quality of our national museums will thank my hon. Friend for securing this debate and for the way that he introduced it.

I have one question for the Minister. I remind him of the question that the Senate of Scientists at the Smithsonian institute in Washington put to him in a letter of 14 June:

"Surely Britain can find a place for the primary research and public education that have brought the NHM world renown and act as a barometer of the cultural health of the nation?"

The answer appears to be no. The museum is being forced to cut 15 per cent. of its scientific staff, crucial skill departments, such as its exhibition in-house unit—which has won awards for the superb creepy-crawlies exhibition —and the specialisms that my hon. Friend outlined.

The reason is that the museum has to save £2 million each year. The cuts will enable it to save that sum. Who is to blame? The Government are to blame. The chairman of the museum's trustees, Sir Walter Bodmer, writing on 14 June in *Nature*, said:

"The essence of our financial problem is that the Government's grant in aid will not compensate adequately for inflation".

Sir Walter is not a politically motivated man—he is an excellent and well-respected chairman of the museum's trustees—yet he makes it clear where the responsibility lies and what is the cause of the cuts.

The question for the Minister, to which the whole scientific world and the whole museum world needs an answer, is whether the Government will fund adequately this great museum. Will they fund it in such a way as not just to ensure the safety of its 67 million specimens but also to ensure that it can continue and develop its scientific research? Much is at stake, not only for the natural history museum but also for the quality of scholarship and research in all our national museums. The millions of people who have visited the natural history museum and our other great national museums wait for reassurance that funds will be found to maintain the international reputation of our scientific culture.

3.26 am

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): I congratulate the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on obtaining this debate on a very important issue: the natural history museum and its objectives and priorities. I welcome it. All hon. Members acknowledge the hon. Gentleman's interest and expertise in scientific matters. It is significant that at this late hour the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) is also here, as well as my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) who has conveyed to me a number of letters on the subject that he has received from constituents. I am impressed that so many hon. Members are present at this hour.

Let me take this opportunity—I am glad to have it—to set the scene in the broadest context that I can. I hope that the hon. Member for Linlithgow will find it helpful.

I am in no doubt, and I am sure hon. Members on both sides of the House will agree, that in the natural history museum the nation has a great asset. On my visits to the museum I am always highly impressed by the quality of its staff and its high standards of display, curation and research. It is second to none. This applies when measured on a national or an international scale. The natural history museum is an institution of which we can all feel very proud: a British museum leading the world in its field.

Under the 1963 Act the museum has a statutory duty to care for the nation's natural history collection. Responsibility for setting priorities and taking decisions on the museum's approach to fulfilling that statutory duty lies with the director and trustees.

It is the museum's announcement on 23 April 1990 of priorities and decisions in its corporate plan that has given rise to the concern expressed by the hon. Gentleman. I shall try to set the scene and answer some of his questions.

The Government's record on funding the natural history museum is good. Reflecting my commitment to the value of the museum's work, I announced last November a 16·5 per cent. increase in its total grant in aid to a new 1990-91 figure of £25·2 million, including an 11·4 per cent. increase in running costs and provision for the replacement of its Ruislip store.

[Mr. Richard Luce]

Over the past 10 years the Government's contribution has risen by 12·8 per cent. in real terms, but I must make it absolutely plain that this figure includes funding for the geological museum which the natural history museum took over in 1985 and the purchase of office supplies previously covered by Crown Suppliers. That is in addition to the substantial resources which the museum has raised. These have risen from £4·6 million in 1989-90 to a projected £6·8 million in 1990-91. They now account for over 21 per cent. of the museum's total resources. I warmly congratulate the museum on its increasing success in this area and the efforts that it is making. I am encouraged by the way in which it is developing its plural funding. While, like all institutions, the museum has to live within its means and is determined to do so, the changes it is now proposing are not primarily about money but about reassessing the museum's objectives and priorities.

In a recent article in *Nature*, Sir Walter Bodmer, the chairman of the trustees of the museum to whom the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) referred and who is an outstandingly good chairman, said:

"It would be impossible to carry out effective research on all the groups of organisms in the museum's collections, even if our resources for research were doubled or trebled."

The proposed changes are set out in the museum's 1990 corporate plan, which looks forward at least five years. The key objectives of the reorganisation proposed in that corporate plan are to strengthen curation; to focus research effort more sharply into areas of particular importance; to improve the management of the collections; and to develop exhibition facilities and other services for all who use the museum. Those aims are fully in line with the museum's statutory duties. Their object is not just to maintain but to improve the care and maintenance of the nation's natural history collection of over 67 million specimens, as well as the largest natural history library in the world.

As Sir Walter explains:

"The museum supports a major research programme based on its collections, with taxonomy as its central theme ... taxonomy is the science of classification of living organisms and, with its evolutionary basis, provides the underpinning to almost all biological research."

Mr. Dalyell: Does not that make the museum a special financial case for funds because so many other institutions depend on it, as do other countries? Is not it part of Britain's worldwide international obligation?

Mr. Luce: Yes. In no way do I underestimate the significance and importance of the research that is carried out, some of which is unique because of the nature of the institution. If the hon. Gentleman allows me to continue I shall be able to reflect on some of the points he raised.

The letters that I have received from all parts of the world clearly demonstrate the museum's wide sphere of influence in taxonomy. There is no doubt about that.

It is generally recognised that a focus for taxonomic research in the United Kingdom is vital. The natural history museum provides that focus and will continue to do so. Taxonomy will continue to pervade all the museum's scientific work. But, as Sir Walter Bodmer has said, no institution can carry out effective research across the whole range of animal and plant life. It is obviously necessary to pick and choose. The museum intends to concentrate its research efforts primarily into a series of six scientific programmes that emphasise the unique and vital contribution its collections and expertise make to issues of contemporary human concern. Those six programmes will be biodiversity; environmental quality—which the hon. Gentleman mentioned; living resources; mineral resources; human health and human origins. Under those broad headings come many specific areas of research. Those programmes have been designed to respond to changing needs and the museum believes that by their interdisciplinary nature they will enhance co-operation between the museum and other national and international organisations.

The museum has also announced that for the foreseeable future it will cease or severely restrict research in some areas—I stress that—of botany, entomology, mineralogy, palaeontology and zoology. But I should stress that there will be no diminution of the care and maintenance of all the museum's collections. While in-house research may be curtailed, I also emphasise that the museum's collections will continue to be available to anyone who wants to work on them. That goes a considerable way towards answering the important letter from Dr. Paxton in Cardiff, from which the hon. Member for Linlithgow quoted, about the availability of research facilities and the museum's care and maintenance policies. I will of course have that point more closely looked into and I hope in a moment to expand on what I intend to do.

Mr. Dalyell: If people are given retirement or made redundant or have to leave the museum for financial reasons, in practice the availability is that much less. I am saddened that some scholars who have given a lifetime of service have been given early retirement. That is terribly sad.

Mr. Luce: I will reflect briefly in a moment on the staffing situation.

It is important that curatorial skills will not only be maintained but enhanced. A more effective and efficient advisory service will be provided for all those who use the museum. In addition, the museum will continue to provide unique training for scientists drawn from this country and worldwide.

In the context of the comments made by the hon. Member for Linlithgow, it is perfectly possible for the museum to apply for grants and respond to requests for research from any relevant source, whatever those sources may be, including universities or research councils, so long as the proposed research fits within the museum's objectives. That is clear and I have given the trustees a clear instruction that that is possible and people can make applications. That would be in addition to the research that I have already said will continue.

Mr. Dalyell: That is important and I support the Minister on that.

Mr. Luce: Naturally the announcement of those plans has generated a lively discussion about the relative priorities that should be accorded to particular areas of research at the museum. I know that the museum is in close touch with the scientific community on those points. Indeed, last Friday a special meeting was arranged at the museum to discuss those issues.

As the director, Dr. Chalmers, told the meeting on Friday, the museum is also in discussion with the Government's chief scientific adviser, as are my officials. I

have asked the adviser to keep me informed of the museum's position in relation to the United Kingdom's science base. I hope that the hon. Member for Linlithgow appreciates the importance of that.

Mr. Dalyell: Is that Professor Stewart?

Mr. Luce: No, Sir John Fairclough, the chief scientific adviser to the Government. I shall be calling a further meeting with Sir Walter Bodmer and Dr. Chalmers to discuss the corporate strategy and the wider issues.

To achieve the aims that the museum has clearly identified and published it has to adapt. I understand that the museum intends to make more appointments on a fixed-term basis, and that will be reflected in a reduction in permanent posts. It is important to make that clear, because that point has not perhaps been sufficiently clear hitherto.

The necessary reductions will be achieved, where possible, by natural wastage and through some redeployment within the museum. The detailed arrangements are, of course, matters for the director and the trustees.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow referred to other letters and he has sent me copies of communications that he has received. I assure him that I will take the views that have been expressed extremely seriously in the discussions that I will be having with the chairman of the natural history museum and the director, Dr. Chalmers. I believe the staff do an outstanding job. We are very fortunate to have them. They are taking any representations extremely seriously as I requested that they should and they are looking into all the points that are raised. In my meeting with Sir Walter Bodmer, I shall then have the opportunity to go through many of these issues and discuss the wider implications.

Major changes of the kind proposed at the natural history museum are inevitably difficult to make and, of course, can be painful. I should therefore like to make clear my appreciation of the museum's staff and the valuable work they do. I am sure that the proposed changes will take the museum into the 1990s with renewed vigour and contribute to my overall aim of ensuring that the highest standards of excellence in scholarship and research are allied to maximum public access to the museum's treasures. It is by giving people today the chance to see and enjoy the museum's unique collections that we shall ensure a healthy future for scholarship and research in natural history.

I want to give the hon. Member for Linlithgow the broadest possible answer to his questions on this important issue. He may already have this document but, if not, I shall make it available to him because I should like him to see the extensive range of research that the museum is planning to undertake in the years ahead. I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's concern that certain areas will be jeopardised. As I have already said, the wider implications of that will be examined carefully. I urge him to look at the document because it illustrates that within the six research programmes that I have highlighted there is a wide diversity of research to be carried out, covering a wide range of issues. I find it most impressive. I assure the hon. Gentleman that I attach great importance to the debate that he has launched today and that I shall take what he has said fully into account.

Mr. Fisher: Much of what the Minister has said today will provide considerable reassurance and be worth studying. People around the museum and in the science world will read carefully what he has said. However, he has given the impression that the changes in the corporate plan were positive changes, taken for scientific reasons, whereas the corporate plan and what Sir Walter wrote in *Nature* magazine last week make it clear that the museum has to take this action to save £2 million. The museum has made it clear on all occasions that if it was adequately funded by the Government, it would not have to make these extremely difficult scientific decisions. The Minister must address that point. His remarks have—inadvertently—addressed only the scientific element, on which he has given a reasonable and helpful reply, but will he address the fact that it is his Government's neglect and underfunding that have put the museum in the position of having to make these difficult scientific choices?

Mr. Luce: I shall reiterate what I said at the beginning. It is not reasonable to suggest that the Government are underfunding in a year when we have increased funding by 16·5 per cent., which is a substantial increase and includes an increase of 11·4 per cent. for the running costs. It is not reasonable to suggest that that is gross underfunding. It shows the significance that we attach to the work of the natural history museum.

However, the hon. Gentleman is right about the corporate plan. I ask each national museum and gallery to look at a corporate strategy, which includes every aspect of their work, including, for example, accessibility to the public, the extent to which they make their scholarship and research available to the public, and their exhibitions. After all, they need to do a great deal of work on their exhibitions. I understand that it is a priority. I shall take the corporate strategy carefully into account. As hon. Members know, it looks five years ahead and, as they also know, with the help of the Treasury, I plan budgets for three years ahead. I shall take the views expressed in the corporate strategy seriously into account before reaching a final decision about the next three years' funding.

Mr. Dalyell: I, too, think that the Minister has given a helpful answer tonight. I say that publicly and privately —and many things in it can be built on. However, I am bothered about his use of the word "jeopardised" because what are jeopardised are important collections and research availability on the most vital matters affecting the global environment, such as the diatoms and the whole question of entymology. Some of those areas are being threatened, yet they are the very lifeblood of increasingly important sciences.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) said from the Opposition Front Bench, anyone who sees the 25 million specimens in spirits will understand that someone has to maintain them. They are biodegradable. They go back to the time of Captain Cook. They are treasures of immense importance and science can make use of them. A comparison has to be made with other spending and there are many other yardsticks, but we are dealing with a vital lifeblood.

Mr. Luce: I think that the hon. Gentleman's intervention pinpoints the importance that I, Sir Walter Bodmer, and the chief scientific adviser attach to assessing the wider implications. I believe that that assessment is the key and that it must be given serious consideration. I must

[Mr. Luce]

defend the natural history museum. It has to take decisions within its resources and decide its priorities. I must assess what it sets out in the corporate strategy and take its views seriously into account. I have already undertaken to the hon. Gentleman that that is something that I shall do.

Mr. Dalyell: I have a particular comment to make, and it involves the Prime Minister. I am not getting at her. In 1981, she confirmed to me, as she said in 1979, that she is the Minister who is responsible for co-ordinating science——

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at fifteen minutes to Four o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 21 June 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

SOUTH YORKSHIRE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (NO. 2) BILL
(By Order)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [20 June], That this House doth agree with the Lords in their Amendments.

Lords amendments agreed to.

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

Order for consideration of Lords amendments read.

To be considered on Monday 25 June at Seven o'clock.

REDBRIDGE LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL.
(By Order)

Order for consideration of Lords amendments read.

To be considered on Thursday 28 June.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [26 February],

That the Bill be now considered.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 28 June.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

MEDWAY TUNNEL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for consideration, as amended, read.

To be considered on Thursday 28 June.

Mr. Speaker: As all the remaining private Bills set down for Second Reading have blocking motions, with the leave of the House I shall put them as a single group.

CATTEWATER RECLAMATION BILL *(By Order)*

SHARD BRIDGE BILL *(By Order)*

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL
[Lords] (By Order)

LONDON UNDERGROUND BILL *(By Order)*

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 28 June.

EXMOUTH DOCKS BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [29 March],

That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 28 June.

GREAT YARMOUTH PORT AUTHORITY BILL *[Lords]*
(By Order)

HEATHROW EXPRESS RAILWAYS BILL *[Lords]*
(By Order)

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 28 June.

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL
(By Order)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [10 May],

That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 28 June.

SOUTHAMPTON RAPID TRANSIT BILL *[Lords]*
(By Order)

PORT OF TYNE BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 28 June.

Oral Answers to Questions

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cross-border Security

1. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the Irish Prime Minister to discuss cross-border security.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Brooke): I called briefly on the Taoiseach when I visited Dublin on 28 May. The usual forum for discussing cross-border security issues is, however, the Anglo-Irish Conference, the last meeting of which took place on 19 April. A copy of the joint statement issued after that meeting has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Marshall: Does my right hon. Friend agree that terrorism will be defeated only when there is no haven for terrorists anywhere in Ireland? In view of that, will he raise with the Irish Prime Minister the failures of the Republic in respect of extradition?

Mr. Brooke: I hope that my hon. Friend will accept an amendment to his statement. Terrorism will be defeated only when there is no safe haven for terrorists anywhere. On the second part of his question, we discussed extradition at great length at the Anglo-Irish Conference on 19 April, as a result of which a working party of officials was set up to discuss and review the present provisions against terrorism.

Mr. Maginnis: Would not it be better if those who talk about cross-border security were advised to regard it in cross-frontier terms? That would bring home to them the international aspect of terrorism and perhaps prompt them to think about the lack of co-operation on extradition between the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic and West Germany. Why should hon. Members believe that there is any difference in attitude between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland in terms of the land frontier between north and south when we see what happens in the courts of the Irish Republic?

Mr. Brooke: I understand the hon. Gentleman's question, but the heart of the problem lies in the legislation rather than the action taken by the courts. We regard the Irish judiciary as independent in the same way as we hope that the Republic regards our judiciary as independent. The working group of officials will consider the legislation.

Mr. Dykes: I hope to remain meticulously in order, Mr. Speaker, but I should say that an explosion took place at an air force base in my constituency this morning. Does my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State agree that it is important to have further discussions with the Ministry of Defence about cross-border security in Northern Ireland and security on the mainland? We must ensure that there is increasingly effective co-operation with the Irish Republic on those matters in view of the obvious connection between IRA terrorism in the island of Ireland and the recent explosions on the mainland. Fortunately, in my constituency there were no casualties.

Mr. Brooke: I entirely appreciate why my hon. Friend raises the sad event that occurred in his constituency today. We must all be grateful that no serious inuries arose. The security of defence bases is more a question for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and, of course, I shall draw his attention to it.

Mr. McNamara: The Secretary of State rightly said that there should be no safe haven for terrorists anywhere, so will he ask his right hon. Friends to raise with the Trevi group the possibility of a criminal law jurisdiction agreement for the Community? We would then be able to avoid the confrontations that occasionally arise between the Irish and British Governments on extradition. The right hon. Gentleman should remember that there are a lot of other places where people have been awaiting extradition for a long time—three IRA suspects in France are awaiting extradition to West Germany. It is important to remember that the problem is not one between us and the Republic of Ireland, but is a European one, and it should be dealt with on that basis.

Mr. Brooke: I read with interest the article that the hon. Gentleman contributed the other day along those lines. All suggestions as to how we achieve greater collective co-operation against terrorism are valuable and no doubt the Trevi group will consider suggestions such as the hon. Gentleman has mentioned.

Cultural Heritage

2. **Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has to develop the cultural heritage of Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Dr. Brian Mawhinney): Last year I introduced the cultural traditions programme aimed at promoting the greater understanding and appreciation of the shared cultural heritage of Northern Ireland and of its diversities. The budget this year is about £1·4 million.

In addition, as part of education reform in Northern Ireland, cultural heritage will be taught as a compulsory cross-curricular theme. The key aim is to enable pupils to know about, understand and evaluate the diverse and distinctive aspects of their cultural heritage.

Dr. Woodcock: Does my hon. Friend agree that that programme and those which I hope he will introduce in the future can make a significant contribution to breaking down the alienation between the two communities?

Dr. Mawhinney: Many people would agree that it is unfortunate that aspects of Northern Ireland's cultural traditions have become politicised. There is much to be gained through understanding and appreciating the richness of the cultural diversity in Northern Ireland, and we are seeking to promote that.

Mr. Trimble: Will the Minister assure us that the programme will pay due regard to the cultural heritage of the majority of people in Northern Ireland? The Ulster museum is currently putting on an exhibition entitled "Kings in Conflict" which helps to repair the serious omissions caused by the political censorship of the exhibition held in London in 1988. Will he take steps to cover the financial loss with which the Ulster museum is threatened which is almost entirely due to the failure of the museum in Dublin to honour its undertakings to show the exhibition there, too?

Dr. Mawhinney: The answer to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question is yes. As to the second part, we are already involved in helping to support the "Kings in Conflict" exhibition.

Mr. Kilfedder: May I congratulate the Minister on the community funding? He is aware that much needs to be done to promote a greater interest in the cultural heritage of Northern Ireland which, together with the rest of Ireland, is intermingled with that of Britain and Scotland. That has been so throughout the centuries and even before Christian times—St. Patrick was not the first Brit to go to Ireland. Does he agree that the more people become aware of that rich cultural heritage, the closer together people will come in Northern Ireland? Perhaps that closeness would also be shared between the people of Ireland and Britain.

Dr. Mawhinney: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his kind personal remarks. I entirely agree with his analysis and appreciate his support for a variety of cross-community and cross-cultural activities over the years.

North Eastern Education and Libraries Board

3. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met representatives of the North Eastern education and libraries board to discuss educational provision.

Dr. Mawhinney: The last formal meeting was on 28 April 1989.

Mr. Barnes: Why are community workshops and training centres in Northern Ireland being forced out of the further education college sector? The North Eastern education and libraries board has announced the redundancy of 26 college lecturers. Should not there be proper consultation with the college lecturers so that their redeployment can be considered, the whole issue discussed and, even better, the crazy plan dropped?

Dr. Mawhinney: The hon. Gentleman has the first part of his supplementary question slightly wrong in that the

provision of training for young people is being discussed. There has been a considerable variation in colleges in quality of training and in the cost of youth training programme places, ranging from £2,000 to £7,000, although not related to quality.

The hon. Gentleman talks about 26 redundancies in the North Eastern board. I pay tribute to the board as one of the five in Northern Ireland which do an excellent job delivering education in schools and further education colleges. The hon. Gentleman will be pleased to know that, following consultation, there will not be 26 forced redundancies. Through natural wastage, redeployment and voluntary early retirement, there are likely to be only two redundancies.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Is the Minister aware that tonight on "Spotlight" there will be an exposure of a very serious matter that has arisen at the Derry youth and community workshop, headed by Mitchell M'Loughlin, one of the leaders of the IRA Sinn Fein, where £25,000 has gone missing this year? Will the Minister make a statement about that?

Dr. Mawhinney: I was not aware of that programme.

Mr. Beggs: As a former chairman of the North Eastern board, I welcome the interest that hon. Members are showing in it. Does the Minister agree that the board enjoys a high reputation with the teachers' unions for the sympathetic way in which it, with the support of the Department of Education, has dealt with redundancies?

Will the Minister also join me in advising employers in Great Britain and elsewhere who face shortages of highly skilled graduates, technicians and a well-educated work force, that the North Eastern board and we in Northern Ireland have been preparing our young people to meet the challenges of not only 1992 but the 21st century?

Will the Minister ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to urge the Industrial Development Board and other agencies associated with seeking inward investment to use the open invitation from the North Eastern board to them and their clients to visit our schools and colleges and see the skills and levels of achievement of all our young people?

Dr. Mawhinney: I am happy to endorse what the hon. Gentleman says about the good relationship between the North Eastern board and the schools and colleges in its area and the good practice there, some of which was established under his distinguished chairmanship.

I am happy to join the hon. Gentleman in pointing out to the rest of the United Kingdom the high quality of training which we believe will be enhanced by the new arrangements, and the opportunity not only for Northern Ireland young people to go to England, Scotland and Wales for jobs but for Great Britain firms to invest in Northern Ireland and make use of the skilled work force and the amenities there.

The hon. Gentleman will be pleased to know that within the past 48 hours the Parliamentary Under-Secretary and I have discussed the invitation to firms to visit schools in the North Eastern board area.

Mr. Alton: I congratulate the Minister on the additional provision that he has made for the Irish language in each of the five boards in Northern Ireland. What plans does he have to extend Irish language provision throughout the Province and what discussions is he currently having with representatives on that important matter?

Dr. Mawhinney: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for those remarks. The position of the Irish language is safeguarded in the education reform new curriculum proposals in Northern Ireland. In addition, as part of the cultural heritage and cultural traditions programme, extra money has been made available to the Ultach Trust, which is seeking to develop the Irish language in Northern Ireland in its cultural context. I welcome that, because, as with a number of other subjects in Northern Ireland, these issues should be removed from the political arena and put back in the cultural affairs arena where they belong.

Security

4. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation in Northern Ireland.

6. **Rev. Ian Paisley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

12. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation.

Mr. Brooke: Since I answered a similar question on 10 May 1990, there have been three deaths arising from the security situation in Northern Ireland. Mr. Patrick Boyle, a civilian, was murdered at his home by so-called loyalists, while Mr. James Sefton, a retired member of the RUC reserve, and his wife Ellen were killed in an under-car booby-trap attack carried out by republican terrorists. The whole House will join me in condemning those cowardly and brutal crimes.

However, large amounts of arms and explosives have been recovered, and in the first four months of this year the numbers of people charged by the police and convicted by the courts have increased over the same period in 1989.

Mr. Brown: We all abhor that carnage, but the Minister must know that there can be no solution in Ireland, particularly to the security issue, unless there is a political solution. There must be some movement towards that end, so will he consider withdrawing—perhaps on a phased basis—troops from Northern Ireland, especially Scots troops? *[Interruption.]* That would be helpful.

If the right hon. Gentleman wants to maintain peace he should encourage worker defence squads—*[Interruption.]*—composed of Catholics and workers. If he cannot accept that—for reasons which I understand—what about a United Nations peace-keeping force coming into the Province to control the situation? *[Interruption.]* That would give some credibility to the hope that one day the north will return to its normal place in political life and that both communities can act together against orange and green bosses.

Mr. Brooke: The work of the security forces must be complemented and reinforced by effective political, economic and social policies. In that sense I concur with the hon. Gentleman's remarks that political development is desirable.

As for the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's long question, although I do not question for a moment the sincerity with which he made his points, the reception that they got from the House suggested that not many hon. Members were in sympathy with him.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Has the Secretary of state given any attention to the threat issued in Bodenstown by Gerry Adams, the IRA Sinn Fein leader, and others, who said on Sunday that if there was any political progress in Northern Ireland towards devolution they would fiercely oppose it with all the power at their disposal? Does not that give the lie to the suggestion by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) that political discussions would bring IRA activities to an end?

What does the right hon. Gentleman think about "hot pursuit", which has been repudiated by the Taoiseach at a conference held with European Ministers?

Mr. Brooke: I believe that the words of Mr. Adams which the hon. Gentleman quoted show the contempt of the IRA and of Sinn Fein for political development without the use of violence. They also show the significance in Mr. Adams' mind of violence in the conduct of political affairs.

"Hot pursuit", which has arisen in the context of other European conversations because of other treaties that have been passed, is a subject which the Government will continue to keep on the agenda, but it requires discussion with the Government of the Republic.

Mr. Cryer: Does the Secretary of State accept that there has been a sad toll of carnage over 22 years, often resulting in the tragic loss of life of wholly innocent bystanders? Will he explain to the House any new initiative that is likely to end this carnage? Does he accept that outside the House there is widespread support for the phased removal of troops? Does he agree that all parties must be involved in negotiations to achieve that, even though I share the Government's reluctance to deal with some organisations? He should remember that in the case of Zimbabwe the Government overcame their reluctance to negotiate with Robert Mugabe and that led to a peaceful settlement at Lancaster house.

Mr. Brooke: The overriding task of the Government in Northern Ireland is to defeat terrorism from whichever side of the community it comes. I said in answer to the question by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) that the work of the security forces must be completed and reinforced by effective political, economic and social policies. The hon. Gentleman spoke about widespread support outside for the phased withdrawal of British troops. I do not think that he would find support for that proposition among those who look at these issues strategically. In reply to the hon. Gentleman's final proposition, I can tell him that the Government have made it clear that they have nothing to say to Sinn Fein while it continues to espouse violence.

Mr. Gow: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the chorus of calls from the Opposition for the withdrawal of soldiers from that part of the United Kingdom called Northern Ireland will only give encouragement to the IRA? Will my right hon. Friend explain to the House why, four and a half years after the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed, he has still not been able to reach an understanding with the Government of the Irish Republic which would give to the police and army in the Republic the right to pursue terrorists into the north and a similar right to our security forces to pursue suspected terrorists into the south?

Mr. Brooke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his initial observations with which I concur. In negotiations conducted under the agreement and within the conference on cross-border security arrangements, there are issues on which we can and have reached agreement with the Government of the Republic about cross-border activity. As I said in answer to an earlier question, we continue to pursue those subjects.

Mr. Hume: Given the knee-jerk and ill-informed reactions which we have again seen in the House today in relation to extradition from the Republic of Ireland, will the Secretary of State make clear the precise difference between the law on extradition in this country and that in the Republic of Ireland?

The right hon. Gentleman has spoken about the killings and the statements of regret by those who support the IRA about some of those killings. Does he recall my statement on 1 January that over the past 20 years 55 per cent. of all the people killed were innocent civilians going about their business and were the victims of so-called mistakes or tit-for-tat killings? The people who carry out that campaign know that one out of every two people that they kill will be an innocent civilian. They should be told that by everybody in the clearest possible terms. There is not a single injustice in the north of Ireland that justifies the taking of single life.

Mr. Brooke: On the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, he is right to suggest that the legislation in both countries derives from the convention. There are some differences in terms of the precise interpretation placed upon the legislation and that is one reason for the employment of the working group. The hon. Gentleman mentioned tit-for-tat killings. I think that every hon. Member will endorse what he said about that.

Mr. Bellingham: Further to the remarks of the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume), does my right hon. Friend agree that we must try to aim for a position in which there is no need for extradition between EEC member states?

Mr. Brooke: My hon. Friend opens an attractive vista. It may be too large to take in at first glance, but I shall return to it.

Mr. Ashdown: Will the Minister confirm, as he told me by letter, that a more extensive use of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act 1976 may well be applicable? What are the Government doing to put that into effect? Does he agree, as I think that he has also said, that the useful proposals put forward by the Progressive Democrats, the Government coalition partner, on how extradition legislation might be differently applied in the Republic, are helpful and constructive, and that the Government would be better advised to support those proposals than to indulge in another exercise of megaphone diplomacy?

Mr. Brooke: On the right hon. Gentleman's first question, I confirm what I said in correspondence. With regard to the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act, we consider carefully, on a case-by-case basis, the particular provisions that we might use in every case that we handle in conjunction with the Irish authorities.

Sir Antony Buck: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the security situation would be infinitely worse if it were not for the supreme professionalism of our armed forces in Northern Ireland, and the professionalism and, in many cases, heroism of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Brooke: I warmly welcome my hon. and learned Friend's words. Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom owe a great debt to the security forces for the manner in which the Northern Ireland community has been protected and has been allowed, in so far as has been possible, to live a normal life over the past 20 years.

Mr. McNamara: The Secretary of State will be aware that Her Majesty's Opposition support the use of the Army in Northern Ireland for as long as it is necessary to support the civil power in upholding the rule of law and to see that that is done impartially. Therefore, we should welcome the withdrawal of troops as a signal of an improvement in the situation in Northern Ireland, but until that time arises the Army must be present to support the work of the RUC.

Mr. Brooke: Again, the House will be grateful to the Opposition spokesman for making clear the official Opposition's position on that matter.

Electricity Supply (Rathlin)

5. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to provide mainland electricity supply for the island of Rathlin in County Antrim.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Richard Needham): Northern Ireland Electricity is presently giving active consideration to the matter.

Miss Hoey: I am sure that the Minister will agree that the proud island community of Rathlin has made enormous efforts to preserve its way of life and survival on the island. Does he further agree that there has been much talk, consultation and surveying, but little action to bring mainland electricity supply to Rathlin? When will he recognise that the people of Rathlin island deserve the same amenities and services as those living in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Needham: I have some sympathy with what the hon. Lady says. There has been too much talk and too little action on the matter. NIE has appointed a project manager and within the next couple of months we shall have worked out the best way of getting electricity to the island. We must also consider the capital cost and who will pay for it. We shall try to find ways of spreading the cost as widely as possible to prevent the islanders bearing too large a proportion of it and without making it uneconomic. I am determined to do everything that I can to bring the matter to a conclusion.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Is the Minister aware that there were 1,000 people in Rathlin at the turn of the century but that there are now only 100? Is it his policy to keep people on the island of Rathlin? If so, will he stop setting up projects and take action so that they can have the facilities that they deserve, in the same way as any other part of Northern Ireland?

Mr. Needham: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his constituency interest in the matter. As I told the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey), of course I want to keep people on the island and to enable them to enjoy the quality of life that is available throughout the rest of Northern Ireland. That is what I am trying to achieve.

Fair Employment

7. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken to implement the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989.

Mr. Needham: The Fair Employment Commission and the Fair Employment Tribunal are both in operation, and encouraging results have been achieved both in the registration of employers and in the provision of their first monitoring returns.

Mr. Loyden: The Minister will be aware that discrimination in employment contributes to division in any community, but particularly in Northern Ireland. In view of the success that has been achieved with registration and monitoring, when will the Minister be able to make his first report to the House?

Mr. Needham: The monitoring phase will be completed in the next couple of months and we shall make the results available as soon as we can. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his comments. The 1989 Act is in place and is working, and employers and employees are responding to it. I am sure that the atmosphere that it is creating will make it easier for all of us who are working together to attract more investment and jobs to the Province.

Mr. Peter Robinson: Does the Minister realise how important it is that the information given by people to the Fair Employment Commission remains confidential? Was he disturbed to read, as I was, an article by Chris Ryder in a national newspaper saying that he had obtained access to the contents of a confidential investigation report by the Fair Employment Commission? As it is vital that such information is kept confidential, will the Minister order an inquiry, even to the extent of employing the RUC, to ask questions of the person in charge, Mr. Bill Cooper, and of his staff?

Mr. Needham: I agree that if the 1989 Act is to work properly, confidential information must be kept confidential. I shall raise with the commission the matters that the hon. Gentleman has brought to my attention.

Human Rights

8. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the protection of human rights in Northern Ireland.

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Cope): Human rights are already well protected in Northern Ireland, but we are always willing to consider proposals for strengthening existing safeguards.

Mr. Ross: Will the incorporation of the international convention on human rights in Northern Ireland legislation appear on the agenda of any of the three parallel discussions that the Minister hopes to have in the autumn?

Mr. Cope: That is possible, but as no agenda have yet been decided, I cannot guarantee that. The European convention on human rights establishes the right of individual petition, and so on, which the Government accept. Most of the rights that it contains are incorporated in our legislation.

Mr. Latham: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the most important human right to be protected in Northern Ireland is the right not to be blown up or murdered by IRA terrorists?

Mr. Cope: I absolutely confirm that. The worst violation of human rights is that done to the victims of terrorists.

Mr. Molyneaux: Given that for the past 18 years Northern Ireland has been governed and administered entirely by Ministers accountable to this House, what is the need for protecting human rights in Belfast as opposed to Birmingham?

Mr. Cope: I am not sure of the distinction that the right hon. Gentleman draws. We do our best to legislate to ensure that human rights are protected.

Rev. William McCrea: Bearing in mind the fact that the Minister has told the House that human rights are well protected within Northern Ireland, and accepting that the greatest human right to be protected is the right to live, will the Minister tell the House why it is that an increasing number of contractors in my constituency are daily threatened by the IRA, why men are forced into unemployment, why bombs are put under employees' cars, and why people are slaughtered? Is not it time that the Government brought the nightmare of terrorism to an end, so that the people of Ulster can enjoy the right to live?

Mr. Cope: We fight terrorism in all its forms, and I particularly deplore the terrorism aimed against contractors, to which the hon. Gentleman draws our attention. We are taking every step that we can to bring it to an end.

Community Workshops

9. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he next intends to meet representatives of the Northern Ireland Association of Community Workshops to discuss provision of community workshops.

Mr. Needham: I shall meet representatives of the community workshop network at a conference in mid-October.

Mr. Davies: Is the Minister aware that there is growing concern among community workshop managers that the Government foresee a diminishing role for them in the provision of youth training? Does the Minister agree that there is an increasing need for a more varied and higher-quality provision of youth training? When he next meets representatives of the association, will he take the opportunity to give them a categorical assurance of his commitment to them, and of their positive role in providing training?

Mr. Needham: I do not have to wait to meet the association; I can give the hon. Gentleman and the community workshop managers that assurance now. Community workshops in Northern Ireland do a very good job, but they have been expensive providers. They have not provided some of the qualifications that we would have looked for in training throughout Northern Ireland and some workshops are more expensive than others. We are looking for value for money, and increased, wider training. To that end, we shall support the workshops in evey way possible. I give the hon. Gentleman that assurance.

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: I refer to the corporate plan, as proposed by the Minister in the new document. Will he please let us know where the community workshops figure in that plan and whether it will be open for discussion with the community workshops involved?

Mr. Needham: Anything that we do with community workshops will be open to discussion. They provide training for a little over 2,000 people out of a total of 9,000 on the youth training programme. The key factor is to make certain that when youngsters leave, they have the skills and qualifications that will lead to employment, and we are working together to ensure that community workshops throughout Northern Ireland provide them as effectively and professionally as possible.

Mr. Jim Marshall: The Minister must be aware that morale among community workshop managers is low at the moment, and that there is increasing concern about the application of the new block funding scheme. Will he give an undertaking that, if it becomes apparent during this financial year that the new financial scheme is acting to the disadvantage of community workshops, he will review the scheme at the end of the financial year?

Mr. Needham: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's understanding of the workshops and his intervention, but I have to say to him that I do not accept that the morale of managers is as he says it is. Nor do I accept that the vast majority of them are not playing the best part that they can to work the new scheme, which will lead to increasing qualifications and skills, and therefore to increased employment. Of course, we shall consider with the managers the level of support that we are giving them, but they will have to ensure that they get as many of their youngsters as possible out into the private sector to be trained and thus earning fees for themselves. That will increase the amount of experience gained by young people, which they need to get jobs.

Strangford Lough

10. **Mr. John D. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what opportunity there will be for the residents around Strangford Lough in its future management following the declaration of the three areas of specific scientific interest for the lough.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Bottomley): Resident owners and users continue to manage their land.

Mr. Taylor: Is the Minister aware of the concern of many people around Strangford Lough about the declaration of the site of special scientific interest, and the proposals for a marine nature reserve? Does the Minister agree that the people who use the lough, those who farm around it and the residents should be involved in its management? I know that the Minister's officials met the

Strangford Lough Nature Conservation Association this morning, but does not he agree that the best prospects for conservation would be to involve the local people? Therefore, will he agree personally to meet that association, which is now supported by more than 300 residents from around Strangford Lough?

Mr. Bottomley: There would be much more of a fuss if we had not declared the foreshore to be an area of special scientific interest. If we were not moving towards establishing a marine nature reserve, there would also rightly be a fuss. Most of the concerns are totally misplaced, as I have explained on two occasions.

I hope that people will continue to manage their own land in ways that are consistent with the importance of the lough and, if sensible discussions need to continue, I am perfectly happy to be involved in them. I ask people, as well as looking at the law, to start looking at the use of the lough. We can combine uses that are economic, recreational and environmental with the protection of the water and the foreshore.

Kincora Boys Home

11. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information his Department received concerning obstruction into the process of inquiry into alleged sexual abuse of boys and the Kincora boys home.

Mr. Cope: I do not believe that any relevant information was withheld from successive inquiries.

Mr. Dalyell: What evidence does the Minister have for that opinion? Does he share the disgust of many of us that for some reason the interests of the security forces apparently took precedence over the interests of vulnerable boys in care in a real sense and under the guardianship of the nation?

Mr. Cope: My opinion comes from my study of the papers on the matter. I would share the concern that the hon. Gentleman expressed if I thought that the facts were as he described them. I do not believe that they were; the RUC had information, but, as Sir George Terry's report explained, that information was acted on not immediately but only some years later.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the Mayor of Paris, Mr. Jacques Chirac, and this evening I shall preside at a dinner in honour of the Crown Prince of Morocco.

Mr. Campbell: Will the Prime Minister commission an inquiry by the social services inspectorate into establishing the allegations that staff shortages in Wandsworth council resulted in the death of a three-year-old child?

The Prime Minister: No. Obviously that tragic case affected us all greviously. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the death of that child occurred in August 1989. The details of the case are being thoroughly looked into. Wandsworth council had already spent a great deal on that case, including at one stage removing that family to another place of residence at the cost of some £15,000. They were moved to a residential home and then back into a council house. Wandsworth has a very good record on social workers, having about 4 per cent. more social workers in relation to its population than other inner London authorities. This is a tragic case. Of course, there has been an inquiry and the recommendations of that inquiry will be accepted.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Is my right hon. Friend at all concerned that on Tuesday the European Court instructed our courts to consider interim relief from sections of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 although the House of Lords decided that it had no powers to do so? Until we accept that European law is supreme over our own law, is not it a dangerous development that the court is effectively taking on the power to suspend sections of laws passed by this Parliament? Will not that open up the possibility and likelihood that groups and individuals will seek relief from laws passed by this Parliament simply by going to the European Court and claiming that they have lost as a consequence of those laws?

The Prime Minister: I share my hon. Friend's concern about that judgment. As he said, since the European Communities Act 1972, our courts have been obliged to protect rights under Community law, but the European Court has now said that where those rights are impaired by British law, our courts have the power to grant an injunction until the main case is heard. That applies to what my hon. Friend said, although the injunction may affect the operation of an Act of our own Parliament. The European Court has left it to our courts to decide whether or not to exercise that power. The case in question now goes back to our courts to decide whether the power to give interim relief should be used. We shall argue strongly that it should not. Meanwhile, the position on fishing rights remains unchanged. I should point out that the European Court's decision applies to all European countries, not only to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the Prime Minister agree with the statement that the proposals put forward by the Chancellor last night are

"a very useful intermediate step"

towards "a Single European Currency"—the view, and indeed the words, of the Governor of the Bank of England?

The Prime Minister: That is not quite what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor said, in a most excellent and constructive speech—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: —which has been very widely welcomed as building on the present position, going forward in an evolutionary way. We should bear it in mind

that many other countries may wish to join the Community, and not make it more difficult for them to do so. The speech does not mean that we approve of a single European currency; it says specifically that we do not. It provides for a common European currency, which each country may use if it wishes to do so. That does not therefore take away from our sovereignty. It provides a way of trying to get inflation down by reference to a hard ecu. I was not quite sure whether the right hon. Gentleman said that he had read the speech or, if he had read it, whether he understood it.

Mr. Kinnock: By all means, I have read the speech. I wonder whether the Chancellor explained to the right hon. Lady that if the idea that he put forward were accepted, with the European Monetary Fund and the hard ecu, it would be the final surrender of monetary sovereignty by Britain, as sterling moved into the hard ecu. Does she take that into account in the view that she expresses about what the Chancellor said?

The Prime Minister: The purpose of that speech, and that proposal, is precisely that we do not surrender control over our monetary policy. Of course, we wish to use monetary policy in a way that gets inflation down, but the proposal does not surrender control over that policy.

Mr. Kinnock: I am grateful to the right hon. Lady. These are important matters. Is she saying, in the responses that she has made thus far, that when the Governor of the Bank of England said to the House of Lords yesterday that a European Monetary Fund and a hard ecu would, and I quote him precisely,

"be a very useful intermediate step between the . . . existing EC currencies and a single EC currency"

he was wrong?

The Prime Minister: I suggest that the right hon. Gentleman reads more carefully the speech of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, which proposes building on the existing ecu—the City has already issued securities denominated in ecu—to have a hard ecu, which could become a common European currency available for countries to use if they so choose. It retains the choice and it retains sterling.

Mr. Speaker: We now come to Question 3.

Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is all right. I shall come back to Question 2.

Q3. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June:

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Walker: Is my right hon. Friend aware that in the 11 years of her leadership the economy in Scotland has been transformed into a dynamic, vibrant and modern economy? Will she confirm that she has no plans to introduce an assembly Act, which would give Scotland an assembly in Edinburgh with tax-raising powers and which would place in jeopardy that modern, vibrant economy?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Scotland is doing better than ever before because of this Government's policies, which Scotland has taken to very well indeed and is using profitably to her own advantage. We have no plans to introduce an assembly. If one took into account all Scotland's own spending, with Scotland having to bear all its own expenditure, it would mean an additional 20p on the standard rate of income tax in Scotland.

North-east Scotland

Q2. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to visit the north-east of Scotland.

The Prime Minister: I hope to visit the north-east of Scotland later this year.

Mr. McAllion: Is the Prime Minister aware that the Speedlink rail freight service that serves the north-east of Scotland faces closure because of her plans to sell off parts of British Rail? Is she further aware that such a closure would lead to 100,000 tonnes of timber being moved from rail to road, which would create an additional 18,000 lorry movements every year on Scotland's already overcrowded roads? Given that such a development makes no economic sense, does the Prime Minister accept that the price to be paid by the rest of us for her personal obsession with privatisation is too high and that she should instruct British Rail to retain the existing Speedlink service?

The Prime Minister: Some of us think when we visit Scotland and travel on her roads that they are very much better than the roads down south, and not nearly so crowded. Scotland has had an enormous amount of money spent on her roads. Current investment levels in British Rail are the highest, in real terms, for a quarter of a century, with £3·7 billion to be invested over the next three years.

Engagements

Q4. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Bellingham: Does the Prime Minister share the widely felt concern about human rights in Romania? Does she agree that neither Britain nor the EEC should extend further assistance to Romania in the present circumstances, except of a purely humanitarian kind?

The Prime Minister: I share my hon. Friend's concern. After all that the Romanian people have been through, we were absolutely horrified to see on television a repetition of previous scenes and the violence being used by the miners. We were also very much concerned about the fate of some of the demonstrators who were arrested. We have invoked the Helsinki agreement to seek information from the Romanian Government about their fate. In the meantime, the European Community is quite right to refuse to sign a trade and co-operation agreement with Romania. Romania will not be invited to the ministerial meeting of the Group of 24 on 4 July to discuss aid to eastern Europe. We think that that is a proper response to the scenes that we saw and witnessed on television.

Mr. Ashdown: Does the Prime Minister realise that, whatever the flaws—I suspect that they will be fatal—in the Chancellor's new proposals for competing currencies, it is nevertheless very welcome that her Cabinet colleagues,

or at least some of them, have managed to lever her forward an inch or two on Europe? The Prime Minister has said that this is an evolutionary approach. An evolutionary approach must have an objective. Will the Prime Minister repeat to the House what she has said before: that she does not believe that Britain should, or will in her lifetime, join a single European currency or a central European bank?

The Prime Minister: I think that the proposals outlined by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer are the right way ahead: to build on the existing ecu. We have issued securities denominated in ecu. It meets the wish of many people to have a common currency. That is quite different from a single currency. The common currency would be the new ecu. It means that those who wish to use the new ecu in place of their own currency may do so. I do not believe that we shall. It also provides protection against inflation. Furthermore, it would not be an impediment to many east European countries that may wish to join us later. If, however, we tied ourselves up too closely and relinquished our monetary powers to a central authority, they would not wish to join; nor should we wish to relinquish the powers of this House.

Q5. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Irvine: Does my right hon. Friend agree that regional airports play a crucial role in stimulating growth in the areas that they serve? Will she therefore join me in expressing astonishment at the crass, blinkered and short-sighted attitude shown by the Labour-controlled Ipswich borough council, which is intent on closing down Ipswich airport even though no suitable alternative site has yet been found?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the Government wish to see the maximum use of airports in the regions, to meet as much local demand as they can attract. Since 1981 we have given borrowing approval for more than £287 million—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: We have given borrowing approval totalling over £287 million for the development of local authority airports and I hope that a new site can be found quickly for the airport to which my hon. Friend referred. I understand that discussions have already taken place between Suffolk county council and the Ministry of Defence—*[Interruption.]* Clearly Opposition Members are not in the least bit interested in the new airport for Ipswich—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is taking up a lot of time and the Prime Minister is trying to answer the question.

The Prime Minister: The Opposition are not interested, Mr. Speaker. Discussions have already taken place between Suffolk county council and the Ministry of Defence about the possible use of RAF Wattisham. We are interested in regional airports, but the Opposition are not.

Business of the House

3.30 pm

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): Having heard the Prime Minister read so many answers to planted questions, may we now have the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 25 JUNE—Opposition Day (15th allotted day). There will be a debate on an Opposition motion entitled "The Price of Electricity Privatisation".

Motion relating to the Police (Amendment) Regulations.

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at seven o'clock.

TUESDAY 26 JUNE—Opposition Day (16th allotted day). Until about seven o'clock there will be a debate entitled "Railway Policy and the Economic and Social Interests of the Nation". Afterwards there will be a debate entitled "British Development Aid and the Environment". Both debates arise on Opposition motions.

Remaining stages of Pakistan Bill [*Lords*].

WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE—Supplemental timetable motion on and consideration of Lords amendments to the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

THURSDAY 28 JUNE—There will be a debate on the scrutiny of European legislation on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

The Fourth report, Session 1988-89, of the Select Committee on Procedure on the Scrutiny of European Legislation (HC 622 vol. I and II) together with the Government response (CM 1081) will be relevant to the debate.

FRIDAY 29 JUNE—Private Members' motions.

MONDAY 2 JULY—Estimates Day (1st allotted day, 2nd part). There will be a debate on class II votes 2, 4 and 5 so far as they relate to assistance to eastern Europe.

The Chairman of Ways and Means is expected to name opposed Private Business for consideration at seven o'clock.

Mr. Grocott: When will we get the Government's statement on their poll tax proposals? This week even the Conservative-controlled Association of District Councils said that it needs £4 billion just to stand still and avoid further massive increases in poll tax demands next year. Is not it high time that the Prime Minister swallowed her pride, came to the House, admitted that the whole thing was a shambles and told us what she was going to do about it?

On Wednesday's business—the National Health Service and Community Care Bill—what will be the Government's proposals on the ring-fencing of community care grants which is recognised as essential by everyone who knows anything about the subject except, apparently, the Government? Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell us on Wednesday what his strategy will be? Will we have adequate time to debate it?

On the international issue of global warming—an issue in which the Prime Minister showed tremendous interest for two weeks between her speech on 24 May and 8 June——

Mr. Donald Thompson (Calder Valley): Get on with it.

Mr. Grocott: I know that the hon. Gentleman does not like it.

On 8 June, the Government blocked European proposals to cut emissions of carbon dioxide. When will the Government stop saying one thing and doing another?

This afternoon the Prime Minister gave one of her numerous, read, prepared answers on the European Court of Justice ruling. When will the Government make a statement to the House so that we can have a proper question-and-answer session to discuss this extremely important issue?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The community charge is likely to be the subject of a debate on charge capping, the date of which will be fixed through the usual channels in the normal way.

The hon. Gentleman's point on the National Health Service and Community Care Bill can no doubt be raised in the debate still to take place on that. The time provided for discussion next week should be sufficient for the matter to be concluded.

There are no plans for any consideration of the broad question of global warming which the hon. Gentleman raised.

The hon. Gentleman has already heard a statement on the ruling of the European Court of Justice from the Prime Minister this afternoon which follows from the provisions of the European Communities Act 1972. It may be possible to raise some aspects of that in the debate next Thursday.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House knows that I am reluctant to curtail business questions. However, we have another statement after this and a very important debate today which is timed for Divisions at 7 pm and 11 pm. I will allow questions on business to continue until 4.10 pm, which will be a full half hour. Will hon. Members please ask single questions related to the business next week?

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): In view of the widespread concern felt by taxpayers throughout the country, will my right hon. and learned Friend find time at an early date for a debate on taxation so that the Government can reassure not just 14, but 15 out of 15 taxpayers that they will not face a substantial increase in tax rates? That may also provide an opportunity for the Opposition to agree their policies on the issue.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I sympathise with my hon. Friend's objective. He will have an opportunity of joining the Government's supporters in making that point very clear when, before too long, the Finance Bill returns to the House on Report.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): On the proposals for a Select Committee on Northern Irish affairs, and in the light of his reply to me last Thursday, has the Leader of the House had time to consult the Chairman of the Select Committee on Procedure?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I hope that there will be an opportunity to discuss that question at some point during the debate on the Northern Ireland Act 1974 (Interim Period Extension) Order 1987 which I hope to bring before the House before too long.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): Following the recent decision of the European Court of Justice, may we have a statement from the Government on whether there is any authority by which a British court may effect the suspension of the workings of legislation passed by Parliament subsequent to the European Communities Act 1972, save by the authority of Parliament? Can our courts issue such directions and by what authority can they do so when legislation has been passed subsequent to the 1972 Act? Do the Government consider that Act to be entrenched?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I hesitate to answer a series of important questions on that matter when dealing with business questions. However, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said, the judgment of the European Court of Justice, which applies equally to all member states, is binding on us as part of our law by reason of the European Communities Act 1972. Again, as my right hon. Friend said, the way in which the consequences of the judgment should be applied will now be worked out by the English courts——

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Only the English courts?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: By the courts of the United Kingdom. They will decide whether—and if so, how far—the power should be used in this case.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Will the Leader of the House confirm that Monday's debate on the Police (Amendment) Regulations also relates to the Northern Ireland and Scottish regulations, the original prayer against the latter having been tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel)?

Looking beyond the European Court's decision to its subject matter—quota hopping by Spanish vessels—will a statement be made by a Minister with responsibility for fisheries on the further steps that will be taken to try to eradicate that abuse of the common fisheries policy?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's first question is that all the Police (Amendment) Regulations will be subject to discussion in the debate that I have announced, for which we intend to provide three hours.

On the hon. Gentleman's point about the European Court judgment, I understand that a question that will be answered in the House tomorrow may have some bearing. Moreover, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said, for the present, until the implications of the judgment are considered further in the United Kingdom courts, the position on fishing rights remains unchanged.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Is it proposed that the right to strike down Acts of Parliament will be used only by the House of Lords in its judicial capacity, or will we find that every court in the land can be appealed to on the basis that there is overriding EEC legislation? If that is the position, there will be uncertainty and confusion in every court in the land.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As I understand it, the position in that respect has not changed since the 1972 Act and the treaty of accession, which provided for questions on Community law to be referred to the European Court of Justice in the fashion that has been exercised in this case.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): The right hon. and learned Gentleman must recognise the deep anxiety about the grave issues that are implicit in yesterday's judgment of the European Court in Luxembourg. Therefore, will he not hide behind a supplementary reply from the Prime Minister and will he arrange with the Attorney-General for a full statement early next week so that we can examine this matter, as we have a right to do?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall certainly bring the right hon. Gentleman's request to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General. As I said, following from what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said earlier, the European Court has given a judgment, whose application to this case will have to be worked out in a case before the courts of the United Kingdom. While that process is taking place, I am not sure how much it would be fruitful to have a statement of the sort that the right hon. Gentleman requests. However, I shall bring his request to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): May I respectfully press my right hon. and learned Friend on that point? All right, the process is carrying on and one may accept that the court was merely applying a right that it has held since 1972, but I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend will accept that this is a matter of the highest constitutional importance, way above the normal ebb and flow of politics, which goes right to the root of the supremacy of Parliament as the supreme court in this land. Therefore, may I urge my right hon. and learned Friend to arrange a major debate on this issue at the earliest opportunity?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have heard the points that have been made by hon. Members of all parties. At this stage, I can say no more than I have said already. I shall bring the request for a statement to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General and I note that we shall have a debate on some aspects of this matter next Thursday.

Mr. Mike Carr (Bootle): May I draw the deputy Prime Minister's attention to early-day motion 1131, which concerns News International's decision to declare 412 workers redundant at the Eric Bemrose works in Liverpool, and to transfer that work to West Germany?

[That this House notes with alarm the proposal by News International to make over 400 workers at the Eric Bemrose Works redundant; calls upon the group to reconsider this decision, bearing in mind the impact on the Merseyside economy; further notes the fact that the group are currently recruiting some 350 staff for their new Knowsley works and calls on them to give priority to Bemrose workers when filling these vacancies; and seeks assurances over the remaining 160 or so jobs at the Bemrose Works.]

If the right hon. and learned Gentleman cannot set aside some time for a debate on that matter, will he make a statement next week?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I understand why the hon. Gentleman raises that point. It is a matter of regret,

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

particularly for those involved in the constituency that he now represents. The decision was taken by News International and the Government cannot intervene in commercial decisions of that nature. However, it is to be hoped that consideration will be given to the work force at Bemrose during the recruitment of staff for the News International plant at Knowsley.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My right hon. and learned Friend has said that we can discuss this supreme constitutional issue on Thursday, but I understand that that debate is about how we scrutinise European legislation. The issue that we are discussing and which we should like to debate next week is the fact that we can pass an Act of Parliament about fundamental issues and next week any tuppenny ha'penny court in the land—I do not mean that pejoratively—can kick it into touch, send it across to the European Court and, however long it takes the European Court, the decision of this House and this Parliament is thrown into abeyance. It is a vital constitutional issue and we should debate it forthwith.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I understand that my hon. Friend is particularly worried about the matter. It is a matter of developing interest in our relations with the European Community. It has always been implicit in and a consequence of the provisions of the treaty of accession and the 1972 Act.

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): The Leader of the House will have heard the question that my hon. Friend the Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) put to the Prime Minister. Is he aware of the deep anguish in Wandsworth over the report on the tragic death of the abused child Stephanie Fox? Is he aware that in Wandsworth we are threatened with even further cuts in essential services for preventing child abuse? Against that background can he give an assurance that the House will have the opportunity as soon as possible to debate that report or that the Secretary of State for Social Services will come to the House and make a full statement on the events that surrounded the brutal death of Stephanie Fox and exactly what provision Wandsworth council intends to make for young children at risk?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I join my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in expressing sympathy with those involved in that case. I do not necessarily follow the hon. Gentleman in linking that tragedy to the other matters to which he referred. I shall bring his point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): Will the deputy Prime Minister provide time next week for an urgent debate on the problems of the town of Holywood in my constituency and in particular the need to provide recreational facilities for the residents and young people, the traffic congestion in the town and the urgent need for a new car park?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot undertake to offer a debate on that topic, but I can undertake to bring it specifically to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Does the Leader of the House accept the thanks of the Scrutiny Committee on European legislation for putting next Thursday's debate on the Adjournment? Is he aware that another report will be relevant to the debate because the Committee is contemplating publishing a special report on its responsibilities? In view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's remarks and proposals last night about monetary matters, will the Govrnment place those proposals before the Council of Ministers of the European Community?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: On the second part of the question, copies of the speech are being placed in the Library of the House. The proposals form part of the United Kingdom's constructive approach to the matters that will be discussed at the forthcoming intergovernmental conference. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for what he said about the form of next Thursday's debate. It will allow matters which emerge from any additional report to be raised during the proceedings.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): Lest my right hon. and learned Friend is in any doubt about the strength of feeling expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House, I hope that he will listen carefully to the representations that have been made about the European Court of Justice decision. It is absolutely fundamental to the existence of the House of Commons and Parliament that the matter should be resolved. We should at least have the opportunity to clear up possible misunderstandings and the doubt that exists in the present circumstances so that we all know where we stand.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Of course I understand that this is a matter about which a number of my hon. Friends and other hon. Members feel strongly. Clearly there is room for a wide range of views and differences of emphasis. I shall bring them to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend and bear in mind the point made by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): May I take it that the Leader of the House was disturbed as I was by the report in *The Independent* today that one child in three is attacked by dogs and that the majority are bitten? This morning in a hospital I heard about some of the horrific injuries to children caused by dogs. Does he agree that it is time that we made the owners liable for compensation —let us say £100 a bite—as that would make owners control their dogs?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree with the right hon. Gentleman's expression of concern about the consequences of injury to children, among others, by dogs that are violent or out of control. The Government take the matter seriously and I shall bring the right hon. Gentleman's specific proposals to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): In view of the shocking explosion at the Royal Air Force base in my constituency this morning in which, mercifully, there were no casualties, will the Leader of the House arrange for an urgent statement from the Ministry of Defence about the circumstances of it?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Of course we share the concern at the explosion that took place in my hon. Friend's

constituency and his relief that there were no casualties. I shall bring his request to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): If the Leader of the House wants to debate the constitutional crisis between the Common Market and the British Parliament it would be relatively easy to find time on Monday by having a word with the Chairman of Ways and Means and getting rid of the three-hour slot on the Associated British Ports (No. 2) Bill. We could then have a pretty good discussion and remind the electorate that it was a Tory Government who took Britain into the Common Market, with a few Euro-fanatics behind me, Shirley Poppins, Dr. Death and all the rest of them. More latterly it was a Tory Government who backed the Single European Act and forced it through on a guillotine with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the House and all the rest of the Tory Cabinet present.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I was under the impression that a subsequent Labour Government claimed to renegotiate the terms of our membership of the Community and commended those terms to the people of this country. They endorsed them with a substantial majority of 2:1 in a subsequent referendum. As for the hon. Gentleman's specific suggestion, I see no reason to invite the Chairman of Ways and Means to derange the proposals that he has already made.

Sir Jim Spicer (Dorset, West): My right hon. and learned Friend will no doubt recollect that in 1980 the cost of first-class postage was 12p. He will also have noted that, this week, there was a proposal to raise that charge to 22p from September. In view of the appalling service that we receive from the Royal Mail, will my right hon. and learned Friend arrange for an early debate before that increase is allowed?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Although I do not accept every aspect of the important points made by my hon. Friend, he may be happy to know that there will be a debate on that subject, although I have not arranged it, on the Adjournment on Monday.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): It not it about time that we had a debate in Government time on the decision of British Steel to close the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig because of the mystery that now surrounds the Government's position? Is the Leader of the House aware that we can get no information from the Department of Trade and Industry since it says that its correspondence with Sir Robert Scholey is confidential, that the meetings between the Scottish Office and the DTI are confidential and that the letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland from Bob Scholey is now confidential? The only way in which to clear up this farce, which is becoming a cross between the magic circle and the secret seven, is to have a debate in Government time. Will the Leader of the House promise that that will be forthcoming?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise a debate of the kind that the hon. Gentleman requests in the way he requests. I understand that the Secretary of State for Scotland has received a substantial reply from the chairman of British Steel which, subject to the needs of confidentiality, goes into the reasons for the decision to which the hon. Gentleman referred. My right hon. and learned Friend would like to publish the letter in due course, but that would require the agreement of British Steel.

Mr. Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes): I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will enable the Chairman of Ways and Means to go about his business in the way he intimated in his statement. But will the Leader of the House, throughout next week's business and particularly on Monday, do what he can to ensure that the House can go about its business properly? Will he ensure that there is no repeat of what occurred at 3 o'clock this morning, when a Bill which had not been opposed on Second Reading or at Third Reading and which was designed to ensure the safety of the travelling public had to undergo farcical treatment because of the activities of a few Opposition Members?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot, of course, ensure the result for which my hon. Friend asks, although it is greatly to be desired. The majority of hon. Members will deprecate what happened yesterday. The measure before the House last night is important and went through Second Reading without a Division. For a small number of hon. Members to seek to debate, and divide on, every amendment made in another place is not an acceptable way of proceeding and I hope that there can be discussions through the usual channels to allow the measure to proceed.

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): May we have a debate on the inadequacy of the regulation of the City, given the scandals of Dunsdale Securities, supposedly regulated by the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Organisation, and British and Commonwealth, supposedly regulated by the Securities and Investments Board? Is not it time that the supine incompetence of the Department of Trade and Industry was examined more closely?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's observations, but if he and his hon. Friends feel as strongly as that, it is surprising that they have not chosen the topic for discussion on an Opposition day.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): On the National Health Service and Community Care Bill debate next week, will the Secretary of State for Health take the opportunity to make a statement saying what he intends to do to help health authorities such as Leicestershire which are facing financial difficulty because of their inability to sell surplus land? Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the matter must be addressed urgently because many health authorities are in similar difficulties?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is diligent in drawing the attention of the House to examples of that matter, I am not sure how far it will be relevant or admissible in the debate next week on the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, but I will bring his point to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): The Leader of the House will probably agree with my request that he urgently consult the Chairman of Ways and Means with a view to changing Monday's business, for the good reason that we have not yet reached the point in the House when we are expected to debate documents that are not

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

available. Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that yesterday I went to the Vote Office, and that this afternoon I and a number of my hon. Friends went to the Vote Office, to collect copies of the Lords amendments that we are supposed to be debating on Monday, but they were not there? Is he aware that as those documents, which are essential for that debate and which we may seek to amend further, are not available, the debate cannot possibly take place—and we cannot be expected to co-operate—in a sensible manner.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I fancy that the hon. Gentleman may be speaking about the wrong day because I see nothing in Monday's business to justify those comments. But I will ensure that his more general point is looked into.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the impact of the recent European Court of Justice decision is more than merely a question of emphasis but is a major question of constitutional importance? In the Bill of Rights the suspending and dispensing power of Acts of Parliament by sovereigns was expressly denied. Is he aware that the European Court of Justice now appears to be changing its practice and is saying that the courts of this country can overturn Acts of Parliament? Hitherto when the European Court had said that our law was not in conformity with European law, it required the Government to introduce legislation to repeal the existing statute. We seem to have gone a large step beyond that now, and this major issue of constitutional importance should be debated at the earliest opportunity.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I understand the way in which my hon. Friend puts the point; I shall continue to reflect on it in the way that I have mentioned.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Although many right hon. and hon. Members have understandably raised the issue of parliamentary sovereignty, does the right hon. and learned Gentleman understand that the principle underpinning Scottish constitutional law is that of the sovereignty of the people? Given that the Government have dismissed the views of the people of Scotland on the disposal of nuclear waste at Dounreay, will he arrange for an early statement about the activities of Nirex and British Nuclear Fuels plc not only at Dounreay but elsewhere in Scotland so that we can be fully aware of all the sites being considered by those agencies?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot give an undertaking on those lines but I shall bring the point to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): As there would be no need for any prisoner to be in police cells but for the industrial action in localised areas by the Prison Officers Association; and as we have the largest prison building programme of the century; and as the prison population is falling and the number of prison officers rising; and as prison officers are among the better paid public service employees; and as there is no need for the proposed industrial action, will my right hon. and learned Friend find an early time for a debate on the subject of prisons so that these matters can be more effectively put?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am sure that the great majority of hon. Members will share the concern expressed by my hon. and learned Friend about the impact of the industrial action being taken by the prison officers. The fact is that the Director-General of the Prison Service has on two occasions—most recently today—written to the chairman of the Prison Officers Association repeating his earlier offer that the prison service is ready to enter into immediate discussions about matters of mutual concern. I think that the great majority of hon. Members will urge the POA to accept that offer of meetings.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement or debate at the beginning of next week on our crumbling schools? Is he aware that the Minister responsible for schools, the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon (Mr. Howarth), is visiting four schools in Coventry tomorrow with the unenviable task of having to explain why the city council has received only 15 per cent. of the £12 million that it needs this year for urgent repairs? Is he further aware that one school in my constituency has to make the toilet area double up as a computer studies area?

Hon. Members: Pay up.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nellist: Is not the Leader of the House ashamed that our children do not have better facilities in which to learn?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: On more than one occasion the hon. Gentleman has asked questions along those lines, completely overlooking the fact that in real terms expenditure per head in education is higher now than at any time.

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware of the recent lobby by a number of unfortunate people who have suffered serious side-effects from long exposure to high doses of steriods. Will he find time for a debate so that attention can be focused on the plight of those unfortunate people and on warning the public of the dangers of protracted use of high doses of these powerful drugs?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend will not be surprised to learn that I cannot offer the prospect of a debate on this topic, but I shall bring it to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Leader of the House accept that behind his slip of the tongue—when he referred to English law—is an attitude of mind that is particularly irritating to Scots, some of whom have been paying the poll tax for 15 months? Will we have a statement from the Secretary of State for Scotland on the Government's proposed amendments to the tax before local authorities in Scotland increase it even more?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am wholly aware of the importance of recognising that the highest courts in the land apply to the United Kingdom because they apply also to Wales and Scotland. I shall bring the hon. Gentleman's specific point to the attention of my right hon. Friends.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): In view of the garbled and muddled attempt by the Leader of the

Opposition on television on Monday to explain his income tax and expenditure policies, will my right hon. and learned Friend arrange for an early debate on adult education so that we can discuss the obvious need for supplemental remedial classes in arithmetic and English?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend chooses an important example of that need. However, I am not sure whether even the most elegant classes would fulfil the object that he has in mind.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Bearing in mind the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's two fascinating statements during the past fortnight about taking Britain towards European monetary union were made to private gatherings of business men, and knowing the Prime Minister's admiration for the principles of parliamentary democracy and accountability, will the Leader of the House persuade the Chancellor to come to the House next week to make an early statement and then to pop upstairs and give some evidence to the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor takes advantage of many opportunities for developing the thinking about this matter in the House and before Select Committees and other audiences. I shall bring the hon. Gentleman's suggestion to my right hon. Friend's attention.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the obvious confusion that abounds among the leaders of the Opposition about their political policy could be substantially clarified for the benefit of the nation generally if every week at a quarter past three the Leader of the Opposition presented himself at the Dispatch Box and answered questions in the same way as does the Prime Minister? We would then be better able to understand exactly what the Opposition stand for.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The great majority of hon. Members would prefer to keep the right hon. Gentleman in his present role at the Dispatch Box on the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): Will the Lord President of the Council take the opportunity to arrange an early debate on the Government's private Bill procedure? Is he aware that the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill is a public Bill going through the private Bill route? Is he further aware that the Finance Bill has had to be modified through the insertion of two new clauses to take into account the financial provisions of a private Bill? Therefore, we have the odd situation of a private Bill which is a public Bill and a hybrid Bill at one and the same time. May we have an early debate on this perversion of the procedures of the House which is an abuse of the House and all that we stand for?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I do not accept the insight offered by the hon. Gentleman. I am happy to say that we have completed our consideration of private Bill procedure and that I have today announced proposals which are being made available. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where?"] I announced them in reply to a question today from my hon. Friend the Member for New Forest (Sir P. McNair-Wilson), and, together with my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Transport and for the Environment, I have published a consultation paper on the topic. That consultation paper is available to hon. Members.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): May we have an early debate on the future of county and regional government in England in view of the proposals by the Labour party to abolish county councils, which, for all their faults, are familiar and traditional units of government, and to replace them with a costly bureaucratic tier of regional assemblies? Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that in the south-west, regional assemblies would be a shambles because Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth would all be unsatisfactory as regional capitals? Even Taunton, which has been proposed by a Labour candidate as a regional capital, would cause a development nightmare for my constituents and I am sure that it would be objectionable to Cornish Members such as my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris).

Sir Geoffrey Howe: After such a comprehensive suggestion I almost doubt the need for a debate.

Mr. Eddie Loyden (Liverpool, Garston): Will the Leader of the House ask the appropriate Secretary of State, presumably the Foreign Secretary, to make a statement to the House about imports from countries that make extensive use of child labour? To some extent it is hypocrisy to talk about human rights when we are importing materials from such countries at the expense of the exploitation of children.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: If the hon. Gentleman has examples in mind I shall bring them to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Mr John Marshall (Hendon, South): Will my right hon. and learned Friend arrange an early debate on the future of the War Crimes Bill so that the House can reiterate its support for that Bill?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Having considered all the implications of the debates and votes that have already taken place in both Houses on the subject, including the vote in the other place on 4 June, the Government have decided that the War Crimes Bill should be reintroduced next Session. The Government will be seeking, whether by way of suggested amendments or otherwise, to secure the support of both Houses for the Bill.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry that I have not been able to call all the hon. Members who have been rising, but I shall ensure that those who have not been called today will be called early next Thursday.

Mr. Hardy: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take points of order after the Home Secretary's statement.

Calcutt Report

4.10 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Waddington): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on the report of the committee on privacy and related matters, which is published today.

I should like, first of all, to pay tribute to the committee and its distinguished chairman, Mr. David Calcutt QC, who have produced a meticulous and carefully argued report on a complex and sensitive subject, and within the very tight timetable set by the Government.

Hon. Members will recall that the committee was set up in April last year in response to widespread concern about invasions of privacy by the press, much of which was expressed in the debates on two private Members' Bills which were then before the House.

The Government warmly welcome the general approach which the committee has taken in its report on the delicate issue of balancing privacy for the individual against the maintenance of freedom of expressionl The committee asserts that, in general, freedom of expression should take precedence over protection of privacy and that where such protection is necessary it is best provided through specific, targeted remedies. It rejects the introduction of a statutory right of reply and concludes that the case for a statutory tort of infringement of privacy has not so far been made out.

The committee was rightly concerned about physical intrusion by the press, particularly in the light of the very serious incident earlier this year when reporters invaded the hospital bedroom of the actor Gorden Kaye. The report recommends three new criminal offences: of trespass on private property to obtain personal information for publication; of planting a surveillance device on private property to secure information for publication; and of taking a photograph, or recording the voice, of someone on private property for publication and with the intention that he should be identifiable. All three offences would be subject to defences of public right to know, for example when done to expose crime or other wrongdoing, and of lawful authority.

The Government are attracted by those recommendations, which offer the possibility of an immediate remedy against the worst excesses of the press. We accept them in principle. Careful thought will need to be given to the detailed formulation of the offences and the precise scope of any defence. I shall report to the House about those matters later in the year. We shall also consider whether these proposals might be appropriate for introduction in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The report also recommends extending in England and Wales the present restrictions on reporting criminal proceedings by giving the court power in certain curcumstances to prohibit the publication of the name and address of any person against whom an offence is alleged to have been committed and extending the present anonymity of rape victims to victims of other sexual offences. I welcome those proposals, which fit well with measures we are already taking to improve the treatment of victims. We shall give further consideration to them, with special reference to the balance to be struck between the rights of victims and the presumption that criminal proceedings should take place in public.

The central recommendations of the report concern the regulation of the press. The committee reviewed recent progress by the industry and the Press Council in improving the current system of self-regulation, but concluded that the process has not gone far enough. It recommends that the press should be given 12 months to establish a new non-statutory press complaints commission, modelled on the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, which would be responsible specifically for the adjudication of complaints.

It would operate under a more comprehensive code of practice than has been used up to now for guidance to both press and public as to what is unacceptable press behaviour, and its 12 members would be independently selected by a special appointments commission. The committee recommends that if the rulings of the press complaints commission are flouted by an individual publication, it should be placed on a statutory basis. If the press do not proceed to set up the commission, or if it is set up but there is a more general breakdown in enforcement of its decisions, the committee recommends the establishment of a publicly funded statutory tribunal with more far-reaching powers.

The Government recognise that the industry has made some attempt in the past year to respond to the public concern about press abuses, and I pay tribute to the determined efforts of the chairman of the Press Council to modernise and make more effective the existing system of self-regulation. In the view of the Calcutt committee, however, the reforms have not gone far enough, the two distinct functions of defending the freedom of the press and adjudicating on complaints of press malpractice sit uneasily together, and only an independent body can effectively carry out that second task.

The Government are aware, of course, that the press are not alone responsible among the media for unwarranted breaches of privacy, and that similar concerns have been expressed in the past about broadcasting. They believe that the establishment of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission has been an effective response to that concern and has provided useful redress to individuals unfairly treated in broadcast programmes. They therefore accept the central recommendation of the committee that the press should be given 12 months to establish a press complaints commission on the lines proposed.

This is positively the last chance for the industry to establish an effective non-statutory system of regulation, and I strongly hope that it will seize the opportunity that the committee has given it. If a non-statutory commission is established, the Government will review its performance after 18 months of operation to determine whether a statutory underpinning is required. If no steps are taken to set up such a commission, the Government, albeit with some regret, will proceed to establish a statutory framework, taking account of the committee's recommendations.

It is now up to the press to take up the challenge that the committee has presented to it. I am confident that the response will be a positive one.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): I begin by offering our congratulations to Mr. Calcutt and to his committee on the production of what I regard as an historic report. We give an unqualified welcome to its positive proposals and shall happily co-operate in their implementation.

The report is based on the principle that private individuals have a right to maintain their privacy. Sometimes, public figures may have to accept the consequences of their status—although I share the view expressed in the report that the kind of treatment endured by Mr. Gorden Kaye was intolerable and in future must be prohibited. But private citizens are entitled to absolute protection against intruders, and the report at least shows the way in which that protection can be provided.

May I specifically offer our support to paragraph 14.38, where it is proposed that the press should be given "one final chance" to prove that voluntary regulation can be made to work. However, may I also make it clear that acceptance of that judgment requires parallel support for paragraph 16.1—the insistence that if the press fail

"to demonstrate that non-statutory self-regulation can be made to work effectively. . .a statutory system. . .should be introduced."

We endorse that, and I hope that the Home Secretary will make it clear that he also endorses the Calcutt test of how the success of self-regulation can be measured.

A single maverick paper ignoring the proposed new code of conduct would, in Calcutt's estimation, justify the introduction of statutory regulations. Will the Home Secretary confirm that he shares and endorses that view?

A code of statutory regulation with funds levied from the industry, but determined by the Government, and a statutory system of regulation would be introduced, including powers to impose penalties, which in our view must be large enough to act as a deterrent. We cannot have the situation in which newspapers gladly pay a small fine because the story that the fine has created improves the circulation enough to make the fine worth paying.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that, although the Calcutt committee does not favour a statutory right of reply, it proposes that the new press commission might require the publication of a correction and an apology in a prescribed form? Some of us believe that the distinction between that remedy and the right of reply is purely semantic. We are prepared to see that variation on the theme examined and initially put into operation.

May I offer the Home Secretary our support for the specific changes in the law which Calcutt recommends: taking a photograph or recording the voice of an individual who is on private property, which could become a criminal offence, except in carefully defined circumstances; and legal restriction on the identification of minors and victims of sexual assault, as is now provided for rape victims.

The Home Secretary said in his statement that in the recent past the British press had begun to take action against unacceptable intrusion. That is certainly the cae with some newspapers, but others have endorsed a voluntary code of conduct and then flouted it within days of their editors signing the document. Other newspapers have refused to accept the recommendations—indeed have derided the recommendations—of the voluntary Press Council, which they regarded as the proper protection against intrusion.

The Home Secretary expressed the belief that newspapers will respond to this one last chance. I have my doubts. That is why the second major implication and recommendation of Calcutt—the introduction of statutory regulations by an official body—is absolutely essential if the year of grace is ignored and if the press do not mend their ways.

All right hon. and hon. Members should be determined to defend the freedom of the press: freedom against Government, freedom against powerful corporations and freedom against corruption. I certainly do not want to see the curtailment of legitimate investigative journalism, but I also believe in another freedom: the right of individuals to live in privacy and peace. The Calcutt report strikes a proper balance between the two objectives, and I hope that both sides of the House can work together to bring those two objectives about.

Mr. Waddington: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his general welcome to a valuable report. It is right to say that the committee starts off by saying that freedom of publication is an important principle and that there is an inherent contradiction between the freedom to publish and the right to privacy. One has to make choice at the outset whether one puts the right to privacy or the freedom to publish first in the list. The committee comes down on the latter side: it says that one starts with the principle of freedom to publish, but one then looks at the protections which have to be granted to ensure that privacy is properly protected when it should be protected and to set out protections for individuals against some of the grossest abuses which have occurred.

I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for welcoming the clear statement by the Calcutt committee that this is one last chance for the press. That is not really an idle threat, because Calcutt goes on to set out quite plainly what further steps should be taken in certain eventualities. I shall make those successive steps clear to the House.

First of all, the press is told that they must set up a press complaints commission as a non-statutory body. That non-statutory body will have the power to recommend an apology and the nature and form of a reply or correction, including where it has to be published in the paper. There no longer has to be any waiver of legal rights as a requirement before the matter is looked into by the press complaints commission.

If maverick publications decline to respect the authority of the press complaints commission, the right hon. Gentleman is entirely right that that triggers off the next step. Calcutt recommends that, in those circumstances, the press complaints commission should be put on a statutory basis, and we have accepted that recommendation. Once the commission is put on a statutory basis, it will have the power to require a response to inquiries about complaints, to publish adjudications and to recommend payment of compensation.

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): What sanctions?

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman had better wait a moment; then he will hear the whole story.

If the press do not set up the commission or if there is a serious breakdown of the whole system of regulation, a press complaints tribunal should be set up, with a judge and two assessors. That body would have the power to award compensation and to restrain publications in breach of the code of practice by injunction. Nobody would suggest that such a tribunal would not have very potent powers indeed. However, the Government will look at the performance of the press and the operation of the press complaints commission over a period and then return to the House.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must remind the House again of what I said earlier. We have a very important debate today with a guillotine falling at 7 o'clock. I shall allow questions to continue until 10 to 5. I hope that hon. Members will bear in mind that no doubt we shall be discussing the matter over the next 12 months. Therefore, I ask for brief and single questions please.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that time and again the press have been given a chance to put their house in order and time and again sections of the press have wilfully flouted that requirement? Therefore, is not the giving of this last chance unduly generous to the press and unduly unprotective to the liberty of the individual? Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that if the defence of the public right to know is too widely drawn, it will provide no further protection for the individual? Will my right hon. and learned Friend kindly give urgent consideration to making the press complaints commission statutory from the start, as is the Broadcasting Complaints Commission?

Mr. Waddington: When my hon. and learned Friend has had time to read the report, I do not think that he will reach the conclusion that the public right to know will be so built up as to negative the protections to which I have referred. The defences to the criminal offences that have been suggested are limited indeed. There would be a defence if the act were done for the purpose of preventing, detecting or exposing the commission of any crime or other seriously anti-social behaviour, for the protection of public health or safety or under any lawful authority. If my hon. and learned Friend looks at appendix Q to the report, he will see how much tougher the proposed code is than the code that is currently supposed to be operated by the Press Council.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): I recognise the need to ensure that the presumption of an individual's right to privacy is strengthened and that it is displaced only by a genuine and direct public interest, but will the Home Secretary carefully reconsider the proposals to set up three specific new crimes in the light of previous representations from the police and other law reform bodies that the creation of a law of criminal trespass would be difficult to achieve in practice? Who will appoint the appointments commission? Who will be eligible to sit on it, and if the procedure is to become statutory, how would those rules change? The first object of the Press Council, as stated in its charter, is to ensure the protection of press freedom. If it is not possible for that to be done while protecting the individual by adjudicating complaints, who will be entrusted with the first object of the Press Council —the protection of press freedom?

Mr. Waddington: I do not see why the two functions need to be in the same hands. It is perfectly logical that the press should set up a body which propagandises in the interests of press freedom, and, as I made abundantly plain, nobody doubts the importance of the freedom to publish. The committee suggests that, in the eyes of the public, it somehow blunts the edge of a body that is supposed to be set up in the interests of those who suffer from invasion of privacy for it to have an entirely contradictory function. The argument that is normally advanced against a law of criminal trespass is that the police might become involved in domestic disputes and disputes between neighbours.

I am not arguing for or against such a law, which in any event would go far wider than necessary to protect people from press intrusion. That does not enter into the argument at all. The fact that there might be an argument for an offence of criminal trespass does not advance discussion on whether there should be specific offences to deal with intrusion by the press in order to obtain information for purposes of publication. It is suggested that an appointments commission should decide the membership of the press complaints commission. It has been suggested—it has been put forward not powerfully but as a possibility—that the Lord Chancellor may appoint members of the appointments commission.

Mr. John Gorst (Hendon, North): I welcome all the recommendations in the report, but I have misgivings about the central proposition on which it is based. Does my right hon. and learned Friend take the view that freedom of expression should take precedence over protection of privacy, which is what the committee says? If so, does he not share my misgivings? The party to which we both belong has for a long time taken the view that the individual is more important than the collective concept. Does he find it difficult to reconcile the committee's recommendation with that article of faith?

Mr. Waddington: Quite frankly, I am not terribly interested in what is, at the end of the day, a somewhat academic argument. Either we start off by saying that there is a general freedom to publish and decide to what extent it should be qualified, or we start with the general principle of privacy and decide to what extent it should be qualified. Academic arguments of that kind do not take us very far. I am a pragmatist: I look at abuses and reach a conclusion as to whether the Calcutt proposals are likely to meet the abuses. I believe that the Calcutt proposals are likely to meet the abuses.

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): Is the Home Secretary aware that the tabloids will laugh at today's announcement and will not take a blind bit of notice of it, simply because there will be no sanctions? What is the use of having a code of conduct, rather like the highway code, if we cannot take away the driving licence? The press barons of today have more power than medieval barons had in the middle ages. That is why we introduced laws to protect people against them. The report offers no right of reply, no tribunal and no independent ombudsman. There is nothing, apart from the derisory £500 compensation, which is worth paying to get the story. The press barons of today will totally ignore the report.

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman is entirely wrong when he says that the report offers no tribunal. At the end of the road is the threat of a tribunal, headed by a judge with two assessors. It would have the power to impose sanctions; there would be the power to award compensation and the power, by means of an injunction, to restrain publication that was in breach of the code of practice. I do not know how anybody can argue that that is not a potent remedy.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall that a few years ago I dropped a small pebble in the pool on this subject and therefore have

a significant interest in it? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that, in the non-academic way in which he put it, the real point is that there have been serious invasions of privacy? In the circulation war, there is a considerable incentive for people to try to make money out of invasions of privacy. Given the recommendations in the committee's report, ought not we to ensure that the people who are to run the new independent press complaints commission have the power to award compensation to victims? That would be the acid test. Should not they be prepared to put their money where their mouth is?

Mr. Waddington: It is suggested that, if we reached the stage of setting up a statutory press complaints commission, there would be the power to recommend the payment of compensation. That meets my hon. Friend's point. I congratulate him on the Bill that he introduced a few years ago. Calcutt has not come to the conclusion that it is entirely impracticable to create a tort of infringement of privacy. He just says that he believes that the other remedies put forward could achieve the same result and that if they did not do so, it would be right to reconsider whether there should be a new tort.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): I welcome a great deal of what is contained in the report. It fully justifies the concern that was shown on all sides of the House, which led to the great support that was given to two private Members' Bills. The report does not provide for a statutory right of reply but states that the press must set up a commission that in effect provides for a statutory right of reply and for due prominence to be given to published apologies in a way that is not possible now. It accepts all the criticisms that have been made of the Press Council.

Will the Home Secretary consider recommending that, when the press complaints commission is set up, it should have the power to award compensation? What is wrong now is that there is access for the rich to the law courts but no redress whatsoever for those who cannot gain access to the law courts. I should welcome an assurance from the Home Secretary on that point.

Mr. Waddington: I think that we should stick to the framework recommended by Calcutt. He makes it absolutely plain that a further step would have to be taken if the lesson was not learnt by the organs of the press about whom complaints have often been made. I congratulate the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) on his work on his Right of Reply Bill. Calcutt's conclusion has been expressed faithfully by the hon. Member. Calcutt has concluded that it is not necessary to go for the right of reply if the press complaints commission can recommend publication of a correction and apology and if those further sanctions are available in the event of the press not reacting in an appropriate manner to that last chance.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): May I urge my right hon. and learned Friend to incorporate those eminently sensible suggestions and recommendations into a Bill for the next Session? Will he promise that one last chance really is one last chance and that there will be no fudging at the end of the day? Do the recommendations cover all the press and not just the national press?

Mr. Waddington: Clearly the recommendations cover all the press, including magazines. I have already said that we accept Calcutt's recommendations that, in the events spelt out by Calcutt, we would move from the non-statutory press complaints commission to the statutory press complaints commission, which would then have the powers that I have outlined.

With regard to the criminal offences, I have said that we accept the recommendations in principle, but must consider the precise wording of the offences and what would be appropriate defences to them. When we have carried out proper study along those lines and we think that it is right to go ahead, we will seek the first opportunity to do so.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): Does the Secretary of State recognise that we on the Ulster Unionist Bench share the concern about the excesses of the press? However, I am glad to say that such allegations do not apply to the press in Northern Ireland and I am particularly pleased to say that as a publisher of several newspapers in the Province.

However, the allegations have been made against national newspapers, but national newspapers are not restricted to England and Wales: they circulate equally in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Therefore, I am amazed that the Secretary of State expressed some doubt about whether any proposal should also apply to Northern Ireland and Scotland. Does he recognise the inconsistency that a journalist working for a national newspaper based in London would be working under one set of guidelines, but the same journalist working for the same newspaper based in the Belfast office would be operating under different guidelines unless the new proposals apply to the entire United Kingdom?

Mr. Waddington: I said:

"We shall also consider whether these proposals might be appropriate for introduction in Scotland and Northern Ireland."

I used those cautionary words because the law in Scotland is rather different in many respects from the law in England and Wales. I do not think that I was being unreasonable when I suggested that we should study those differences in law before concluding that the same changes should be made throughout the United Kingdom.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): My right hon. and learned Friend sounds distinctly tougher than Calcutt reads. I find it puzzling that, in recommendation 11.14, the press are urged

"to set the record straight whenever practicable."

One wonders when it would not be practicable to set a record straight. The recommendation continues:

"Where the facts are disputed it would generally be appropriate for the newspaper to publish instead a reasonable letter from the individual or organisation concerned."

Why only "generally appropriate"? I accept the code of conduct, but I thought that the qualification, "whenever practicable" weakened the recommendations and that the report sounded a lot better in the words of my right hon. and learned Friend than they read.

Mr. Waddington: Yes, but in that part of the report, Calcutt was setting out the arguments against a right of reply Bill. One of the arguments against such a Bill was the difficulty of ascertaining from a speedy and informal procedure whether there was a factual inaccuracy which should be corrected. If my hon. Friend reads the report carefully, she will find that that is all argumentation about

[Mr. Waddington]

whether it is right to have a specific right of reply. She must then consider the general arguments that are advanced, as they were in the Bill introduced by the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington).

Mr. John Cartwright (Woolwich): May I declare my interest as a member of the Calcutt committee and thank both Front-Bench spokesmen for their positive responses to our recommendations?

Is the Secretary of State aware that the committee saw a long succession of prominent proprietors and editors who came before us to repent of past sins and to assure us that they had all now turned over a new leaf? Unfortunately, we were well aware of the fact that every inquiry into the press over the past 40 years has heard the same pleas and has been persuaded to grant one last chance. That is why we included in great detail the outline of our statutory framework if self-regulation does not work. When the Secretary of State meets the press to discuss those matters, will he make it absolutely crystal clear that this is the end of the road and that, if they do not put their house in order, statutory regulation will follow and they will have absolutely no one to blame but themselves?

Mr. Waddington: I do not think that I even need to see the press. They can read what I have said today, and that is the message that I am putting over. I thank the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) for his service on the committee. He is entirely right. Various people gave evidence to the committee and they all said that there had been a sudden reform and that they had seen the light on the road to Damascus. However, Calcutt begged to differ and wondered whether it was likely that such a reform would come about so speedily.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): My right hon. and learned Friend has produced through the Calcutt inquiry a well-balanced report which shows on the one hand that we need to improve the standards of journalism, and on the other to protect the individual. Does he agree that the press have not got off, as the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) suggested, without any sanction? Does he agree that they will face the offences which will protect the individual? Does he accept that it is appropriate to give a free press one last chance to put their house in order?

Mr. Waddington: I do not think that many hon. Members would agree with the assessment of the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) or with his experience. Indeed, his right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) did not take that attitude. He was satisfied that the approach suggested by Calcutt was right and that the recommendations have teeth.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Are not we entitled to be pessimistic, bearing in mind that, while those matters were under discussion recently in the House, and while the committee was sitting, the tabloid press have been getting worse, in particular the Sunday press with their trashy stories and the rest? Bearing in mind that the Calcutt report states that one of the main reasons why the Press Council has been a failure is the "lack of effective sanctions", is not it absolutely clear that until there are proper statutory regulations, and until some of the worst offenders—and I have in mind the Sunday tabloids—are dealt with, we will get no improvement? Are not we entitled to believe that, as others have said, as there has been no improvement over the past 40 years, unless real action is taken there is no chance of progress in the next 40 years?

Mr. Waddington: This was a very eminent committee and it has produced a very cogent report, which I invite all hon. Members to read closely. However, I do not believe for a moment that anyone who reads it is likely to conclude that it is a let-off for the press, that the consequences of Calcutt are nil and that things are going to be allowed to continue exactly as they are. I have already spelt out how we can move to a statutory body as a result of the triggers that are spelt out clearly in the report.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend's statement, especially the proposal for anonymity for victims of sex offenders. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the present system, with the Press Council having to act as judge, jury, prosecuting counsel and defending counsel, is entirely unsatisfactory and that decent, honourable and reputable journalists, who are the vast majority, have nothing to fear from the proposals?

Mr. Waddington: No journalist of integrity has anything to fear from these recommendations.

Mr. Hattersley: The Home Secretary will have noticed that what scepticism there is about the report and his reaction to it concerns whether the one last chance will be taken and whether the Government will then move to the statutory remedies which should follow the one last chance. Would it help to concentrate minds if the Government held an early debate on a motion making clear that the statutory remedy will be applied if the one last chance is not taken? If such a motion were put down, there would be overwhelming support for it in the House.

Mr. Waddington: I have said that, if the events spelt out by Calcutt take place, the Government will move to set up a statutory press complaints commission. I will certainly talk to the business managers, and they will read what has just been said. I am not reluctant to have a debate—indeed, I am happy to have one, as it is an interesting, long and detailed report. In exchanges of questions and answers such as this, we cannot hope to touch all the ground.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry that I have been unable to call all the hon. Members concerned. I have noted the comments of the Home Secretary, and I am sure that the hon. Members who have not been called will receive some precedence in that debate.

BILL PRESENTED

Pulp and Paper Products Restriction

Mr. Robin Squire, supported by Sir George Young, Miss Emma Nicholson, Ms. Joan Walley, Ms. Joyce Quin and Mr. Simon Hughes, presented a Bill to prohibit the manufacture, sale, use, distribution and importing of paper products and wood pulp which contain more than a specified amount of adsorbable organic halogens; to specify offences, penalties and defences; to impose duties and confer powers on district councils as enforcement

authorities; to make provision for the analysis of samples; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 166.]

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Ordered,

That European Community Document No. 10270/89 and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum submitted by the Department of the Environment on 8th June 1990, relating to cadmium and its compounds, be referred to a Standing Committee on European Community Documents. —*[Mr. Chapman.]*

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Coal Industry (Restructuring Grants) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*Mr. Chapman.]*

Orders of the Day

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill *[Lords]*

[2ND ALLOTTED DAY]

As amended (in the Standing Committee), further considered.

New Clause 1

ABORTION ACT 1967

'The Abortion Act 1967 shall be amended as follows:—

In section 1(1) after the word "practitioner" insert

"(a) when a registered medical practitioner has certified in good faith that the pregnancy has not exceeded its twelfth week, or

(b) in any other case,".'.—*[Ms. Harman.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

4.53 pm

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 6—*Amendment of the Abortion Act 1967*—

'.— In section 1 of the Abortion Act 1967 (medical termination of pregnancy) after subsection (2) there is inserted—

"(2A) The opinion of a single medical practitioner shall be sufficient for the purposes of subsection (1) of this section providing that that practitioner is also of the opinion that the pregnancy has not exceeded its twelfth week.".'.

Amendment No. 31, in clause 34, page 19, line 41, at end insert—

'(1A) After section 1(1) of that Act there is inserted—

"(1A) The opinion of one medical practitioner is sufficient for the purposes of subsection (1) of this section if he is also of the opinion, formed in good faith, that the pregnancy has not exceeded its twelfth week.".'.

New clause 5—*Conscientious objections*—

'The Abortion Act 1967 shall be amended as follows:— After section 4 insert—

"4A—(1) Any registered medical practitioner who has a conscientious objection to participating in any treatment authorised by this Act who relies upon or intends to rely upon a provision of section 4 above shall be under a duty to notify either—

(a) The Chief Medical Officer of the DHSS, or if they work in Scotland,

(b) The Scottish Home and Health Department.

(2) The Secretary of State shall by Statutory Instrument make regulations to provide—

(a) for requiring any such notification as mentioned in subsection (1) above to be in such form and at such time as may be prescribed by the regulations; and

(b) for the keeping and maintaining of a register of the names of all those persons who have given notification and such register shall be open to public inspection.

(3) Any Statutory Instrument made by virtue of this subsection shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'.

Government amendment No. 54.

[Mr. Speaker]

New clause 7—*Application of Abortion Act 1967 to Northern Ireland*—

'In the Abortion Act 1967 in section 2(1) after the word "Scotland" there shall be added the words "and in respect of Northern Ireland"; the reference in section 2(2) to Chief Medical Officers shall include a reference to the Chief Medical Officer of Northern Ireland; the references to the National Health Service Acts shall include references to any Acts and Orders which have the like effect in Northern Ireland; and for section 7(3) there is substituted "This Act extends to Northern Ireland."'.

Ms. Harman: I shall confine my comments to new clause 1, new clause 6 and amendment No. 31, which deal with easier access to early abortion. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) will seek to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, to address the issues raised by new clause 5.

New clause 1, new clause 6 and amendment No. 31 address the problem of late abortion. There will always be some late abortions when, for example, it is only late in the pregnancy that the pregnancy begins to pose a health risk to the mother, when there is only a late diagnosis of foetal abnormality or when the woman does not realise that she is pregnant until late in the pregnancy. Many late abortions could be carried out earlier. I am sure that all hon. Members will agree that early abortion is better than late abortion.

Prompt abortion spares the woman unnecessary stress and anxiety caused by delay and red tape. Early abortion is easier for the doctors and nurses involved because the foetus is less developed, it poses less of a health risk to the woman, there is less likelihood of post-operative complications, and it can be carried out as day surgery so that the woman does not occupy a scarce in-patient bed. Late abortion is to be avoided wherever possible. One important way to avoid late abortion is to improve access to early abortion, and there should be no disagreement about that in the House because the sad facts are well documented.

In its report, "Late Abortion in England and Wales", the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists found that one in five women who had an abortion after the 28th week of pregnancy, where there was no foetal abnormality, had been referred before the end of the 12th week of the pregnancy. It is inexcusable to make a women wait a further eight weeks into the pregnancy and to have an abortion after 20 weeks when she could have had that abortion before the 12th week of the pregnancy. The royal college's report simply backs the findings of earlier studies by the Lane commission, as far back as 1974, and the Policy Studies Institute's reports commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Security and published in 1979. The reports have piled up and the numbers pile up. It is estimated that every year, over 2,000 abortions are performed at over 20 weeks where there is no foetal handicap. It is time that something was done.

The new clauses and amendments offer the House a choice. New clause 1 would make abortion legal up to the 12th week of pregnancy on the woman's request. New clause 6 and amendment No. 31—which are in almost identical terms—would avoid late abortion by allowing abortion with the approval of one doctor instead of the current requirement of the approval of two doctors. The grounds on which the doctor would certify the abortion would remain the same as under the current law. Those grounds are that the continuation of the pregnancy would pose a threat to the life or to the mental or physical health of the woman, or to her existing children, or that there is serious foetal abnormality. The key point about new clause 6 and amendment No. 31 is that, up to 12 weeks, only one doctor instead of two would be required to certify.

If that step is taken tonight—as I hope that it will be—we shall be moving in line with public opinion. According to the Jowell report on British social attitudes, public support for allowing abortion has increased significantly in the past four years. The report shows that a clear majority are in favour of abortion being allowed by law when the woman decides "on her own" that she does not wish to have the child. A majority now back abortion on request. We should be following the pattern of many other European countries, such as France, Italy, Sweden and Holland, if we allowed easier access to early abortion.

Easing the law and allowing abortion in early pregnancy would enormously help reduce the delay that leads to late abortion. Improving abortion services on the national health service is also important. The law makes abortion legal in this country, but whether a national health service abortion can be obtained depends on where one lives. There is an enormous and unjustified regional variation in the provision of abortion services on the national health service. I should like the Minister to look at these figures.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill) *rose*——

Ms. Harman: I shall not give way. I know that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) will speak later and I do not want to take too much time.

I should like the Minister to look at these figures, which come from her own Department. In north Devon, 95 per cent. of the abortions performed were carried out by the national health service; only 5 per cent. of women who have abortions in north Devon have to seek, or choose to seek, private sector abortion. In south Birmingham, only 1 per cent. of the abortions carried out are performed by the national health service; 99 per cent. are carried out in the private sector. That regional variation cannot be justified because inability to obtain a national health service abortion contributes to the delays that lead to late abortions. We need a prompt NHS abortion service in every region.

I know that, although some hon. Members will be anxious to avoid late abortions, they will be worried that easier access to early abortions will result in more abortions and increase the abortion rate. I do not believe that women use abortion as a casual alternative to contraception. In my view, the new clauses will not affect the abortion rate or the number of abortions that are performed. The abortion rate is largely the result of unwanted pregnancies. The way to cut the abortion rate is to help women to avoid unwanted pregnancies.

5 pm

I hope that all hon. Members who share my concern about the abortion rate will join our campaign for better sex education in schools and for a public information campaign about contraception. We must also see an end to the cuts in family planning services. Those are the measures that will cut the abortion rate. The new clauses,

which seek to ease the legal requirements for early abortion, will cut the number of avoidable late abortions. I urge the House to support them.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): I am happy to follow the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman). I specifically commend to the House amendment No. 31, which has been tabled by myself and by my hon. Friends the Members for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson), for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt), and for Dorset, West (Sir J. Spicer).

The purpose of our amendment is limited, modest and, I believe, useful. I insist that it does not reopen the wider issues that were discussed and settled—at least for the time being—during earlier stages of the Bill's consideration. Its purpose is simple. When an abortion takes place, it is better for the woman concerned that the termination of her pregnancy should take place earlier rather than later. The medical arguments in support of that proposition are so overwhelming that I need not detain the House by repeating them. They were well described by the hon. Member for Peckham.

Therefore, I hope that the House can agree the general proposition that the law should be so drawn that it is not a deterrent to early termination—or, put the other way round, that it is not a positive encouragement to later termination.

All the evidence available to me points to the inevitable conclusion that the need to have two rather than one medical practitioner leads to later termination of pregnancy, but it does not deter termination. Therefore, it is neutral on the broad issue that has been engaging our attention for so long.

The House knows that I am not an enthusiast for abortion—nor do I hold the view that abortion is only a belated form of contraception. Indeed, I am most certainly opposed to abortion on demand. However, I accept the realities of life. Whatever the moral and religious attitudes of any society, abortions take place. The practical issue is whether those abortions take place within or without the law.

Earlier in our proceedings we endeavoured to redefine the legal rules for abortion. Later this evening we will be discussing further refinements of those legal rules. This amendment lies clearly within those legal rules—and, indeed, can accommodate any of the further amendments on the Amendment Paper. As I said earlier—and I now repeat—it is directed simply to make earlier rather than later termination of pregnancy easier.

If the House accepts our amendment, we will, as the hon. Member for Peckham said, be entirely in line with our European partners in the European Community. The vast majority of abortions in Europe take place within the 12-week span. We find from Jennifer Gunning's helpful paper that terminations of pregnancies take place as follows in other European countries. In Denmark, 97·5 per cent. of terminations take place within the 12-week span. In France, the figure is 97 per cent.; and in the Federal Republic of Germany, it is 93 per cent. The figure for the Netherlands is slightly distorted because it apparently has a large intake of foreign women seeking abortions in later pregnancy, largely because until now Belgium has not had legal abortion. Therefore, the figure for the Netherlands is only 89 per cent., but the figure for this country is only 84 per cent.

If, as a result of passing amendment No. 31, we increased that figure of 84 per cent. to above 90 per cent., I believe that we would be making a useful and helpful contribution to a number of the women who are at risk. In addition, other European countries now have a strong bias in their law in favour of a 12-week limit. They include Belgium, Spain and Italy, where the limit is 90 days.

I trust that I have said enough to demonstrate that it is now the general practice in Europe to terminate pregnancies, where the law allows termination, within 12 weeks.

Those who would resist our modest, but helpful amendment, must demonstrate that their insistence upon the opinion of two, rather than one, medical practitioners would provide a degree of medical protection for the pregnant woman which would be substantially diminished if the decision to terminate was taken on the opinion of only one medical practitioner, not two. I await the demonstration of such a proposition. I am unaware of its medical strength.

I trust that I have said enough to persuade the House that amendment No. 31 represents a modest but medically useful change in our abortion law, which does not alter the basic criteria for a legal termination of pregnancy, but will be beneficial to the woman concerned —the woman at risk.

Sir David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): It is not often that one is pressed to make a speech in the House, but on this occasion several hon. Members have asked me, as the promoter of the original legislation—the Abortion Act 1967—to give my views on the amendments and new clauses that we are considering. I notice wryly that some of those who were pressing me are not present to have the benefit of what I am about to say—but that's life.

I shall address my remarks briefly to the three issues central to our debate until 7 o'clock. The first has already been discussed—the easing of the regulations for abortions in the early part of pregnancy. The second is the proposed extension of the law to Northern Ireland, and the third is the proposed certification of conscientious objection.

On the first issue, I very much follow the line of argument of the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price). I vividly remember in our debates on the passage of the original legislation the general agreement in the House and across the Committee—regardless of the views taken about the merits of my Bill—that if abortion was to be carried out, it was best carried out early. Unhappily, the experience of the working of the Act over the past 22 years shows that the desire of the House, as then expressed, has not been fully carried out.

The hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) mentioned the report of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which strikingly reminds us that one fifth of all abortions performed over 20 weeks are on women who had been referred within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. It is significant that that was not an early report—it was published in 1984. But in the 16 or 17 years of the working of the legislation until then, there was clearly still a bottleneck somewhere in the system, resulting in undesirable late abortions which could have been carried out earlier.

There are three reasons why the House should give favourable consideration to the suggestions before us. The first is administrative—too many abortions are needlessly

[Sir David Steel]

carried out late. If we could simplify the procedure for earlier abortion, we could transfer later abortions into those carried out earlier in pregnancy—

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Does the right hon. Gentleman recall the arguments that he deployed when promoting his Bill in 1967 to justify the use of two doctors, as opposed to one, and will he outline those arguments to the House?

Sir David Steel: Yes, of course I recall them and I stand by that basic provision. But the House should now look carefully at the experience of the working of the legislation, compared with the intentions at the time—

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What were the arguments?

Sir David Steel: I do not deny that there are good arguments for having two doctors—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order.

Sir David Steel: I shall not be deflected from my speech. I shall stick to the narrow issue before us which is whether we should contemplate a change in the law relating to the early period of pregnancy—

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What were the arguments?

Sir David Steel: The hon. Gentleman can make his own speech later.

What the hon. Member for Eastleigh said about the European experience is instructive. Most of our European neighbours introduced legislation on abortion after we legislated in 1967. The hon. Gentleman mentioned the case of Belgium which made abortion legal only this year. Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Turkey all adopted a system which makes abortion difficult after the early period of pregnancy but makes it easy in the first stage. In a sense our legislation has been overtaken by the light of experience and views in other countries. There are good administrative grounds for making this minor change to the 1967 Act.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir David Steel: I am reluctant to give way too often, but I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Leigh: Surely the point that the right hon. Gentleman does not address is that, as he said, in those countries late abortions are more difficult than here. If the amendment is accepted we shall have abortion on demand up to 12 weeks and relatively easy abortion after 12 weeks. That is quite different from the position on the continent.

Sir David Steel: If I catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall deal with the law on later abortions in the debate on a later amendment. I should like to confine my remarks to the provisions of this amendment.

I do not pretend for a moment that the law in each of the countries that I listed is identical to that of all the others. It is not. In some cases there is almost a total prohibition on late abortion. The hon. Member for Eastleigh gave the figures for Denmark, where there is almost total prohibition after 12 weeks of pregnancy. It is most difficult to obtain an abortion after 12 weeks. In other countries it is relatively easy, but there is still a distinction between the two periods of pregnancy. We should be wise to adopt that distinction.

The second reason why I favour the change is the simple reason of publicity. If it becomes known that, in short, the law of the land states clearly that abortion before the 12th week is administratively easier and that the law encourages abortion before the 12th week of pregnancy, if it must take place at all, people will be more likely to present themselves earlier. In support of that I cite a letter from the Brook advisory clinic. It tells us:

> "While recognising that Parliament has now voted for a 24 week upper limit for the termination of pregnancy we still have many concerns for those vulnerable young people who turn to us late in pregnancy. Many fail to recognise the signs and symptoms of pregnancy through a lack of sex education and appropriate services to which they may turn."

If it enters people's minds that there is a new 12-week cut-off before which abortion is relatively simple to obtain and after which the administrative complications and medical referrals are much more difficult, we shall take a major step towards pushing abortions into the earlier part of pregnancy.

The third argument that I adduce is that abortion techniques have changed since we legislated in 1967. In those days almost all abortions were carried out by one form of surgery or another. Nowadays they can be carried out by injection or what is euphemistically called the morning-after pill, which is an early abortifacient. There have always been legal doubts about whether the morning-after pill can be prescribed within the present abortion law. The amendment would remove that doubt because a single doctor could prescribe the drug, which works in the early period of pregnancy. For all the reasons that I have given, I favour the proposal of the hon. Members for Peckham and for Eastleigh and I shall support them in the Lobby.

Government amendment No. 54 deals with whether the law should extend to Northern Ireland. I cannot remember exactly why the 1967 Act was not extended to Northern Ireland, but I suspect that one reason was that in those days Stormont still existed. We had only a small coterie of Northern Ireland Members in the House. Again, we are entitled to examine the practice of the law since 1967. Ireland—both the north and the south—is now the only country in Europe where abortion has not been legalised. It is no good people saying that abortion does not take place in Northern Ireland. We have the figures for women who come from Northern Ireland to obtain abortions in England and Wales. In 1988 the figure was 1,815. That does not include those who made the journey to Scotland, for which I do not have the figure to hand. We are talking about almost 2,000 women a year who come to Britain from Northern Ireland for abortions. Again, that has the effect of causing late abortions. By the time a referral has been made and a place found for a woman, precious weeks have passed. The extension of the Abortion Act 1967 to Northern Ireland would reduce the number of late abortions.

We must also consider the cost. If the national health service cannot provide the facility in Northern Ireland, it is unlikely that much of the NHS will provide it on the mainland. The result is that in the main such women go to private clinics. On top of that, they have the cost of travel, so the cost of abortion becomes prohibitive and may be a cause of further delay.

A survey has been carried out among members of the British Medical Association in Northern Ireland. The proposal in the amendment is supported by the majority of doctors in the Province.

A further argument for extending the Act relates to the section which deals with foetal abnormality. Ante-natal screening for foetal abnormality is not widely offered in Northern Ireland because if an abnormality is detected termination cannot be offered under the present law. That should be changed.

5.15 pm

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North) *rose*——

Mr. Alton: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir David Steel: I shall give way to my hon. Friend in a moment. For all the reasons that I have given, I believe that it is right to extend the legislation to the Province of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Alton: Will the right hon. Gentleman cite the reference in the BMA report that he quoted to the House? The latest poll that was conducted among doctors in Northern Ireland showed that over 80 per cent. were entirely opposed to extending the legislation to the Province. The latest opinion poll in Northern Ireland showed that 90 per cent. of people were opposed to it. Only last week 60,000 signatures were presented from people in Northern Ireland against the extension. Does he agree that on any other occasion he would recognise that, where Catholic and Protestant opinion in Northern Ireland is united and there is a shared platform, public opinion should be listened to?

Sir David Steel: I am prepared to concede to my hon. Friend, who, like me, has some knowledge of the Province, that the majority of public opinion in Northern Ireland is probably against the extension. That is a valid point for the House to ponder. However, we must decide whether that prevailing opinion in the Province should lead us to deny a facility and a right which is extended to all other female citizens of the United Kingdom. That is the issue before us.

I do not pretend that extending the Act will be met with enthusiasm, but I do not see how my hon. Friend can defend the fact that Northern Irish women must travel to Britain to obtain something which they cannot obtain in their own Province. He cannot say that there is no requirement for abortion when the figures show that that is what happens and that it results in delay and later abortions. That is the argument with which I counter my hon. Friend's argument. I do not deny that the figures that he produced are right.

Mr. Alton: What is the reference for the right hon. Gentleman's figure?

Sir David Steel: I shall find the reference in my papers; I do not have it to hand.

New clause 5, which deals with a register of conscientious objection, has not yet been spoken to. I am afraid that at this point I part company with the hon. Member for Peckham. Together with the now Lord St. John of Fawsley I introduced the conscience clause in 1967 although we had opposite views on the substance of the Bill. I have taken an absolutely consistent view on the matter of conscience. I fought within my own party conference on the issue.

Abortion divides hon. Member from hon. Member, church from church and doctor from doctor, so group dynamics should never be made to operate. The individual conscience is important. I have tried to stop my party passing resolutions on the subject which would bind its members. I regret that the Labour party has proposed such resolutions. I regret even that there is a two-line Whip on the Third Reading of the Bill. I am wholly consistent. I object to the idea that a conscience should somehow be held in a public register. That seems to me a repugnant concept. It would bring undue pressure to bear on those who hold that view.

I do not deny that, as a result of the exercise of that conscientious objection by some doctors, in some cases women would be denied the facility and the right to which they are entitled. However, in the general practices of which I am aware the doctor who holds that conscientious objection tells the patient so and refers her to doctor X who will consider her case. That is proper, good practice.

The idea of a public register of conscience is objectionable and I shall not support new clause 5.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): Whatever my disagreement has been with the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) since he introduced his Bill, I pay honour to him for sticking to his guns regarding the necessity for preserving the right of conscience in this matter.

I also agree with the right hon. Gentleman that if an abortion—always a tragic happening—is to be carried out, the earlier the better, given that there are satisfactory grounds for it and proper medical approval and attention. That proviso is absolutely key.

I am profoundly disturbed by the group of amendments now under discussion, the like of which I have not heard discussed in this place in the 40 years I have sat here. I venture to suggest that public opinion will be outraged when it learns what has been advocated today.

On 2 May I wrote a letter to a colleague in the House who was canvassing support for an amendment that would allow abortions up to 12 weeks on the agreement of a single doctor. We have been repeatedly told that new clauses 1 and 6 and amendment No. 31 will not allow abortion on demand, but, whatever is said, everyone knows that under the present system, when two doctors' signatures are required, collusion sometimes occurs. Abortions for the most trifling reason are granted on one ground or another. Over the years there have been enough scandals for me not to go into detail. If only one doctor's signature is now to be required it is inevitable that the situation will get worse.

My thoughts on this matter have not been dreamed up in response to what has been said this afternoon. I shall quote from the letter that I sent to my colleague on 2 May as it sets out the history of the matter and its inherent dangers. I wrote:

"The idea of allowing abortion on the agreement of only one doctor. . . was first floated by Government advisers as far back as 1977. At that time it was suggested that the development of abortifacient drugs would enable women to abort at home, thus diminishing the need for late abortion." Incidentally, at that time no one ever mentioned legalising abortion up to birth, but the Bill, as it is presently drafted, would permit that in certain circumstances.

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): Not true.

Dr. Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy): How many abortions have taken place as late as that in Scotland, where the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 has never applied?

Sir Bernard Braine: Over the years, I have participated in debates relating to England and Wales and I have learnt never to engage in a discussion of the different approaches and nuances involved in Scottish practice. After all the disappointments in the world cup I must say that my admiration for Scottish things has gone up greatly. I shall not tangle with the hon. Gentleman about this, except to say that there are differences.

My letter continued that the idea of allowing abortions on the agreement of a single doctor had then been floated again by Government advisers at the time of the Corrie Bill, when the development of abortifacient drugs was stressed once again. My letter stated:

"Today, of course, we have RU 486 and the Government could no doubt save millions of pound through a law enabling women to be aborted at home by their own GPs"—

if the proposals that we are debating are accepted, we shall be talking about not two doctors, but one. I also wrote that at that particular stage—the letter was written on 2 May—there was no attempt to amend section 1(3) of the Abortion Act with regard to the operation being carried out in an "approved place".

This week, however, the final piece in the jigsaw is found. Later today we shall debate amendment No. 29, which would allow the Secretary of State to extend the meaning of approved places for abortion treatment consisting primarily in the use of medicines or, more bluntly, abortifacient drugs.

New clauses 1 and 6 and amendment No. 31, together with amendment No. 29, would therefore change the law to allow abortions through abortifacient drugs such as RU 486 to be carried out by one doctor in the patient's home. The Secretary of State must give us a clear explanation as to why we should change the meaning of "an approved place" in order to allow abortion in the home. That is a grave matter.

Over the years and throughout our debates on abortion the spectre of the back-street abortionist has been raised. Pro-abortionists have always failed to mention, however, that before 1967, many back-street abortionists were doctors or midwives aborting women in their own homes or in a private clinic.

I am one of the few hon. Members still in the House who—after the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale had had his Bill enacted—served on the Select Committee on Abortion, which met on 15 March 1976 to hear evidence from Sir John Peel. Sir John was a former president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, he was then president of the British Medical Association and he was one of the most distinguished gynaecologists of that time. It is important to record what he told that Committee, on page 78 of the minutes of evidence. Sir John was asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden) what effect the 1967 Act had had on illegal back-street abortions:

"if the present Act were tightened, would this be likely to lead to a substantial increase in the number of illegal back-street abortions?"

Sir John replied:

"I always did think that the back-street abortion prior to the 1967 Act was nothing like as common an event as it was thought to be, and the statistics alone indicated that the back-street abortionist so-called was a pretty efficient operator. I think that a lot of the people who would be labelled back-street abortionists before the Act are now front-street abortionists, and technologically they are very competent at doing the particular job. I do not think there is any doubt about that."

5.30 pm

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): I must say on behalf of many women while the Father of the House is quoting somebody else's opinion that the thought of women having to return to back-street abortionists fills many of us with horror.

Sir Bernard Braine: It has always filled me with horror, too. My hon. Friend, for whom I have great respect, has not been following the drift of my argument. I am describing the sort of people whom Sir John thought were engaged in the business of back-street abortions prior to the Act.

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, West) *rose*——

Sir Bernard Braine: No, I shall not give way at this stage, because I wish to pay tribute to the fact that the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale made a genuine attempt in 1967 to clean up an extremely unsatisfactory situation. However, I am quoting from evidence given nine years later into the working of that Act.

The right hon. Gentleman's measure introduced certain improvements, but there were also some abuses, and I am sure that he would agree with that. A later Bill introduced by Mr. James White seeking greater control over abortion obtained a big majority, the House will recall, but the Government of the day decided that the matter was so technical and difficult that, rather than proceed, they would set up a Select Committee to look into the issue in great detail.

I was a member of that Select Committee, as was the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale and a number of hon. Members who are in the House to this day. We took evidence, and I have been quoting from evidence given by the president of the British Medical Association, a former extremely distinguished gynaecologist with a worldwide reputation. I am merely reporting to the House what he said, and hon. Members can draw their own conclusions.

The statement made by Sir John Peel at that time is highly relevant now. The combination of amendments now before the House would revive back-street abortions of the type to which he was referring, without the safeguard of a second medical opinion, which has always been thought necessary since the passage of the right hon. Gentleman's measure. If we are to reach a sensible, balanced, rational and decent conclusion to these deliberations, we must have a clear lead from the Minister.

The idea of easier abortion on the authority of one doctor, as I pointed out, had been put forward by Government advisers on several occasions in the past. We must be told whether the same advice is being given to the Government now. I leave the matter there. The House must search its conscience in deciding whether the proposals inherent in the group of amendments that we are now considering can be accepted, knowing in our hearts what the reality is in the world of abortion.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I will take the House into my confidence because so many hon. Members wish to participate in the proceedings, and rightly so. I urge those whom I call to speak for seven to 10 minutes so that we can have all points of view in this important debate aired.

Mr. Alton: I shall try to stay within that time limit, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Three questions are before the House as we debate this group of new clauses and amendments. The first is whether abortion should be allowed up to 12 weeks; the second concerns changes to the conscience clause; and the third refers to Northern Ireland.

In 1967, when the original legislation was laid before the House, my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel), in trying to tackle the problem of back-street abortions, said it was not the purpose of his measure to create abortion on demand. Yet, as one who has been strongly involved with this issue, I have not received a letter from anyone saying that they have been unable, under the 1967 legislation, to obtain an abortion in this country.

At a time when one in five pregnancies ends in abortion —184,000 each year—one issue should unite every hon. Member, and that is a desire to reduce the total number of abortions. So missing from the proposal of the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) is the second part of the equation. She and my right hon. Friend referred to the European situation but, as the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) said, abortion there is restricted in the later periods—a point on which I have tried to concentrate the minds of hon. Members on many occasions.

The average European Community upper time limit is 12 to 14 weeks. Before the House now is a time limit of 24 weeks in most cases and in some cases right the way up to birth. So we are being asked to extend the legislation to provide abortion—abortion on demand, which we were told in 1967 would not happen, and in a climate of 184,000 abortions a year—up until birth.

We have been told today that one reason for that is the issue of delay. The hon. Member for Peckham omitted to tell the House that the 1984 report of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists said:

"The major reason for delay at 15 to 19 weeks is the wait for a prostaglandin abortion, which of course must be done late, by its very nature."

It added:

"In less than 5 per cent. of cases, the failure to recognise pregnancy was a delay definitely attributable to the doctor."

However much one may wish to criticise the NHS on other occasions, as the majority of late abortions concern people from overseas, who are unable to obtain abortions in their own countries—last year women from over 100 countries came here for abortions—we can hardly blame them on the NHS. So let us clearly understand what we are being asked to agree today.

In none of the speeches made for the group of amendments has anything been said about the child, even though the child is another vital part of the equation. How can we talk about abortion without thinking of the effects on the child? Does not the child have some rights? As we reach the final stages of the Bill, the House is being asked to allow abortion right up to birth if the unborn child is handicapped. We shall debate that issue on the next amendment, after the 7 o'clock vote. In the context of that amendment, hon. Members will appreciate that I cannot have much faith in the desire of hon. Members to preserve the minimal rights of the child. Indeed, having unlinked the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1920 from the Abortion Act 1967, we have made the position infinitely worse.

In these debates we rarely talk about post-abortion trauma. But we must consider the effects of an abortion on the woman. I have received hundreds of letters from women describing the effects of early and late abortions. It is not an easy operation. Indeed, it is a disaster for everybody involved. Frequently people are psychologically scarred for life.

Secondly—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Peckham would not give way when I tried to intervene in her speech and is continually trying to make a point from a sedentary position during mine, but I am happy to give way to allow her to make it.

Ms. Harman: I was just hoping that as the hon. Gentleman has expressed his concern about the abortion rate he might turn his attention to preventing unwanted pregnancies by talking about sex education and family planning. He has accused us of never mentioning the child, but we try to prevent unwanted pregnancies. He never seems to talk about measures that would lower the abortion rate by preventing unwanted pregnancies.

Mr. Alton: In that case the hon. Lady does not listen. I talk at great length on those subjects. I believe that we should talk more openly about sexuality—and more responsibly, a word rarely used. We talk about our rights but not about our responsibilities to each other. We should put sexual relations in that context. Destroying the consequences of our actions is not the solution for anyone; it is not a solution to a problem if another person's life is ended. We must consider the position of the unborn child, and of the mother and family.

As for the conscience clause, there are serious reasons why the House should resist the blacklist proposal—I am happy to agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale about that. This amendment is aimed at criminalising doctors who cannot in all conscience participate in abortions. It is intended to intimidate doctors who might take the conscience clause. The amendment institutionalises job discrimination by allowing employers to check the register before interviewing applicants. In the past, employers have not been allowed to specify abortion experience as necessary for a post. If the amendment is passed, excellent gynaecologists will be passed over because their names appear on the register. That opens the door to intimidation by a minority of pro-abortion activists who will be able to identify targets with ease—as we witnessed during recent debates on abortion legislation.

There is no evidence that any woman has been unable to obtain an abortion because of the conscience clause in its present form. To make it a criminal offence not to register publicly a conscientious objection is unprecedented and designed to prosecute those with sincerely held beliefs. This is a deeply repugnant proposal; it is authoritarian and illiberal and the House should reject it.

Thirdly, I turn to the extension to Northern Ireland. As I said earlier, this issue unites people on both sides of the divide there. It is extraordinarily arrogant of the House not to listen to the voices in Northern Ireland. At a

[Mr. Alton]

meeting only last week representatives of the DUP—for instance, the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea)—the leader of the Ulster Unionists, the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), and the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) of the SDLP came together on the same platform. Sixty thousand signatures have been received from groups in the Province opposed to the extension of the legislation.

In 1984—the last time this was considered—the Northern Ireland Assembly voted 20 to one against an extension to Northern Ireland. Every political party apart from Sinn Fein—even it recently modified its policy to one of neutrality—opposes the extension of the legislation. Eighteen councils are against extension and none is in favour. A poll of doctors in 1987 showed that 90 per cent. were against extension and a Gallup poll in 1982 found that 83 per cent. of people expressing an opinion were opposed to social abortions. So the people of Northern Ireland oppose an extension of the legislation and their views should be heard.

This issue was not raised on Second Reading and members of the Committee had no chance to consider it in Committee. It is monstrous that at this late stage of proceedings it should be proposed that the legislation be extended to Northern Ireland against the wishes of its representatives and people. I wholeheartedly urge the House to oppose the recommendation.

5.45 pm

Miss Emma Nicholson: In this country abortion used to be the most common method of contraception, and it still is in the developing world. There are 60 million abortions a year worldwide, 25 million of which are carried out illegally, and a leading cause of death among mothers in the developing countries is septic abortion. In Romania the death rate from abortion rose sevenfold when restrictive abortion laws were introduced in 1966.

In the United Kingdom we have moved a long way; we have more enlightened thinking these days. Contraception is readily available; there is far greater education, in schools and through other organisations, on ways of limiting the family, and I suggest there has been a dramatic removal of the stigma of using birth control methods—a stigma that was common before the Abortion Act 1967. But there is still some way to go, which is why I introduced new clause 5 in the previous debate on this issue. I was grateful then to the House for giving me the time in which to discuss it, and I am enormously grateful to all hon. Members who have shown an interest in this crucial proposal.

I was sorry that the right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) dismissed my wish to discuss this important point with him as an attempt to canvass support. The issue is more important than that.

England and Wales have the smallest proportion in the European Community of legal abortions at eight weeks or under, and the highest percentage of abortions performed at 13 to 16 weeks and at 17 weeks and over. Yet the trend among the general public has been towards earlier abortions all the time. In 1968, 61 per cent. of all abortions took place under 13 weeks; the figure in 1988 was 84 per cent. So there has been a tremendous move towards earlier abortions and a corresponding reduction in abortions performed between 13 and 19 weeks—from 34 per cent. to 13 per cent.

Among women seeking abortions and among the medical profession there has been a move towards earlier abortions. In the context of the massive efforts of the pro-life campaign in the House to limit later abortions, it is of great interest to us all to recognise that between 1968 and 1988 abortions at more than 20 weeks remained at a steady 3 per cent. So the shift has been downwards, apart from odd abortions performed after 20 weeks, and I find that immensely encouraging.

I am encouraged because, like my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) and other hon. Members, I believe that if abortion is to take place, the earlier the better, because the trauma for mothers and the unfortunate nurses and gynaecologists, who have other things to do besides perform abortions, is correspondingly reduced. There are also concomitant and massive economic savings in NHS beds and other medical services.

The hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) has already mentioned north Devon, which has an interesting system of immediate telephone referral from the GP to the consultant. That means that a mother who presents herself for an abortion is given an appointment with a consultant within one day. She will then have an abortion within a week. Nearly all abortions in north Devon are carried out before 12 weeks. That is because the consultant is in favour of early abortions, but early abortions are so sought after throughout Britain that about half the abortions carried out by that gynaecologist are performed on women from outside north Devon.

I want to knock on the head the idea that earlier abortions have led to a higher incidence of abortions. In the 11 to 19-year-old age group in north Devon, 8·9 per 1,000 mothers have an abortion, compared with 14·1 per 1,000 nationally—that is considerably lower. In the whole age group on whom abortions are performed—women between the ages of 11 and 49—the figures are 5·7 per 1,000 in north Devon, compared with 12·5 per 1,000 in the rest of the United Kingdom. Early abortions do not lead to a rise in the number of abortions. One could postulate that they lead to fewer. In the developing countries where there are illegal and septic abortions, a lack of contraceptive facilities and where legal abortions are not available, about 60 women per 1,000 present themselves for abortion.

As I said, easy and early abortion does not lead to higher abortion rates. It is caused by good school education, enlightened gynaecologists and a good social attitude. We cannot replicate that throughout the United Kingdom, much as we would like to. It is clear that we have not managed to do so, hence the incidence of later abortions outside north Devon and throughout the rest of the United Kingdom.

I shall deal finally with public opinion and the opinion of gynaecologists. A series of polls carried out from 1979 to 1988 asked whether the choice to continue pregnancy should be left to the woman in consultation with her doctor. That proposition was supported by 80 per cent. of the public and by 73 per cent. of gynaecologists. Amendment No. 31 does not offer the right to choose. It does not tread that difficult path in total deference to the susceptibilities of Parliament's conscience. It fits in neatly with public opinion and chimes in with informed medical opinion—the medical specialists and the gynaecologists. It

is in line with European Community thinking and the later legislation which resulted from that and which was introduced after our 1967 Act. More important, it sends the proper signal to society as a whole that if abortions are to take place we should get them over and done with.

Mr. A.E.P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): I oppose new clause 1, which would allow abortion on demand up to 12 weeks and I support amendment No. 54, which would extend the 1967 Act to Northern Ireland. New clause 1 will allow abortion with no regard for mental, medical or eugenic reasons following a request by the mother to any doctor.

The Abortion Act 1967 required that abortion should be carried out for only specific medical reasons. I presume that that was the purpose of the probing question posed by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel). Under that Act a second opinion and a signature were required to ensure the safety of the mother and the baby. Under new clause 1 none of those safeguards would apply to demands for abortion where the pregnancy has not exceeded 12 weeks. That saddens me because it seems only to emphasise present trends.

In my city of Sheffield the number of abortions has risen steadily throughout the past decade and, contrary to the suggestion by my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) about experience in other parts of England, an increasing number of those abortions have been carried out on the national health service. I am worried not only about the trends, but about the manner in which that will prejudice the social climate about which we have heard in the debates today and yesterday. We heard about it in the speech by the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson). In today's debate hon. Members appear to be concerned about doctors, while in yesterday's debate they were worried about donors and about almost everyone but the child, especially the unborn child.

Disregard for the sanctity of life and the rights of the unborn child has a bad effect on our society. I repeat that there has been too much evidence of that not only today but during yesterday's debate and in the debates that we had five or six weeks ago. That makes me wonder whether there will be abuse.

I was interested to hear the statistics from north Devon. We need more such breakdowns and the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West is to be commended. I tried to collect such statistics in Sheffield. During the 1980s no abortions were sought on the ground that the life of the expectant mother was at risk, and fewer than 1 per cent. were sought on the ground of handicap. I presume that the 1,500 unborn children who are killed every year in Sheffield are healthy.

I have tried and failed to find out something about the motives for those abortions, and I invite hon. Members to try to find out what happens in their constituencies under section 2 of the 1967 Act. I and my hon. Friends have tried. Obviously, most abortions are performed under section 2. The Secretary of State for Health could tell us the reasons for those abortions and I invite him to do so. On 24 April I tried my darndest to intervene in the speech by the Minister for Health. I said then that it would be helpful on Report for the Secretary of State or his Minister to let the House have more information about section 2.

I fear abuse because new clause 1 requires no reason for abortion other than the mother's demand. It will abandon all pretence of medical causes and will open the door to more social abortions, abortions of convenience. I suspect that it will allow abortion on all sorts of specious grounds, which I shall not go into now. The doctor's position will be made ambiguous by the new clause. He will not be required to consider medical reasons or the safety of the patient.

The delay argument has been dealt with effectively by my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton). It is claimed that the new clause will reduce delays in obtaining abortions and lower the number of late abortions. However, he reminded us of the 1984 study and report of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. That body has produced other studies. The new clause would put specific pressures on the mother, and we can well imagine them. I need not dwell on them because every hon. Member on whatever side of the argument will be well aware of them.

A comparison has been drawn between new clause 1 and the situation in Europe. My hon. Friend the Member for Peckham, who moved new clause 1, cited European experience but she did not say that European countries that allow abortion on demand up to 12 weeks also severely restrict abortion after 12 weeks. My hon. Friend the Member for Mossley Hill mentioned that, but I should like to spell it out. There are no proposals to restrict the availability of an abortion in Britain after 12 weeks. On the contrary, we are moving in another direction. None of those European countries has an appreciably lower rate of abortion than Britain. Some of them have a higher rate and I fear that the new clause will substantially increase the number of abortions and the abuse of abortion facilities.

As I said, I support amendment No. 54, which would extend the 1967 Act to Northern Ireland. It now seems in our society that human life is to have value only under certain conditions and new clause 1, which I have just dealt with, highlights just how much further society has drifted towards abortion on demand and towards the view that human life is disposable.

Health in Northern Ireland was covered by transferred powers to the old Stormont Parliament and to the power-sharing executive. It has certainly been Opposition policy, although this is not a party political matter, to interfere as little as possible in matters that should properly be devolved to a legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland. Specifically and directly health is one matter that would be transferred to a devolved Assembly. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is in his place and I invite him to say that the talks that he is so impressively and gallantly trying to bring about in Northern Ireland will deal with the devolution of health. I suspect that that matter is near the top of his agenda.

I do not know how the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland can sit so complacently alongside the Secretary of State for Health. He must know in his heart that the proposal will be carried unless the Secretary of State for Health goes into battle against it. He must know that the devolution argument, for people in Northern Ireland to take control of their affairs, is not helped when pressure groups of whatever hue or on whatever issue seek to extend the 1967 Act, which did not apply to Northern Ireland, by the back door.

It is a neo-colonialist attitude, patronising in the extreme, to say that the House knows better than all the

[Mr. A.E.P. Duffy]

elected Members for Northern Ireland who are united, as we shall hear, on this, as on other matters, but especially on medical, ethical and moral questions and matters of faith.

If a devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland sought to alter the legislation, will the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland confirm that it could not do so without a separate Westminster Act of Parliament amending British legislation? We are effectively tying the hands, in what would be a transferred area, of any future devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland with legislative powers.

I oppose new clause 1, but I support amendment No. 54.

6 pm

Rev. Ian Paisley: My colleagues and I oppose new clauses 1 and 6, amendment No. 31 and new clauses 5 and 7, and support amendment No. 54. I shall make a brief speech to allow others the opportunity to speak, and I want to concentrate on my opposition to new clause 7.

I want to make a protest on behalf of all the people of Northern Ireland. If the House is to legislate for Northern Ireland, let it do so decently and in order, and let it give Northern Ireland representatives, few though they be, an opportunity to discuss in the House every clause of a Bill, from its presentation to its Third Reading, and to deal with a matter that runs to the very gut and heart of the Ulster people. I must protest that it is mischievous to foist such a new clause on the House and on the people of Northern Ireland on Report.

I am not just speaking on behalf of the Protestant section of the community; I am speaking on behalf of my entire constituency and the entire constituency of Northern Ireland. I have had the highest vote in three elections to the European Parliament, so I speak for the whole Province on this issue.

I have consulted my parliamentary colleagues in the Social Democratic and Labour party and they are at one with the Unionists—the Ulster Unionists, the Democratic Unionists and the Popular Unionists, represented by the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder). We are at one on the issue.

The House should have a little respite for unity in Northern Ireland. The House oft times thinks that there is no unity in Northern Ireland. I have heard hon. Members on both sides of the House say, "Oh, if only you would agree, we would give you what you agreed on." Now we come to something that we agree on and we are told no. The new clause is to be rammed through the House on Report.

The overwhelming opposition is amazing, because it stretches from the Unionist parties to the nationalist SDLP. It stretches from the Churches to the students union of Queen's university, which in no way could be called a Conservative or right-wing body.

I was amazed to hear the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) tell us that the medical profession in Northern Ireland are in some sort of way overwhelmingly in support of the measure. That is definitely not true. The medical profession were canvassed by Dr. Ferguson and 1,575 replied, 60 per cent. of whom were opposed to it. How can any hon. Member tell the House that the medical profession are overwhelmingly in favour of the legislation being extended to Northern Ireland?

I want to make it perfectly clear that I resent what the right hon. Gentleman said in another regard. Foetal abnormality, rape, risk to the physical health of a mother and severe psychological trauma are catered for in Northern Ireland. Abortions are available in such cases. I resent the suggestion that we are opposed to the woman having any protection. I am all for protecting the woman, but I am for protecting the child as well. I have made that clear in other speeches in the House.

In 1967, it was argued that, except we had abortion by law, there would be an increase in illegitimacy, child abuse and juvenile crime. One would have thought that, after 1967, we would have an ordered society and those problems would practically disappear. But today's figures show that illegitimacy, child abuse and juvenile crime are less per head of the population in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Let no hon. Member say that abortion will raise the ethical standards of the people.

Then we heard that there would be back-street abortions. There is no evidence of that in Northern Ireland. The number of deaths that result from abortion is lower in Northern Ireland than in any of the regions of England. Since 1967, there have been 3 million abortions, twice the population of Northern Ireland—3 million tiny lives snuffed out—and it has not led to a well-adjusted generation. We need to face up to that.

If the matter is to be dealt with in Northern Ireland —we do not have a local assembly; we do not even have proper representative local government—there should be a referendum on the matter. Let the people of Northern Ireland say exactly what should be done.

I repeat that all the parties are united. I am glad to see that the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) has just come into the House. I was mentioning before he came in that his party was united with us all in our opposition to abortions. The three parties represented in the House are opposed to the measure. We have 26 local councils. They have no real power, but 18 of them have debated the measure and voted against it. None of the remaining councils were prepared to say that they wanted it. Therefore, no council went on record as wanting the measure. The Northern Ireland Assembly voted 20:1 against it, although the SDLP was not present at that Assembly, which we regret.

Reference was made to the Gallup poll, in which 83 per cent. of the Northern Ireland community expressed opposition to abortion when sought by unmarried women or those not wishing to have a larger family.

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): My hon. Friend referred to the impression that is often given that the boats are filled with women from Northern Ireland crossing the Irish sea to have an abortion on the mainland. Is he aware that only 0·5 per cent. of the ladies concerned are from the Province and that 99·5 per cent. of women in the Province want nothing to do with abortion and stand with their public representatives in opposing the Bill? The facts should be put before the House.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I appeal to the House to reject the Bill and to let the people of Northern Ireland speak up. Winston Churchill said that one should trust the people.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I reinforce the hon. Gentleman's remarks about the position taken by all political parties in the north of Ireland. I know that there will not be time for me to contribute to the debate, but I want to make it clear that the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) represents the views of all the political parties in the north of Ireland on an issue about which the people there feel very strongly. There can be no doubt that on this occasion all the political parties there, because they understand the seriousness of the proposal, are united in their opposition.

It would be interesting to calculate the number of times since I first entered the House that all the Northern Ireland parties have voted together. The result might astound those who look at us somewhat askance. There can be no doubt that in this case we are united in our opposition to a measure that we think would be bad for Northern Ireland.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I thank the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh for his helpful intervention. I do not usually give way to him so quickly, but I was delighted to do so on this occasion. I must leave matters there, because my time is up.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): I speak in support of new clause 7 and in opposition to Government amendment No. 54. The Abortion Act 1967 was never extended to Northern Ireland. The law governing that issue in Northern Ireland is the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, which entirely prohibits abortion with only one exception. The 1861 Act states that any person performing, attempting and or assisting in any abortion

"shall be guilty of a felony and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be kept in penal servitude for life"

—except where an abortion is absolutely necessary to save a woman's life.

That came about because the 1861 Act was amended for Northern Ireland in 1945 as a consequence of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1921. That allows an abortion to be performed in order to save a woman's life, but only after 28 weeks of pregnancy. That anomaly arises because the Infant Life (Preservation) Act deals only with the period after the 28th week of pregnancy and up until after the birth. As the 1861 Act still governs the first seven months of pregnancy, there is no legal provision for abortion in Northern Ireland during the first 28 weeks of pregnancy.

I refer to two cases reported in the *New Statesman* of 16 October 1987. The first concerns a girl of 14 whose father made her pregnant. Northern Ireland law did not guarantee her an abortion, but a consultant eventually agreed that her pregnancy should be terminated. As she was already 20 weeks pregnant, she was put on a prostaglandin drip for 48 hours. After initiating that treatment, the consultant went off duty. Some hours later, after the girl's labour had begun, the doctor on night duty removed the drip because he had ethical objections to abortion. On discovering that the following night, a woman doctor restored the drip and the pregnancy was subsequently terminated.

In another case, a woman of 26 who already had four young children found she was 11 weeks pregnant. She had bouts of anxiety and depression and was experiencing difficulties in her marriage. She suffered from a congenital heart defect and a chronic kidney infection. The consultant to whom she was referred for termination of her pregnancy on those grounds pronounced her fit to continue the pregnancy. As she was unable to afford the the fare to England to have an abortion, she gave birth to an unwanted baby.

6.15 pm

That is a horrifying state of affairs. Right hon. and hon. Members who have spoken against the extension of the 1967 Act to Northern Ireland may feel that, if they could become pregnant even in the same circumstances, they would not choose to have an abortion. My objection is to making criminals of the women who do make that choice. Even within the limits recognised as necessary to save a woman's life, it is commonsense that, the earlier an abortion is performed, the less traumatic and life-endangering it is likely to be. In any event, medical judgment in individual cases as to what is the least hazardous point at which to perform an abortion should be of paramount importance. If the law sets parameters that do not allow medical judgments to be freely exercised, it must be defective.

Few doctors would perform an abortion after 28 weeks in any case because of the greater risks and the likely effects on the woman's emotional state and mental health —and because of their own views on the moral aspects. In reality, abortion is extremely rare in Northern Ireland. Any woman there who finds herself pregnant must accept her lot, no matter the problems and difficulties that drove her to consider an abortion in the first place, in the realisation that she was likely to be left to get on with it, often with little or no help.

Alternatively, she can tell lies to all and sundry to explain away her brief disappearance while she goes to Britain and pays for a legal abortion that she may be unable to afford. The current all-in cost is around £300. She would have to do that without any assistance from her family or friends, and in the absence of any medical back-up when she returned home. Finally, she could opt for a back-street abortion, with all attendant risks to her health and life from which women in Great Britain were set free in 1967.

Every year, thousands of women from Northern Ireland come to Great Britain for abortions. In 1988, 1,815 of them attended clinics in England and Wales. Since 1978, more than 20,000 women have come over to England and Wales for abortions, and many more give a false address in Britain. I wonder if right hon. and hon. Members who think that they are speaking for their constituents speak also for those 20,000 women who were forced to come to Britain for an abortion.

I will tell the House of the experience of one woman who came to Britain 14 years ago for such an operation. She had always been anti-abortion, but when faced with an abortion in an unhappy marriage that was on the verge of breaking up, she felt that she had no choice. Some right hon. and hon. Members may feel that they would have done otherwise in her circumstances—but most can never experience pregnancy, let alone find themselves in that woman's dilemma. I refuse to regard her as a criminal for making the decision that she did.

That woman has related her experiences in the clinic that she used. Of the 12 women in the ward, only nine were Irish and only one was under 16. Most were middle-aged women who had been caught out by the menopause. She

was one of the few between 20 and 25 years of age that the mythology presents as being the most common group. Only two of the 12 women were unmarried.

It is not as though contraception is freely available in Northern Ireland. Many women, and especially those living outside the urban areas, are reluctant to seek advice on contraception and counselling, particularly from their family doctor. Another consequence of the current law is that there is a virtual absence of screening procedures for identifying conditions such as Down's syndrome or spina bifida, though such tests are easily available in the rest of the United Kingdom.

It is time that the women of Northern Ireland were freed from the burden that has been lifted from women in similar circumstances in Scotland, England and Wales. We should ensure that women receive support and back-up, whatever decision they take. New clause 7 merely asks that the law applying in Great Britain, which recognises the risks to women's health and to life itself, and the other legitimate reasons for abortion that Parliament recognised, should be equally valid and to the point for women in Northern Ireland and should extend to them as well.

Hon. Members have made a point about imposing legislation if all the elected representatives are opposed to it. I must point out that no one will be made to have an abortion who does not want one, and no one will be made to carry out an abortion if they are opposed to doing so. We are simply saying that it is high time that elected Members of Parliament, who are not speaking for women who have sought abortions, recognised the fact that some women in Northern Ireland will want an abortion at some time in their lives, even if they are opposed to it at the moment. Those hon. Members should recognise the freedom of women to do what they want.

Rev. William McCrea: I have listened to the hon. Lady's speech carefully and have noticed that one thing is absent—she has never once mentioned that the child being aborted is a human being. Before she sits down, will she please give some cognisance to the fact that children have some rights? I speak as a father with five children at home.

Mrs. Fyfe: I am sorry that I gave way for the hon. Gentleman to make that point. In the three cases that I mentioned—I do not have time to go into more—I pointed out that, even if hon. Members think that it was morally wrong for those women to have abortions and that it ought to be a criminal offence, I disagree, and I would not make a criminal of a woman in those circumstances.

People on this side of the argument care about unborn children. We reject the idea that we do not care about unborn babies, but we recognise that women in desperate circumstances will make the decision to have an abortion, and we will not criminalise them for it.

Mr. Leigh: I have not yet attempted to take part in the debate, because the divide between the two sides seemed to be so deep and unbridgeable that I felt that any comment I could make would add more heat than light to the argument. However, I hope to try to bridge the divide in a couple of minutes.

As the father of four children, I accept that a woman's life is precious, as is her health, and that the life, the upbringing and education of existing children are also precious.

I respect what I understand to be the motives behind the Abortion Act 1967, which was introduced by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel). I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman believes in the sanctity of the unborn human life, but he wants to balance the sanctity of that life with the many other pressures—which hon. Members who have a family recognise—that are placed upon women.

As I understand it, the 1967 Act was based on the notion of balance. The right hon. Gentleman did not introduce the Act in the spirit that abortion could become a convenient form of birth control. I am sure that that was not his intention, and I think that he said so at the time.

Some hon. Members may regret the way that the Act has been interpreted, the way that things have developed and the number of abortions which have taken place. However, the right hon. Gentleman did not introduce abortion on demand. As far as he was concerned, he was introducing a balance.

I am fearful that, if the new clause is passed tonight, the wrong signals will be sent from the House. I fear that there is a malaise in our society, and I applaud the Government's efforts to insist that fatherhood, as well as motherhood, is a lifetime commitment. We cannot walk away from the consequences of our actions. We cannot think of an unborn child as a mere object. In a real sense it is a sacred object. Therefore, with all the passion that I can muster, I urge hon. Members not to give a wrong signal, and not to pass a provision which would be seen outside the House as allowing abortion on demand. That simple, straightforward moral issue cuts through the debate and is more important than arguments about delay.

Ms. Jo Richardson (Barking): I shall delay the House for only two or three minutes to explain the purpose of new clause 5. Its general theme is the reduction of late abortions. New clause 5, in a different way from new clauses 1 and 6, is intended as a positive means of avoiding unnecessary delay for any woman seeking advice about abortion because it places a duty—as those hon. Members who have read it will realise—on the general practitioner to state in a public register that he or she has a conscientious objection to abortion. The new clause would enable a woman to ensure that she did not suffer unnecessary delay by consulting a doctor who was unwilling to help her.

The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) said that he thought that a general practitioner would say, "I'm sorry, I am not willing to do it, but I will refer you to someone else." That would be fine if it worked, but it happens in some cases and not in others. I am sure that all right hon. and hon. Members have come across cases where a woman has gone from one doctor to another, and that is what we want to avoid.

In 1987, the consultant gynaecologist for Hexham told a Life conference that it was impossible—or almost impossible—to get a national health service abortion in Hexham. I wonder how late in pregnancy women in Hexham end up having abortions.

An interesting point for the House to consider is that, in February 1989, the Government published a background document called, "General Practice in the National Health Service—A New Contract". While there is much in that paper, and in the general thrust of the Government's plans for the national health service, with which Opposition Members do not agree, we all agree with the intention behind the statement:

"The Government places great importance on raising consumer awareness and understanding, of what constitutes good general practice and on increasing consumer influence in developing services to meet patients' needs".

The paper goes on to say that general practitioners should publicise the services that they offer.

As that is not yet in place, we want general practitioners who are not willing to perform abortions or to refer a woman for an abortion to sign a register so that a woman knows that a particular general practitioner would not help her if she went to see him or her. That would ensure that patients have access to the necessary information about their general practitioners, and would allow patients to make an informed choice before approaching a doctor.

As I understand it, general practitioners who offer contraception do so by saying that they have a certificate from the joint committee on contraception from their area health authority. The register is just another way of doctors making a statement to say, "I am sorry, there is nothing wrong with it, but I have an objection to carrying out abortions, and it is better that you know now, rather than come to me, when I will have to tell you and refer you to someone else, and you may find that the same thing happens again."

I hope that right hon. and hon. Members will consider the new clause in the light of my remarks. It is not in any way intended to hound general practitioners, but to relieve them of unnecessary visits from women they cannot help and whom they would have to tell, perhaps with some embarrassment, that they could not help.

One in five women who have abortions between 20 weeks and 23 weeks approached a doctor before the 12th week of pregnancy. Surely all hon. Members agree that no abortion should be later than necessary.

The new clause is a modest proposal, and it would in no way prevent doctors from exercising their right conscientiously to object to abortion. However, it would help women to get access to the services they need as quickly as possible. That is why we tabled the new clause.

6.30 pm

The Minister for Health (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley): The House is well aware that Ministers remain neutral on matters concerning abortion, which are issues for right hon. and hon. Members to exercise their conscience and use their own judgment. Traditionally, Ministers advise the House on details of administrative, medical or legal issues. I shall follow that tradition in seeking to comment on the amendments and new clauses.

Certainly Health Ministers have no particular expertise in advising other hon. Members how best they should make a moral or ethical judgment. Hon. Members will recall that, during the lengthy debate on the abortion clauses in the Bill in a Committee of the whole House, I agreed that we would come back if the House had voted for particular measures which would lead to an incoherent or inconsistent Bill. I assure the House that, having studied the results of the Committee stage, that is not the case, except for matters concerning Northern Ireland. In deciding whether to support the amendments, we believe that right hon. and hon. Members should exercise their own judgment, except that we believe that it would be right to leave existing arrangements for Northern Ireland unchanged.

My hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) tabled amendment No. 31, on which my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) and the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) spoke. The House will be aware that at present, in ordinary circumstances, a pregnancy may be terminated only if two doctors are of the opinion, formed in good faith, that an abortion is justified under one or more of the grounds specified in the Abortion Act 1967. The opinion of a single doctor is sufficient in cases where that doctor is of the opinion that abortion is immediately necessary to save the life of or to prevent grave permanent injury to the woman's health.

Amendment No. 31 enables the House to modify that position for pregnancies of 12 weeks or under. My hon. Friend referred to it as a limited, modest and useful measure. Some hon. Members may take that view, but during the debate it has become clear that my hon. Friends the Members for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) and for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) and the hon. Members for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) and for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) do not regard it in that light.

New clause 1 appears to be intended to allow a woman the right to have an abortion on request up to the 12th week of gestation, regardless of the grounds specified in the 1967 Act, if one registered medical practitioner certifies that the pregnancy has not exceeded that period. New clause 6 and amendment No. 31 do not go as far as new clause 1. They relax the two-doctor requirement and allow the termination of a pregnancy with the consent of one doctor, provided that the requirements of the Act are met and the doctor is of the opinion that the pregnancy has not exceeded 12 weeks. I am advised that, of the two proposals, amendment No. 31 is technically superior to new clause 6 and would achieve its purpose without further amendments to the Act being required.

In considering the new clauses and amendment No. 31, the House has agreed that, when an abortion is carried out —every case is clearly an individual tragedy—it is much better that it takes place early. Although 84 per cent. of abortions were carried out before 12 weeks' gestation in 1988, and in 1989 that figure had increased to 86 per cent., in 1988 some 30,000 abortions took place after the 12th week of pregnancy.

The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) and the hon. Member for Peckham mentioned the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists report which showed that 20 per cent. of abortions done between 20 and 23 weeks' gestation had been referred to a doctor earlier and had then been referred for a second opinion.

Delay can occur at various stages in considering a woman's request for an abortion, and the need to obtain the consent of two doctors can be a contributory factor. Many hon. Members have spelt out the importance of trying to ensure that, when an abortion needs to be carried out, it should happen swiftly and without undue delay. The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale also made the useful point that a greater public consciousness of the need to take necessary steps before 12 weeks should be encouraged. I can also pass on the medical advice that those terminations that take place after 12 weeks are much more likely to lead to complications, quite apart from the additional stress to the woman.

I shall briefly comment on new clause 5, to which the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) referred.

[Mrs. Virginia Bottomley]

Again the Government remain formally neutral, although it is important to make it clear that we would anticipate a number of difficulties should such a clause gain support.

Hon. Members will know that section 4 of the Abortion Act 1967 already provides that, except where treatment is necessary to save the life of or prevent grave permanent injury to the pregnant woman,

"no person shall be under any duty whether by contract or by any statutory or other legal requirement, to participate in any treatment authorised by this Act to which he has a conscientious objection".

If medical or nursing staff have strong ethical or moral objections to abortion work, they should not be obliged to take it on. Their conscientious objections should not be detrimental to their careers and appointments.

New clause 5 seeks to introduce a statutory notification system. Apart from a number of technical faults, with which I shall not trouble the hon. Lady, it would require very demanding administrative arrangements. Perhaps more important are the implications of making public people's views on a matter on which there are such strongly held feelings. In addition, we have received correspondence from the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting, expressing grave reservations about the implications of such a system. As the hon. Lady said, although the new clause refers to medical practitioners and not to nurses, it is important to make it clear that they anticipate difficulties with such a system. Similarly, the Royal College of Midwives has informed us that it might well lead to considerable difficulties of recruitment and retention.

Conscientious objection has been considered by the Social Services Select Committee. There are strong views and, of course, the Government will consider the Select Committee report carefully.

I turn now to a subject which has been the source of considerable concern to many hon. Members representing Northern Ireland constituencies. The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) spoke forcefully and was supported by his hon. Friends. The 1967 Act, which legalised abortion under certain circumstances, does not extend to Northern Ireland. The provisions of that Act were not originally introduced in Northern Ireland because the Government considered that the reform of social law in the Province was a matter for the Northern Ireland Government. It has been the policy of successive Governments throughout direct rule that Northern Ireland's unique position makes it desirable to re-establish a devolved Administration there.

The Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 provides for a Northern Ireland Assembly to determine its own policy and pass its own legislation on certain matters. The amendment falls clearly within that legislation. Parliament may of course legislate in such matters, but we have always been at pains to tailor such legislation to the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland, especially in social legislation, where the values of the people of Northern Ireland may differ from those of people living in England, Wales and Scotland.

To the best of my knowledge, no Northern Ireland Member of Parliament has ever called for changes in the Northern Ireland abortion laws. Similarly, all the soundings of opinion have made it very clear that there is no will in Northern Ireland for such a change. I am informed that my noble Friend Lord Skelmersdale and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland have received more than 2,000 letters on the subject, urging them robustly to resist such a new clause. I strongly urge the House to reject new clause 7, which would be offensive to the overwhelming majority of people in the Province.

I urge the House to support Government amendment No. 54, which is a tidying amendment. There is a contradiction within clause 34, and amendment No. 54 simply excludes clause 34 as it applies to Northern Ireland.

Many hon. Members are seeking to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who all have strongly held and sincere views on these difficult and sensitive matters. I have sought to confine my remarks to the medical, administrative and legal issues that affect these concerns.

My having made the point about not altering the position on Northern Ireland, it is for hon. Members to weigh up the merits of the new clauses and amendments and to exercise their judgment on behalf of their constituents.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I oppose new clause 5. The Minister inaccurately referred to midwives being affected by it. It does not refer to midwives, and the Royal College of Midwives Trusts was inaccurate in the brief that it circulated to hon. Members.

I appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) not to press new clause 5, to which many hon. Members are deeply hostile, and I shall explain why. An organisation called the Economic League registers people who take a principled position in conscience on political issues. My hon. Friend said that the new clause is supported by "we on this side", whereas it is supported by some Labour Members but not by me. The new clause sets up a register exactly the same as that organised by the Economic League. Instead of people being registered for their political conscience, they would be listed because of their opinion on abortion. That is quite unacceptable and is against all the traditions of the Labour party, which for decades has prided itself on the libertarian position that it generally takes on all issues.

We are deeply hostile to the new clause. It will lead to the targeting of doctors by minority groups, who will not want certain doctors to be allowed to practise in certain hospitals. Furthermore, it will lead to the emigration of many doctors who will feel, having been placed on the register, that no one will be willing to give them an appointment or interview anywhere in the United Kingdom.

I say to my hon. Friends on the Front Bench—I ask them to listen to what I am saying—please do not press the new clause. It is appalling, it is immoral and it is wrong.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): I rise briefly to support the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours). I can never recall a public register being drawn up to pillory people who hold certain opinions.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Economic League.

Dame Jill Knight: As far as I am aware, the Economic League does not produce a register that is available to the public. The new clause says that the public register should be available for anyone to read.

6.45 pm

Hon. Members have a right to whatever opinion they hold. There are sinister groups, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) and I have good reason to know, who physically attack those who oppose abortion. I have been the victim of an attack and my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point has also been attacked. If the new clause is passed, those vicious people will be able to obtain a list of doctors who have a professional job to do but have a right to their own opinion on how they do their job. Doctors who do not agree with abortion will be targeted mercilessly. It is not only a question of them not being able to get a job in a practice or a hospital because, without question, they would be targeted in a most vicious, wicked and un-British way. The House cannot allow this sinister new clause to be passed.

Dr. Moonie: In the few minutes that I have, I shall give my reasons for supporting several of the new clauses and amendments.

I support new clause 1 for the simple reason that a balance should be struck in the law between the rights of women and the potential rights of the unborn foetus. The later parts of the Bill provides a reasonable balance between those rights. They recognise that as the pregnancy proceeds the rights of the foetus become paramount. They do not recognise that the rights of the woman should be paramount early on. It is a matter of civil liberties as much as medical reason, and I believe profoundly that a woman should have the right, up to 12 weeks into her pregnancy, to decide whether she wishes to proceed with it.

New clause 6 and amendment No. 31 are almost identical. They provide for a single signature rather than the two signatures that are necessary at present. An argument that has not been advanced thus far should be recognised. When the Abortion Act was passed in 1967, there were disparities in the training of medical practitioners, general practitioners and consultant practitioners in hospitals. That was recognised by the fact that two signatures were required—that of the GP for the initial referral and that of the consultant to signify that he agreed. Medical practice has moved on since that Act was passed and general practitioners are given full and rigorous training before being allowed to take up their position. They are adequately trained and informed to make that judgment without it being subjected to that of a second party. If new clause 1 is not passed, new clause 6 or amendment No. 31 would recognise that fact.

I support new clause 5, and I gave it considerable thought before adding my name to it. The NHS is an expensive resource and it is paid for from my taxes and those of others. People are entitled to receive a full service, but they are also entitled to know who will not provide it so that they may find out who will.

The rights of women have not been mentioned by Conservative Members, but they never are; all they talk about are the rights of unborn children. They do not care about the rights of women, and I certainly will not listen to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight), who gave us her bigoted views, having attended for only five minutes while other hon. Members who had been present longer waited to speak.

I support new clause 7, which deals with the rights of women in Northern Ireland. Women in Northern Ireland who wish to have an abortion should have the same rights as other women in the United Kingdom.

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): I shall speak to new clauses 1 and 6 and amendment No. 31. I am grateful to the Minister for her comments on the conscience clause and the difficulties that it will cause. I am also grateful for her comments on Northern Ireland.

I bear in mind three points in my opposition to new clauses 1 and 6 and amendment No. 31. If we passed new clause 1, we should be saying that for the first trimester of pregnancy there would no longer be any reason to produce medical grounds for abortion. Whatever may be the failings of the Abortion Act 1967, at least it requires good reasons to be given for abortion. It provides some, albeit paltry, recognition of the fact that the unborn child is special and that abortion is special and cannot be equated with a simple operation, such as having a tooth out. If we remove the medical grounds, we remove that minimum recognition of the difference between such operations.

I am also concerned about those women who have been neglected in the arguments advanced by the Opposition. I refer to those who receive inadequate counselling and who consequently suffer from post-abortion syndrome. If the signature of only one doctor is needed and abortion becomes immediately and readily available, those women will be less likely to receive good counselling and to be given sufficient time to consider what they are doing.

The argument that has been deployed by the Opposition today is bogus. They argue that if we make early abortion easier, we shall reduce the number of late abortions. I refer not to a pro-life document but to a study published by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists—no friend, in recent years, of the pro-life movement. When the RCOG investigated the causes of late abortion it found that

"in 30 per cent. of second trimester abortions"—

that is the period immediately following the 12 weeks—

"the major cause of the abortion was not that it had been earlier requested and that there were NHS delays but that in fact there was, very simply, a failure in those early stages to recognise pregnancy. Of the further 50 per cent."—

that takes us up to 80 per cent.—

"personal factors were the major cause."

They include prolonged indecision, apprehension and, above all, changes in relationships and changes in circumstances.

The report also referred to the large number of foreign women entering the country and inflating the late abortion figures. Perhaps—most sinister of all—the major reason for delay, according to the RCOG, between the 15th and 19th week was the wait for a prostaglandin abortion because the unborn baby must be of a particular size for prostaglandins to be effective. Does that mean that a child should be allowed to grow until it is ready to be aborted? The figures show that the major reason for late abortions is not NHS delays.

As for the figures quoted by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price), for whom I have great respect and with whom I work on many issues, he said that where there is abortion on demand or request up to 12 weeks, a larger number of abortions are performed during those 12 weeks, but he failed to examine the effect on those percentages of the regulations that govern abortions after the 12th week. The tougher the regulations that govern

[Miss Ann Widdecombe]

abortions after the 12th week, the more abortions are carried out during the first 12 weeks. The figures for the Netherlands and Britain are close, compared with France, because it is still so easy after the 12th week to obtain abortions in both countries. It is not true that if we make abortion easier in the first trimester we shall reduce late abortions. That is not the governing principle.

We have been told that an overwhelming majority of people believe in abortion on demand in the early stages of pregnancy. A recent Gallup survey—many hon. Members invoke Gallup surveys, so I hope that we shall not hear that there is anything wrong with this one—asked a representative sample of the population a simple question:

"Do you think that abortion should be made available on demand in some circumstances, or never?"

Only 24 per cent. of those who were asked that question said that abortion should be available on demand. There is no majority for it.

We fly in the face of public opinion. I urge hon. Members not to be misled by claims that easy early abortions mean fewer late abortions. It does not. Many other factors govern late abortions. We must not further devalue the life of the unborn child, the need for proper counselling and the recognition, paltry though it is in the Act, of the fact that the decision to have an abortion is serious.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): This is the first occasion on which I have spoken in a debate on abortion. I do so in consequence of a recent important decision by the House. It has changed my stance. I am not vain enough to think that the House may be interested in the reasons for my change of stance, but I represent a constituency in which the religious groupings make it necessary for me to spell out why I shall vote in a different Lobby tonight.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) captured yesterday what was rightly called the high moral ground when he referred to the rights of the unborn child. The debate can be polarised in that way. However, we should examine our moral actions from a different standpoint. Sometimes it helps to stand back from the issue that we are discussing and consider another one on which people, faced with a difficult issue, had to come to a moral decision.

Bishop Bell of Chichester adopted the absolutist stance that to bomb Germany was wrong, and he deployed his argument powerfully. In a sense, a similar argument has been deployed tonight. At that time, the pilots, and the men and women who had to service the aircraft, had to take a moral decision. According to the records, we now know that many of those people were immensely troubled. They did not regard it in absolutist terms but as a choice between two evils: letting the Nazis win or taking part in an activity that they did not like. They carried out their duty.

The Minister for Health said that there is an element of tragedy in every abortion. That starting point unites the whole House. On earlier occasions we have debated means by which the number of tragedies can be reduced. Some people believe that we should make it more difficult for women to have abortions. It is clear from the way that the House speaks and votes that that is not an option.

In the messy area of not being absolutist but of having to choose between alternatives, I believe it to be right to go for earlier rather than for late abortion. We should make it harder for late abortions to take place, but that option is not before the House tonight.

We must link family planning to the debate about abortion. We all know in our hearts that if we had a fraction of the campaign and the lobbying force that has rightly supported the issue of abortion behind the issue of family planning, things would be very different. If we could move on the family planning front as well, the tragedies to which the Minister for Health referred—tragedies which unite the House—could be reduced. The number of women coming forward for abortions could be significantly reduced.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster) *rose——*

It being Seven o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order [2 April] and the Resolution [20 June], to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

The House divided: Ayes 159, Noes 264.

Division No. 250] **[7 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Carr, Michael
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim *(Pontypridd)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd SW)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Miscampbell, Norman

Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowe, Andrew
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Squire, Robin
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Turner, Dennis
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Miss Kate Hoey and
Mrs. Teresa Gorman.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Critchley, Julian
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grocott, Bruce
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Terry
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrea, Rev William
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Redwood, John
Reid, Dr John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray

Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I will now ask the Secretary of State to say which amendments he intends to move so that a Division can be called on them in this group.

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, votes can be taken at this stage only on the motion of the Minister, in line with the timetable motion, and I intend to follow the practice that I explained yesterday of moving for a vote the amendments on which the hon. Members who tabled them have told me that they would like a vote. They are amendment No. 31 and new clause 5, both of which are subject to a free vote for Conservative Members, and amendment No. 54, on which we shall urge Conservative Members to vote in favour.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on amendments and new clauses, moved by a member of the Government, of which notice had been given, to that part of the Bill to be concluded at Seven o'clock.*

Clause 34

AMENDMENT OF LAW RELATING TO TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

Amendment proposed: No. 31, in page 19, line 41, at end insert—

'(1A) After section 1(1) of that Act there is inserted—

"(1A) The opinion of one medical practitioner is sufficient for the purposes of subsection (1) of this section if he is also of the opinion, formed in good faith, that the pregnancy has not exceeded its twelfth week."'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 200, Noes 228.

Division No. 251] **[7.13 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Carr, Michael
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Grocott, Bruce
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Key, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Price, Sir David
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ryder, Richard
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soley, Clive
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Turner, Dennis
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes
Ms. Kate Hoey and
Mrs. Teresa Gorman.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony

Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Critchley, Julian
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
McCrea, Rev William
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Reid, Dr John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 5

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS

'The Abortion Act 1967 shall be amended as follows:— After section 4 insert—

"4A—(1) Any registered medical practitioner who has a conscientious objection to participating in any treatment authorised by this Act who relies upon or intends to rely upon a provision of section 4 above shall be under a duty to notify either—

(a) The Chief Medical Officer of the DHSS, or if they work in Scotland,
(b) The Scottish Home and Health Department.

(2) The Secretary of State shall by Statutory Instrument make regulations to provide—

(a) for requiring any such notification as mentioned in subsection (1) above to be in such form and at such time as may be prescribed by the regulations; and
(b) for the keeping and maintaining of a register of the names of all those persons who have given notification and such register shall be open to public inspection.

(3) Any Statutory Instrument made by virtue of this subsection shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'.—*[Dr. Moonie.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Motion made, and Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 115, Noes 228.

Division No. 252] **[7.24 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dobson, Frank
Eastham, Ken
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Knowles, Michael
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Loyden, Eddie
McLeish, Henry
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
O'Neill, Martin
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Squire, Robin
Steinberg, Gerry
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Turner, Dennis
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Doran and
Mrs. Teresa Gorman.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grocott, Bruce
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Janner, Greville
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lambie, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
McCrea, Rev William
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*

Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Reid, Dr John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trimble, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Worthington, Tony
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 43

NORTHERN IRELAND.

Amendment proposed: No. 54, in page 24, line 39, after 'Act', insert '(except section 34)'.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 267, Noes 131.

Division No. 253] **[7.37 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrea, Rev William
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*

Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nicholas Baker and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Carr, Michael
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Eastham, Ken
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Richardson, Jo
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rooker, Jeff
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Tredinnick, David
Turner, Dennis
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Miss Kate Hoey and
Mrs. Teresa Gorman.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Clause 34

AMENDMENT OF LAW RELATING TO TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY

Mr. Michael Alison (Selby): I beg to move amendment No. 4, in page 20, line 4, at end insert

'provided that the pregnancy has not exceeded its twenty-fourth week or, if the pregnancy is being terminated in accordance with section 1(1)(d) of this Act (termination because of the risk that the child will be handicapped), its twenty-eighth week'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): It will be convenient to take at the same time the following amendments: No. 30, in page 20, line 4, at end insert—

'(4) In section 5(2) of that Act, for the words from "the miscarriage" to the end there is substituted "a woman's miscarriage (or, in the case of a woman carrying more than one foetus, her miscarriage of any foetus) is unlawfully done unless authorised by section 1 of this Act and, in the case of a woman carrying more than one foetus, anything done with intent to procure her miscarriage of any foetus is authorised by that section if—

(a) the ground for termination of the pregnancy specified in subsection (1)(d) of that section applies in relation to any foetus and the thing is done for the purpose of procuring the miscarriage of that foetus, or

(b) any of the other grounds for termination of the pregnancy specified in that section applies".'.

No. 29, in page 19, line 42, at end insert—

'(2A) After section 1(3) of that Act there is inserted—

"(3A) The power under subsection (3) of this section to approve a place includes power, in relation to treatment consisting primarily in the use of such medicines as may be specified in the approval and carried out in such manner as may be so specified, to approve a class of places".'.

No. 28, in page 19, line 42, at end insert—

'(2A) After section 2(1) of that Act (notification), there is inserted—

"(1A) Regulations made by virtue of paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of this section—

(a) may require a certificate to include such further particulars relating to any opinion certified as the regulations may prescribe,

(b) shall require any certified opinion falling within section 1(1)(d) of this Act to include an opinion as to the nature of the physical or mental abnormalities from which there is a substantial risk that the child would suffer if it were born, and

(c) shall require the practitioners or practitioner concerned to send a copy of any such certified opinion as is referred to in paragraph (b), and of any

such further particulars relating to that opinion, solely to the person to whom they are required by regulations to give notice of the termination,

and for the purposes of paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of this section such a copy is information furnished pursuant to the regulations.".'.

Mr. Alison: It will probably assist the House most if I begin with a factual background explanation of what the amendment would secure, and then argue its merits. In an important vote on 24 April of this year, when we last debated these matters on the Floor of the House, we determined by a substantial majority that the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, with its well known 28-week benchmark for foetal viability, should no longer be the overall ringmaster, so to speak, in the arena of abortion. It was the crack of that ringmaster's whip, to continue the analogy, which in practice determined the operational impact of the Abortion Act 1967, because the 1967 Act incorporated no specific time limits of its own.

But in disapplying the 1929 Act in its bearing on the 1967 Act, as we did in April, and in shaking off that yoke, the instinct and purpose of hon. Members and, I argue, of the Government was not to declare a time vacuum between a human conception and a human birth nine months later. It was rather to declare that the 1967 Act had come of age and could feature specific time limits in its own right and in accordance with more modern conditions.

Our purpose was manifestly not to sweep away all benchmarks but to choose between alternative benchmarks. If our original intent had been to sweep away all benchmarks, we need not have troubled ourselves with long lists of optional alternative time periods for foetal viability, ranging from 18 to 28 weeks. We could simply have had an amendment to repeal the 1929 Act.

There was no such catch-all amendment before hon. Members on 24 April last. But there was before us—properly, logically and responsibly—a proposed Government new clause in which every relevant major category of abortion had an up-to-date and specific time limit attached to it—24 weeks for the general risk of injury category, 24 weeks for the new grave permanent injury category and 28 weeks for the risk of foetal handicap category. Only the category of pregnancy where the continuance would involve risk to the life of the woman did the Government leave fully open-ended in their original new clause on 24 April.

I will not weary the House with a rehearsal of how, probably partly unintentionally, we ended up by declaring a time vacuum for important categories of abortion, enfranchising them, so to speak, across the whole nine-month gestation period up to birth.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-West): My right hon. Friend suggests that hon. Members voted unitentionally in that way. Surely we were just following the recommendations of the Brightman committee. Has my right hon. Friend read the conclusions of the House of Lords Select Committee, which recommended not only that the Infant Life (Preservation) Bill [Lords] should not proceed, but that there should be no upper limit in cases of foetal abnormality? The Bishop of Gloucester, a member of that Select Committee, voted for that recommendation.

Mr. Alison: I chose the word "unintentionally" deliberately, because a number of hon. Members who voted to eliminate the 28-week limit as applied to foetal abnormality were under the impression, falsely, that its elimination would not produce an open-ended and undated situation but would result in a fall-back fail-safe application of the 24-week limit, which the Government had written into other categories of abortion. I repeat, from the point of view of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act, that whatever others may be arguing or advocating, there was no substantive amendment before hon. Members on 24 April to repeal that Act.

Miss Widdecombe: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the representations that we have received from hon. Members who were confused on that occasion do not come exclusively from what might be termed the pro-life side but come from all sides of the argument, including hon. Members such as my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), and that the confusion that reigned that night must be put right if we are to know the will of the House?

Mr. Alison: I agree with my hon. Friend. The fact remains that that open-ended enfranchisement of a whole range of categories of abortion for the total nine-month gestation period appears now on the face of the Bill.

As at present amended, the four grounds for abortion spelt out by the Government in the original version of clause 34, with time limits specified, now feature no fewer than three which discard all time limits and allow abortion up to birth. That is about as sweeping and fundamental a reversal of the existing law as one could imagine, for the existing law allows for the destruction of a viable foetus up to birth in only one case, and that is the single dreadful contingency that one life, either that of the mother or the infant, must be forfeit. That open-ended commitment in that unique case we have extended in the way I have described.

It is because I believe that the majority of hon. Members are not content with that sweeping liberalisation —with the new open-endedness—that my amendment has been tabled, precisely to re-establish some final points.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have before me the diagram which was produced by the Leader of the House on the last occasion we discussed the issue and which, in my recollection, was used by the vast majority of hon. Members as a guide to their voting intention. It clearly sets out—in the case of the two categories where my hon. Friend's amendment challenges the no limit—that in respect of grave permanent injury to the health of the woman, two amendments were tabled, one of which would have brought in no limit and one of which would have brought in 28 weeks. Hon. Members cast a vote in favour of no limit, and I was on the losing side. It also makes clear, in the case of substantial risk of serious handicap, the choice between no limit, 28 weeks and 24 weeks. Again, hon. Members voted for no limit.

I understand my right hon. Friend's views and, as his amendment has been selected, he is reopening the question. But is he sure that he is doing the House a service by suggesting that, in the middle of the night on the last occasion, when hon. Members were armed with three documents—there were unofficial ones also—which were guides to what they were voting on, they did not actually know the way in which they were voting? That is not my recollection of the evening.

Mr. Alison: My right hon. and learned Friend must bear two points in mind, and I am grateful to him for

[Mr. Alison]

throwing further light on this complex area. The first is that the Leader of the House's famous diagram darkened counsel for a large number of hon. Members. It was erroneous in substantial and important respects.

For example, paragraph 7 of the document said:

"The effect of the ILPA is to produce a 28-week limit where the abortion is to prevent grave permanent injury to the pregnant woman's health. The new clause replicates this, providing 28 weeks instead of 24 weeks."

Where did the new clause replicate that? It did not do so on the face of the amendment as tabled by the Government. That statement was misleading and erroneous. There were others, in the junior Minister's speech, in which she misquoted letters applicable to amendments that appeared on the Order Paper, and in the guidance offered by the Leader of the House.

I must tell my right hon. and learned Friend that not only was counsel darkened by some of the advice received from the most responsible sources but when, against the wish and advice of the Secretary of State—in the case of the 28-week change—the House took a particular decision, it is not unlikely that the resulting liberalisation might have induced hon. Members to think that they should reconsider the whole gamut of amendments that ultimately resulted from the decisions that we took that night.

8 pm

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend. Does he agree that that evening of voting was the most confusing that most of us have experienced in our parliamentary careers; and will he further agree that it tended to bring Parliament into disrepute because hon. Members were going around with three sets of papers and were totally confused? My right hon. Friend is doing the House a great service by bringing the issue back this evening.

Mr. Alison: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I do not want to lose the sympathy and support—I am bound to desire and require it—of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, but I trust that he will allow me my attempted defence of the inescapable human fallibilities of the highest civil service sections and sources in these difficult matters.

The effect of the amendment will be that the 24-week limit already provided for by my right hon. and learned Friend in clause 34(1)(a), in the single case of the general risk of injury category, will be extended to the grave permanent injury category of subsection (1)(b) and to the risk to life category of subsection (1)(c). Uniquely, the general 24-week limit will be raised to 28 weeks by our amendment in the case of the fourth and last category in the clause—that of possible foetal handicap.

The House will note that there is nothing innovative or radical about these new time limits. They do not tighten up on what the Government first brought forward; rather, they echo the original 24 April draft of the Government new clause, in which, as the House will recall, 24 weeks was proposed for the new grave permanent injury category and 28 weeks for potential foetal handicap.

Mr. Terence L. Higgins (Worthing): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that his amendment will still leave open-ended an abortion in the case of risk to the mother's life?

Mr. Alison: I come immediately to that point. The only category that was originally open-ended in the Government's 24 April draft but to which we have attached, as to the others, the 24-week limit is that of balance of risk to the woman's life—subsection (1)(c). In the amendment, that is merely a precautionary, not an absolute, provision, because, as we know, any abortion performed in good faith for the sole purpose of saving the pregnant woman's life is not subject to any time limit under section 1(1) of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. That Act will thus continue to operate as a fail-safe mechanism in any abortion over 24 weeks.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) may wonder why we bothered to include that limit, given that the Infant Life (Preservation) Act can override it. The reason is that there are doctors today who argue that an abortion at 12 weeks is so safe that it is actually a good deal safer than any pregnancy brought to term, so it could be argued that one was more likely to save the life of a woman if her pregnancy were never allowed to come to term and were always aborted as early as possible—that is the logical consequence of the argument: to end all human births. So we have introduced this precautionary, 24-week limit, safeguarded by the Infant Life (Preservation) Act.

We should not deceive ourselves or mince words. To abort means to do away with, deliberately, finally and irrevocably—the word can mean nothing else. That is different from a miscarriage of a very early foetus. In that case, what nature has given, nature has taken away. It is also different from an induced or premature termination or evacuation of a more developed or viable foetus. In that case, when nature has apparently fumbled, human hands can seek to rescue. Incidentally, a termination or evacuation after viability is an induced birth. It is only an abortion if the child is deliberately killed.

My amendment, reintroducing the 24 and 28-week limits, would not affect terminations on medical grounds—for example, under clause 34(1)(b) or (c)—provided that there was an intention to save the child if possible and not to destroy it.

The stark and dreadful import of abortion is that what nature has successfully—in spite of all hazards—launched into the orbit of life, human hands seek deliberately to arrest and destroy in mid-trajectory. To make such a terrible intervention in the course of nature demands compellingly good reasons. The further the foetus has got off the ground, so to speak, the more vital it is that human intervention should be geared to assisting and upholding, not to arresting and destroying.

This is why Parliament is surely right to seek, across every shade of opinion, to circumscribe abortion, carefully and agonisingly, and why it is right to insist on some time limit, as the new clause, if amended, would still do, if a growing foetus had to be interrupted and destroyed. Parliament would be wise to adopt this amendment, with its reintroduction of these vital limits. The amendment is designed to circumscribe the greatest of all risks in this area: human fallibility.

Sir David Steel: We are considering four amendments, and before I deal with the main one, I want to mention the other three in passing. I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) will seek to speak to amendment No. 29, about which he has written to me, so I will say only that I support it and I look forward to hearing what he has to say about it and amendment No. 30.

Amendment No. 28 attempts to write into the main statute the conditions of certification that doctors may make when carrying out certain abortions. My view is that that is best left to the regulations, but perhaps the Minister will say something in answer to the anxieties of those who have tabled the amendment. I shall certainly not support it in the Lobby.

As for amendment No. 4, I was one of those who voted unsuccessfully and on the losing side in Committee on removing the 28-week upper limit and, in certain categories, allowing abortion up to birth. Were a similar amendment to be put before us again I would vote the same way, but the right hon. Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) should be aware that he is not only reintroducing the 28-week upper limit in this category; far more seriously, he is reintroducing to abortion law the concept of the use of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. The 1967 Act contained no time limit. Instead we decided to incorporate a reference to the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. I remind the House that that Act created a presumption of viability at 28 weeks but no reverse presumption of non-viability below 28 weeks. We incorporated that reference precisely because of the uncertainty at that time about precise viability.

We have seen the law in operation for 23 years, and, as everyone knows, private Members' Bills have attempted to bring in a more precise upper time limit for the carrying out of abortions. The Department of Health under successive Governments has by regulation and instruction introduced lower time limits. In Committee, we introduced a general limit on most abortions of specifically 24 weeks. That was a fundamental change to the 1967 Act and to the exceptional upper limit of 28 weeks. The House decided on a free vote that there would be no limit at all in certain categories. I know that the hon. Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) attempted to suggest that there might have been some confusion. That suggestion received some support, but I have yet to meet a single Member who has said that he voted the wrong way and was confused.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury) *rose*——

Sir David Steel: If the hon. Gentleman wishes to admit to confusion, may I take that as read and pass on?

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: Yes.

Sir David Steel: Even my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) writing in *The Tablet* of 15 May—this shows how carefully I pay attention to his words—said:

> "It was suggested that at the end of the two-day marathon debate some MPs had become confused about precisely what they were voting for. Looking through the division lists I do not believe that by and large this is the case."

There is a little twist in the tail, because my hon. Friend then says:

> "Some may be confused in their beliefs, but there is a fairly consistent pattern in what MPs actually did".

That is true. There may have been an odd case of confusion, but I think that the House was fairly clear, given all the guidance that was around. I wrote to everyone in my party regardless of how he voted, and not one of them voted in a way that he did not mean to.

Mr. Alton: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving publicity to *The Tablet*. I said that, by and large, there was no great confusion about the way that hon. Members voted. I am glad that the House has an opportunity to consider the matter again, because it raises substantive issues, not just on the matter of handicap but on the uncoupling of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 which my right hon. Friend linked to the Abortion Act 1967. He should now explain to the House why he thinks that it should not be linked.

Sir David Steel: I was in the middle of doing that, and I am sorry that I was deflected by the discussion on confusion. Even if there was minor confusion, it would not have affected the fact that the House, wrongly in my view, voted the way it did.

The amendment is an alteration to the clause which seeks to remove the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 from abortion law. The reason for that is that, if we state specific statutory time limits, as we have done in this legislation, it does not make sense to recreate uncertainty by applying a totally different law on infant life preservation and incorporating it in the Bill. We would be reintroducing the element of doubt which always lay in the Infant Life (Preservation) Act. Because the 1967 Act had no statutory limits, we rested our case on the 1929 Act. Experience since then suggested that it is better, and the House has expressed the wish to put specific time limits in abortion legislation.

8.15 pm

This matter was carefully trawled by the Select Committee in the other place. Reference has been made to that. The condition "capable of being born alive", which is in the Infant Life (Preservation) Act, is the very phrase which has given rise to so much uncertainty in the minds of the medical profession. The Select Committee in the other place unanimously recommended that there should be a decoupling and that we should state clear statutory limits.

There has been only one consistent effort to secure prosecutions under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act. There were four attempts, and they were all made by Professor Scarisbrick who is the chairman of the Life organisation. Hon. Members are used to being badgered by the so-called pro-life organisations. I am pro-life and I object to being characterised as not pro-life. Perhaps it is fair enough for hon. Members to be badgered, but I object to members of the medical profession being badgered and bullied in this way. I am glad to say that all four cases were rejected by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The amendment proposes to reinvite vexatious prosecutions in this area, and we would be wise to avoid it. In the context of the provision that applies to the handicapped, the House of Lords report says on page 18:

> "If, for example, an unborn child were diagnosed as grossly abnormal and unable to lead any meaningful life, there is in the opinion of the Committee no logic in requiring the mother to carry her unborn child to full term merely because the diagnosis was too late to enable an operation for abortion to be carried out before the 28th completed week."

That is a telling argument in favour of the decision made by the House.

While I did not support the decision to place no upper time limit on these categories, it is perfectly reasonable to support it as long as they are in extremis cases only. Earlier, we heard about a cut-off time limit in the abortion law of other countries. According to the Gunning study, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden have no upper limit in extremis cases of the kind that we are talking about. We are talking about a limited number of cases.

One other country which has no other upper time limit is Scotland. The right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), who is the Father of the House, wisely declined to become entangled in the Scottish case. I assure him that that matter is highly relevant. The Infant Life (Preservation) Act never applied to Scotland, not even after 1967. That means that, within the kingdom, we have an example of a country whose abortion law has no upper time limit. That has certainly not been abused, because in 1988 there were seven abortions over 22 weeks and in 1989 there were five. We are talking about a small number of extremely tragic cases where desperate decisions have to be made by the medical profession.

In that connection I deplore the circular that was put round by the promoters of the amendment. It is by two gentlemen in University college, Oxford. Paragraph 3 says:

"If abortion on any of the four grounds results in the delivery of a living and viable foetus, it will be lawful to destroy it during birth for any reason at all, from harelip to hair colour."

That is a gross calumny on the medical profession. I do not think that anyone practising medicine in Britain would destroy a baby during birth because the colour of the hair was wrong.

Mr. Alton: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Sir David Steel: I will not give way. I feel strongly about this matter. The paper is there and hon. Members can make their own speeches. I find such things totally discreditable.

I shall end by quoting from Mr. David Paintin, reader in obstetrics and gynaecology at St. Mary's hospital. He was one of the original medical advisers on my team in 1967. He now says about the proposal that is before us:

"There are few circumstances in which abortion is necessary after the 24th week; there were only 23 cases notified in this country in 1988. Most such abortions are performed because the foetus has been shown to have an abnormality that would prevent sustained life after birth or that would result in gross handicap. A small number of such abortions are induced because the woman is gravely ill and her health would be permanently harmed or she might die if the pregnancy continued. In these cases the foetus is so immature or so affected by the illness in the woman that it would not survive. If the foetus is mature enough to have a reasonable chance of survival with modern intensive care, all possible steps are taken to optimise the survival of both mother and foetus; delivery is normally by caesarian section."

He concludes:

"A proper ethical attitude to abortion must take into account the potential humanity of the foetus"—

that was the basic principle of the 1967 Act—

"but must also consider the humanity of the woman and the circumstances which, in her view and her doctors' view, make continuation of the pregnancy inadvisable. I believe that it is wrong to force the woman to continue the pregnancy to the serious detriment of her health or to force her to carry a foetus that is severely abnormal. The sensible decisions taken by Parliament in April clarify and improve the law. In my experience, women and doctors agree that abortion after the 24th week should be performed only in the most exceptional circumstances."

I believe that the House should rest by the decision that we have taken.

Mr. Robert Key (Salisbury): I rise to speak to amendments Nos. 29 and 30. Amendment No. 30 would clarify the law in relation to selective reduction. The present position, as I understand it, is that it is not clear beyond doubt whether that procedure comes within the terms of the Abortion Act 1967. Some people agree that if after selective reduction a pregnancy continues, that cannot be a termination of pregnancy within the meaning of the 1967 Act. The counter argument is that the procedure constitutes a miscarriage and that it must therefore be done under the protection of the Act. The medical literature abounds with legal cases and learned articles from lawyers trying to argue the problem through. It is clear that there is significant doubt and it is essential that that is removed.

The selective reduction procedure was neither in use nor even contemplated when the legislation introduced by the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) was passed in 1967. However, I understand that the procedure has been in use in Britain since 1982. It involves terminating one or more foetuses in a multiple pregnancy. That procedure may be used for a number of reasons. For example, some selective reductions are done because one or more of the foetuses has been diagnosed as having a seriously handicapping condition. In other cases it may be done because carrying a high order multiple pregnancy to term may jeopardise all the foetuses or the woman's life or health. Whether it is appropriate to carry out a selective reduction is, in the last analysis, a matter for the clinical judgment of the doctor and the wishes of the woman concerned. I understand that the number of cases is likely to be small.

My explanation has been brief. I hope that whatever moral or ethical stance we take on abortion, we can accept the importance of clarity and that the procedure should be brought within the ambit of the 1967 Act and the controls that it provides.

Mr. Frank Doran (Aberdeen, South): I take the firm view that amendment No. 4, on which I want to concentrate, is thoroughly misconceived, certainly in the way in which it was presented by the right hon. Member for Selby (Mr. Alison). It is also deliberately disingenuous because it is nothing more than an attempt to reverse a decision of the House taken by an emphatic majority in a way which is a mystery to me as a relatively new hon. Member.

We have already heard several hon. Members complain about the large number of voters on that night who were apparently misled or who misled themselves. I have never heard of such a thing from hon. Members. One of the major problems that struck me when I first came to the House was the arrogance of hon. Members who felt that they could do no wrong and always thought that they knew what they were doing; that Parliament, in its great wisdom, is always supreme. Yet here we have a large number of hon. Members bowing before the House and admitting to the commission of a supreme error—that they voted the wrong way because they did not understand measures properly. I wonder what their constituents will

think when they are faced with legislation and issues much more complex than this, on which the majority of hon. Members have strong views, as all the debates on the issue have shown. No hon. Member can make a greater sacrifice than to admit his fallibility, as so many have done. But they are not lowering the ego quotient in this place; it is simply a desperate attempt to reverse an emphatic decision of the House, and it should be seen in that light.

What saddens me about the efforts that have been made to reverse the votes on 24 April is the way in which many arguments have been perverted. Few of the arguments that we heard from the right hon. Member for Selby and those who support him have rested on fact. I have a copy of the paper that was referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, which purports to be a legal opinion from John Finnis, professor of law and legal philosophy, university of Oxford, and Dr. John Keown lecturer in law and co-director of the centre for health care law at the university of Leicester. I am a solicitor and well used to reading legal opinions and I am appalled at the content of that paper, which I understand was circulated to all hon. Members. The right hon. Member for Tweedale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) has already taken issue with part of it.

It is important to look at the paper, to assess the arguments with which it presents us. For example, it is suggested in the first paragraph that an interpretation of the clause that was passed by the House on 24 April would allow abortion until birth in a wide range of cases, markedly altering the existing law, which allows the destruction of a viable foetus only to save the mother's life. Only the most asinine of lawyers would interpret in that way a clause that is specific about the legal requirements before it is permitted to operate.

For example, according to clause 34(1)(b), it must be shown

"that the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman".

That is a severe legal test, as are the other tests. Clause 34(1)(c) says:

"that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated".

That again is an extremely serious legal test, and if any doctor failed to satisfy it, he could be prosecuted. Finally, clause 34(1)(d) says:

"that there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped."

Doctors operating in that area know of the attempts to examine their work by the so-called pro-life or, as I prefer to call them, anti-abortion organisations. Their work has been handicapped. I do not want to attack the integrity of our medical profession, which is what the right hon. Member for Selby and his supporters have done. They do an excellent job in difficult circumstances. It is sometimes a difficult and tasteless job. But to make their job that much more difficult by suggesting that the medical profession would willy-nilly ignore those strict provisions in the Bill, which I hope will become an Act, is unacceptable and a smear on the medical profession.

For example, it is suggested in the paper that some doctors will interpret the onerous conditions that apply to them as including a hare lip or a cleft palate. That is pure scaremongering, which is appalling coming from a professor of law and a lecturer in law.

Mr. Alton: My right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) refused to give way on that point, and as it has been cited a second time, it is important to clarify it. Doctors at Guy's hospital recently advertised for mothers who would otherwise be having abortions on grounds of cleft palate to come forward in order to carry out operations in the womb. As much as we may be grateful for progress in medical science, does not the hon. Gentleman accept that if those are the sort of reasons being given by doctors for performing abortions, it is perfectly acceptable for Professor Finnis to quote them in his letter?

8.30 pm

Mr. Doran: It is perfectly acceptable for Professor Finnis to quote such examples in context. However, we have instead the bald statement that in the view of that learned professor, the justification for terminating pregnancies is being interpreted in the way that he suggests. That is unacceptable, and his paper bears little resemblance to what I suppose was meant to be an objective assessment of how the Bill will operate. The paper goes on:

"If abortion on any of the four grounds results in the delivery of a living and viable foetus, it would be lawful to destroy it during birth for any reason at all, from harelip to hair colour."

That is an outrageous statement from practising lawyers, let alone a professor of law at one of our principal universities.

I am not sure what is intended by that alleged interpretation, but if an aborted foetus is found to be alive and is by medical opinion thought capable of sustained survival and is effectively viable, then I as a lawyer should have no hesitation is saying that the destruction of that foetus would be criminal.

Scaremongering of the type that I quoted, by two apparently respectable individuals, is outrageous and has produced a contrary response in me.

Ms. Harman: They ought to be reported to the Law Society or to the Bar Council.

Mr. Doran: My hon. Friend says that they should be reported, but it is unlikely that either of those two gentlemen has even practised real law. Certainly there is no suggestion of that in the opinion that I quoted.

As the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale pointed out, the medical profession has adapted to the 1967 Act as it has progressed, and the Scottish experience is worth bearing in mind and examining. Any lawyer offering an opinion should look at current practice, particularly when it is so close to home.

I circulated a paper written by one of my constituents, Professor Allan Templeton, professor of obstetrics and gynaecology in Aberdeen. I shall read out part of his paper because it is important to record the professional medical view on a provision similar to that passed on 24 April, which I hope will become law. It has operated in Scotland since 1967.

It is not a case of widespread abuse of the 1967 Act, of abortions being performed willy nilly, on request, and of reasons for them being invented afterwards. It is not a case either of abortions being performed for trivial reasons—and the suggestion that they have occurred because of the risk of cleft palates or hare lips is intended to trivialise the medical decision. Instead, it is a case of establishing a body

[Mr. Doran]

of principle related to the obligations that a medical practitioner has to his patients and to the law of the land, which is currently the Abortion Act 1967. Professor Templeton says:

"It has been accepted in obstetric practice for some time that pregnancy should be terminated, regardless of the gestation, if the mother's life is at risk. Such a situation is not infrequent in obstetric practice, associated with such conditions as pre-eclampsia, abruption and placenta praevia. Similarly, it is accepted that the diagnosis of a lethal foetal abnormality is, if the mother so desires, an indication to terminate the pregnancy, regardless of the gestation. The classification of the procedure can vary. For example, we recently terminated a pregnancy"—

at Aberdeen royal infirmary—

"of 27 weeks' gestation, at the mother's wish, because of the diagnosis of renal agenesis, a condition which results in absence of the kidneys and is incompatible with life . . . This is a clear example of current recognition that the age of viability is somewhat less than 28 weeks, and probably nearer to 24 weeks. The point here is that doctors have developed self-imposed guidelines that have emerged from their experience of current clinical practice. Thus, the perception has grown that it would be quite inappropriate for a variety of reasons to terminate pregnancies approaching the age of viability for reasons other than where the mother's life is at risk or there is a lethal"—

and Professor Templeton emphasises lethal—

"foetal abnormality. This self-imposed, unwritten code of practice is evident on scrutiny of recent figures."

Professor Templeton gives figures for the number of late terminations in 1987, 1988 and 1989. In 1987, there were in Scotland 11 terminations over 22 weeks; in 1988, seven terminations; and in 1989, five terminations. That is not a story of abuse of the law or of an apparent latitude that the measure passed on 24 April will allow elsewhere in Britain.

The law is being observed responsibly, and that will continue. I have no reason to believe that doctors in England and Wales are any less responsible than those in Scotland. For that reason, I hope that all right hon. and hon. Members will oppose amendment No. 4 and will base their decision on how to vote on the facts—and not in response to the scaremongering tactics that have been evident so far today.

Miss Widdecombe: I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to this group of amendments and to my own amendment No. 28. The law currently states that a doctor should abort on the ground of disability only if the child runs a substantial risk of having a disability and if the disability itself is serious, yet there is no method of checking on the various disabilities that are the reasons why abortions are performed. When an abortion is undertaken the forms that are returned often show that it was performed not because of a disability but for a different reason. If we are to draw a distinction between handicapped and healthy children, the time has come for a ready check on the disabilities that are deemed to be so severe that the child is to be killed after viability and not be allowed to survive.

When the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton)—who on this occasion is my hon. Friend—moved his original Bill, he clearly stated that there was evidence that doctors were aborting in the case of harelip, cleft palate or club foot. At that time, we were not debating abortions for disability up to birth but abortions within the limits of the 1929 Act. When the hon. Member for Mossley Hill made those statements, he was ridiculed. The same sort of reply was given then as we heard tonight—that such claims are a slur on the medical profession, which would never do such a thing. However, there is no means of extracting from the Secretary of State for Health whether such a practice would arise, because there is no obligation in an abortion to submit to the Secretary of State a clear definition of the disability involved.

In case anyone doubts that abortions have been carried out for the reasons cited by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill I will refer to a letter that I received from Anthony Rowsell, a consultant plastic surgeon at Guy's hospital, who is responsible for performing the pre-natal surgery, for which we are all very grateful, on unborn children with minor deformities. He wrote in defence of his work because he misunderstood my remarks in Committee, thinking that I was attacking pre-natal surgery. He informs me that mothers not only have abortions but that they are routinely offered. That should be a cause of worry because the legislation says that abortions should not be offered routinely in the case of minor defects but that there should be a substantial risk of serious disability.

If, as hon. Members on the other side of the argument frequently contend, the medical profession has nothing to hide, and the Act is working well, there could be no possible objection to asking the profession to tell us how often it routinely aborts for a minor defect. If we have a requirement that the nature of the disability should be specified on the form, we shall be able to see whether doctors are aborting for spina bifida, hydrocephalus and cystic fibrosis or for harelip and club foot. I cannot see any objection to giving that information.

If the House tonight confirms its decision—I sincerely hope and believe that it will not—that we are going to abort for disability until birth, even if the circumstances are rare, we have a sovereign duty, not merely a right, to check on the nature of the disability which is the reason for the abortion being carried out.

Ms. Harman: I intervene on the point that the hon. Lady made about Guy's hospital. I am not familiar with the letter that the plastic surgeon wrote to her, but I presume that he is not in the regional genetic investigation department, which is run from the hospital. Guy's serves many of my constituents, and I had my babies there. For my last pregnancy I had amniocentesis and I went through the entire counselling procedure. It was never suggested to me that the discovery of an abnormality such as harelip or club foot should be grounds for considering a termination. It was made clear to me, as a patient, that the object of counselling and investigation was to discover whether there was a serious abnormality. In the process they might discover minor abnormalities, but that would not mean counselling for an abortion. The hon. Lady should be careful before she continues in that vein.

Miss Widdecombe: I shall be careful, because I have ample evidence, including that letter from Guy's, which I have in my hand, that it is, or was, routine to offer abortion for minor defects. If we need any proof of that, think of the police investigation into the case of the King's college baby. I shall raise that case later when I discuss the amendments tabled by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key). We know that in that case the disability was not serious, it was not life threatening, it would not cause the child to be crippled, to have restricted physical movement

or restricted mental agility. Yet, an abortion—it was not an abortion, but a selective reduction, which is one of our dinky terms for fratricide—was carried out at twenty-seven and half weeks.

If the medical profession has nothing to hide, it cannot object to filling in the forms and doing it on time. Why does the Department tolerate a situation in which more than 300 of those forms were returned more than six months late in the past year?

Mr. Thurnham *rose*——

Miss Widdecombe: I shall give way later.

I shall now turn to the important amendment, No. 4, tabled in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison). I regret the passing of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 from the Abortion Act. I should like to digress briefly before you call me to order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on what I believe to be one of the most serious effects of removing that Act—now, for the first time since 1929, we have no long-term law in place.

One of the greatest achievements of the 1929 Act was that it was drawn up when medical science was nothing like it is now, and the Act stood the test of 60 years. The reason why it stood the test of time was that it was drawn up with a long-term view in mind. It did not give 28 weeks as a limit for abortion. It said that 28 weeks was a rebuttable presumption. The guiding principle of the 1929 Act was the capability of a child to be born alive. As viability came down gradually from 28 weeks to 24 weeks, children between the ages of 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy effectively enjoyed the protection of the 1929 Act.

8.45 pm

I mention that fact to the Secretary of State because it is important that the point is not overlooked during the debate. It is a pity that the amendment standing in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) was not selected, and it is important that his argument is not overlooked. If, in two years' time, the medical profession turns round and says, "We have improved incubation techniques to such an extent that we can now keep alive 40 per cent. of 22-week-olds and a few more 23-week-olds", what protection will there be in law for them?

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am sure that the hon. Lady understands that no one has repealed the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. The only effect of what the House has done is that the Act does not now apply to cases provided for by the Abortion Act. The effect of the amendment is to apply two pieces of legislation to the same operation, in some cases with very confusing results. The House voted before for the Abortion Act to have limits, or no limits, and for those cases to disapply the Infant Life (Preservation) Act. The Act still applies to non-Abortion Act cases.

If the hon. Lady's second question was "What will happen if medical science moves on," if the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists agrees that 24 weeks is too high a limit, the House could come back and review the Abortion Act limit which we have just set in the light of medical knowledge. That does not mean that we would start applying two Acts and reducing them both. The Infant Life (Preservation) Act has been set aside for Abortion Act cases, largely to ensure that there is clarity in the law, in line with the votes which the House cast last time on the Abortion Act limits.

Miss Widdecombe: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for confirming two things. First, no long-term protection exists under the law and we would have to come back to the House to decide again. I thought that the purpose of the grievous dissension and wrangling in the past few months was a clear long-term law, so that it would not be necessary to have such parliamentary upheaval at regular intervals. If we do that, surely it is essential to build in a legal protection so that we do not have to come back to say, "Look, the situation has changed."

As a result of the decoupling of the Acts, the House has inadvertently removed protection from viable children under the 24th week, removed long-term law and made it certain that, at some time, we shall have to return to the vexed business of time limits. I certainly do not think that that is desirable, and I have said so in public on numerous occasions.

All hon. Members should understand that that is the effect of removing the Infant Life (Preservation) Act. I appreciate that it has not been repealed, but decoupled, and I do not want to be critical of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, because he and his Department have been most helpful in the past few months, assisting us with whether an issue was valid or technically cohesive. However, for the past year I have issued challenge after challenge about the observation of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act. For example, why was a lethal injection given if there was no possibility that a child could be born alive in the first place? I gave several other instances. The Secretary of State admitted that it did not work particularly well. Instead of tightening up and policing the Act properly, his answer to the failure of difficulties in observing the Infant Life (Preservation) Act was to remove the Act altogether.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I fail to follow my hon. Friend. Obviously neither of us wishes to interrupt——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Will the Secretary of State please desist from turning his back on the Chair? Will he please address the Chair?

Mr. Clarke: The pleasure of looking in your direction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will enable me to turn towards the Chair.

Amendment No. 4 decouples the Infant Life (Preservation) Act in respect of abortions carried out under 24 weeks. However, my hon. Friend's point is irrelevant. The amendment maintains the position—which is not as troublesome as she claims—that as medical science moves on, the House will reduce the limit from 24 weeks. However, her amendment still decouples the Act. She is using the Act to introduce confusion into the law by making the Infant Life (Preservation) Act and the Abortion Act both apply above 24 weeks in certain cases and 28 weeks in others.

Miss Widdecombe: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend, although he did not offer any elucidation.

I said at the beginning of my speech that it was digressing a little to refer to babies under 24 weeks' gestation, but I want to get it clearly on record that there is no longer long-term protection for them.

[Miss Widdecombe]

Let me examine what we have agreed in regard to disability. I do not want to discuss again whether there was confusion. Although hon. Members may have understood clearly enough the instructions and description of any particular amendment, the interdependency and inter-relationship between various amendments became more difficult to work out. When they decoupled the Infant Life (Preservation) Act, they thought that, under the guidance of the Secretary of State, they were simplifying a difficult legal situation and producing an administrative device to make things tidier rather than, as a result of the previous failure to write in limits, removing completely any protection for disabled children right up to birth.

When I introduced my Bill I was quite happy to exempt disability, as did the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) when he presented his Bill. But we did not mean that we would exempt disability up to birth; we meant that we would exempt it up to the limit of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act. The removal of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act effectively meant that there would be exemption up to birth.

I feel very strongly about the matter, as does my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham), and I shall take an intervention from him in a moment. However, it is a gross insult that disabled people could switch on their televisions and radio at any hour of the day or night during the past few months and hear politicians arguing about whether they have the right to be born. We would not offer that insult to any racial or religious group, so we should not offer it to disabled people. It is wrong.

When a disabled child is born, that child has the full protection of the law. It does not matter how gross the disability, how handicapped the child embarks on life or how grievous are the effects of that handicap on the mother and the family. At that point the child has the full protection of the law. However, a few hours or even a few minutes earlier, according to the letter of the law, the child does not have that protection. I have stood up in the House time and again and argued that the right that we extend to a child in an incubator should be extended to a child of identical age in the womb. I never thought that the day would come when I would have to stand here and argue in the House of Commons, the mother of Parliaments and the centre of civilisation, that it is wrong not to extend the same protection to a child a few hours before birth as applies to a child that has been born prematurely and already enjoys the full protection of the law. It is wrong, morally repugnant and an insult to the handicapped.

Mr. Thurnham: My hon. Friend has been issuing challenges and talking about duties. The effect of the amendments would be that more severely handicapped children would be born. My hon. Friend is in favour of more severely handicapped children being born. The other day I heard that she had said that if she had a handicapped relative she would give up her job to look after that person. What is she waiting for? There are thousands of severely handicapped children in institutions whose families cannot look after them. Why does she not adopt one? Is she afraid that a social services committee would not give approval for her to be a mother?

Miss Widdecombe: That last comment shows the degree of desperation prevailing on the other side of the argument. When hon. Members have to resort to personal abuse, it is quite clear that they have no argument. I must tell my normal hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North East that there is a queue of people waiting to adopt Down's syndrome children. Are we now saying that Down's syndrome is a cause for abortion up to birth although there is a queue to adopt those children? That queue consists of couples, not single people like myself who could not provide a father. I believe that the best start in life for handicapped children is to have two parents.

Mr. Alton: I support entirely what the hon. Lady is saying. I reiterate that if the state were not prepared to provide homes for disabled people and if there were no adoptive parents, many people in church and voluntary organisations, including the Bishops of England and Wales, have made it absolutely clear that they would provide homes for any disabled person.

Miss Widdecombe: I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that comment.

Mrs. Ann Winterton (Congleton): Does my hon. Friend agree that the intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) was somewhat cheap to say the least? He has raised that point during every debate on the subject. I should like to put on record how much I admire and respect his wife who, for seven days a week, cares for their severely handicapped adopted child. However, it does the hon. Gentleman's reputation no good to raise the matter because we know that he is extremely active in the House, in his constituency and as an entrepreneurial business man. So he cannot undertake the very duties that he challenges other hon. Members to undertake.

Miss Widdecombe: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, but we should not argue about each other's personal capability or willingness to undertake those duties. That would not be profitable.

Many members of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children and of LIFE and many others have adopted handicapped children but do not make a public parade of it. They also deserve respect. It is not confined to one side of the argument.

I deal now with the Finnis letter and the statement that it is possible to terminate for disability before birth. The 1929 Act was introduced—as can be checked in the *Hansard* of the time—precisely to fill the lacuna of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 which did not protect the child during the process of birth. That is on record and is a matter of legal history. I do not draw any pictures of doctors aborting during birth; I am saying that the 1929 Act filled that lacuna, but the removal of the Act reinstates it.

Those who share the views expressed by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill and I will vigorously oppose the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury. Amendment No. 30 proposes to bring selection reductions under the Abortion Act. I am not sure that the amendment is technically viable because it refers to a miscarriage. A miscarriage is not an abortion and it is not a selective reduction or a stillbirth. When a woman has a miscarriage she loses her child. In a selective reduction, the child is left in the womb until birth occurs naturally of its

surviving siblings. In the King's college baby case, there was selective reduction at 27½ weeks for a mild form of handicap. One twin was allowed to live, but the other was killed in the womb by an injection of potassium chloride.

9 pm

I do not use, and have never used, the term "murder". I do not think that it is helpful to do so and it causes much guilt and grief for women who have had abortions. But when at 27½ weeks one twin is allowed to survive and the other is deliberately killed with a lethal injection, I cannot think of another term to use.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: When I was carrying our first child I did not understand why my husband suddenly lost two stone in a fortnight. He did not tell me for many years that he had been told by the doctor that I was expecting one baby with two heads. In this day and age, those delightful children, who have twins of their own, would have been aborted.

Miss Widdecombe: I am most grateful to my hon. Friend. We daily read stories of parents who have been given the wrong information—although perhaps not as horrendous as that—by the medical profession, whose children go on to lead normal, healthy and fulfilled lives. That is a genuine error of the medical profession; it never deliberately gives misinformation.

If selective reduction is to be governed by the Abortion Act, it will be made legal, even after viability has occurred. We now have no time limits, for example, for reductions for disability. Viable children in the womb could be killed quite legally. But that is not always done, even for serious or minor disability. When a woman discovers in the early stages that she is having a multiple birth—quite often these days, as a result of being overimplanted through IVF techniques; the doctor creates the situation which he solves by selective reduction—how does she choose? If there is nothing wrong with them but there are simply too many, how does she choose? On the grounds of sex, hair colour, colour of eyes? What is the deliberate killing of children in those circumstances called? If that is to be called abortion, when it is not—it certainly is not a miscarriage—we are going down a dangerous path.

Amendment No. 29 gives the Secretary of State powers to enlarge the classes of premises that will be licensed. I believe that that is merely a paving measure—even if it is not intended as such—for self-administered home abortion.

Mr. Key: It has been brought to my attention that what my hon. Friend has just said appears in the whip issued by the pro-life group. That is not the intention and, quite inadvertently I am sure, my hon. Friend has been very misleading. When I spoke, for all of three minutes so that we could hear arguments from all hon. Members, in the cause of brevity I did not refer to amendment No. 29. My hon. Friend has been speaking for 30 minutes, and with the leave of the House I shall later seek to explain her misleading argument.

Miss Widdecombe: I shall take my hon. Friend's hint and begin to curtail my remarks. I said not that he had deliberately set out to create that, but that it would be the effect. If the Secretary of State is finally able to allow self-administered abortion at home, through RU486 or whatever else is developed, there will be legalised back-street abortions with precious little counselling or control. That will be the ultimate effect.

We are told that Scotland has never experienced any problems, despite not having the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. Scottish medical practice is governed by the General Medical Council and the ethics committee. Its ethics are based on English law. That point has been made by a number of Ministers in different circumstances. Now that the English law is being changed, there is no reason to suppose that there will not be very late abortions. If the amendment spoken to by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East is passed, more disabled children will be born. The amendments that have already been agreed to will lead to an increase in the number of abortions. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East admitted as much tonight, even though he may not have intended to do so.

The ILPA has resulted in the removal of legislation that has been on the statute book for many years. We shall be making a distinction, up to birth, between disabled and healthy children. If the other amendments are passed, they are likely to end up as home abortions and as selective reductions.

I apologise for addressing the House on the subject at such length, but it is important.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. There is little time in which to discuss these important issues. A number of hon. Members wish to take part. Therefore, brief speeches will be in order.

Ms. Richardson: I listened carefully to what the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) had to say about disabled foetuses. She shows great concern for disabled people, so I was surprised when it was drawn to my attention that the hon. Lady voted against the last report of the Select Committee on Social Services on community care. All hon. Members want the interests of carers to be safeguarded. However, the hon. Lady was the only member of the Select Committee to vote against the report. That is extraordinary, especially when one remembers that she has expressed support for the handicapped and the need for the House to think about how Parliament and the Government can help the disabled.

The subject with which we are dealing amounts to a re-run of what happened on 24 April. That is extremely distressing. I have been a Member of Parliament for about 15 years. I cannot recall another occasion when cool, decisive decisions have been taken and then, six to eight weeks later, reversed because, it is said, many hon. Members did not know what they were doing. A few hon. Members may have been confused; it was, in many respects, a confusing evening. For about two and a half hours we were trooping through the Division Lobbies. However, I was extremely pleased and surprised to see that hon. Members seemed to know what they were doing. I did not find that hon. Members were saying to one another, "Gosh, I don't know what I'm voting about tonight. Should I be in this Lobby? Oh, no, I am in the wrong Lobby." That did not seem to be happening.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: The hon. Lady was not in the same Lobby that I was in. Her side of the argument

[Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman]

suddenly withdrew the tellers in their Lobby, which admittedly threw our Lobby into confusion. There was a quick succession of votes and the fact that the hon. Lady's Lobby suddenly withdrew tellers on a Division on one amendment threw people into confusion.

Ms. Richardson: The hon. Lady is apparently saying that something that we did on our side of the argument threw her side into disarray.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: We had gone into the Lobby to vote for something and then suddenly, quite unaccountably, the hon. Lady's side of the argument withdrew their tellers.

Ms. Richardson: I am very sorry, but this is the House of Commons and I should have thought that hon. Members were used to reading the Order Paper to know what they were doing. The hon. Lady's comments are quite an admission. It is not our job to say, "Stop, are you sure you know what you're doing? Are you sure that you really want to withdraw this?" I am not suggesting that the hon. Lady is stupid, because I am sure that she is not. I am really sure about that.

I honestly believe that by and large, with possibly a few exceptions—one or two hon. Members have admitted that they were in the wrong Lobby on the wrong occasion—hon. Members knew what they were doing. The fact that the clause stand part debate was carried by such an overwhelming majority and that hon. Members stayed to the very end to register their votes must be significant. Nearly two months later, we are effectively having a re-run of that issue.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: And you have lost.

Ms. Richardson: The danger is that we shall undo what we did less than two months ago. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) can recall an occasion when the House has taken two different stances within such a short period. I certainly cannot recall such an occasion.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): Does the hon. Lady recognise that some of us knew what we were doing on that night? I abstained then, and I am grateful for the opportunity to think again about the issue. Although I disagree with a great deal of what I have heard tonight and I particularly deplore the personal insults which have been flying around on both sides of the House, I have concluded that amendment No. 4 should be supported.

Ms. Richardson: Well, okay, people are entitled to change their minds. The hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) is honest and gutsy enough to get up and say that she wants to change her mind. However, I do not believe that the House as a whole wants a re-run. If we were to take that practice to its logical conclusion, we would be re-running votes that we had taken during the week.

Mr. Cormack: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Richardson: I do not really want to give way, because I do not want to spend all the short time available to me on this constitutional issue. However, as the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) so ably chaired the Standing Committee on the Abortion Bill and was so kind to us, I will certainly give way to him.

Mr. Cormack: I am grateful to the hon. Lady. She was most gracious to give way.

We are dealing with this Report stage and during the passage of Bills hon. Members have the opportunity and the duty to keep thinking about the issues under discussion. I happen to believe that there was an element of confusion on that night of the long votes, and that we will prove it this evening. Hon. Members will vote and the Bill has not yet completed its passage through the House. What we are doing tonight is entirely constitutional and proper. At the end of this evening, we will know where we stand.

Ms. Richardson: I did not suggest that this was unconstitutional. I said that it was unusual and that I could not remember it happening before. We must remember that the Leader of the House specifically gave the House, as the Department gave the House, a clear opportunity to vote on this issue on 24 April after a full day's debate.

The majority of hon. Members who participated that day—and there were many—feel that, although it is perfectly true that we are today discussing the Bill on Report, we are entitled to re-discuss issues and I acknowledge that. The fact that we had a Committee of the whole House with not just one child's guide from the Leader of the House, but child's guides all over the place meant that the House knew what it was doing. Not only hon. Members who supported my argument but hon. Members who supported the other side of the argument have expressed surprise that the whole matter should be re-run.

9.15 pm

The effect of what was passed that night was the same as the provisions of Lord Houghton's Abortion (Amendments) Bill in the other place. A considerable amount of briefing material explaining its provisions had crossed hon. Members' desks well in advance of the debate on 24 April. Some hon. Members actually tabled that Bill as a new clause so hon. Members were not unfamiliar with the arguments and proposals. The Houghton Bill was supported unanimously by the House of Lords and was based on the report of a Select Committee that had sat for two years. The members of that Select Committee took the same position as the House has taken today.

There are two reasons why the House of Lords thought that a woman's health and foetal handicap should be exempt from time limits. It is difficult to distinguish between life and health. Doctors cannot be sure whether a pregnancy will kill a woman immediately, but it could shorten her life considerably, and that must be taken into account. Pregnancy could damage a woman severely. It could put her in a wheelchair or induce illness such as multiple sclerosis. Some handicaps are so severe that the foetus cannot survive. In a dramatic case, the brain or some other vital organ may be missing.

It is difficult to define the phrase "capable of being born alive". There have, quite rightly, been many judgments and much case law and discussion on this. The recent judgment in the Rance case, for example, has extended case law in this area. It now appears that, if a foetus is capable of drawing

a few breaths, the law can regard it as viable. We must tackle that decision, because a foetus with no brain may be capable of being born alive, but it cannot survive for more than a few hours. We must face these difficult problems, and the House did so on 24 April with enormous good sense.

There is no evidence that doctors have ever performed late abortions for trivial reasons—not even in the case of the Carlisle baby, which is often referred to in the House. On investigation, it was found that there was no case to answer. The upshot of the Carlisle case was that the woman concerned, having had to make a terribly difficult decision, had her case investigated by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the whole thing was splashed across the British press. That woman was put through enormous agony.

I do not understand why those hon. Members who are anti-abortion cannot accept a decision that was taken by this House in good faith and with substantial votes so recently. I think that I heard those hon. Members say before 24 April that if the House had an opportunity to vote on that matter, they would accept the results of that vote. I believe that the hon. Member for Maidstone said that. I hate to say that they suggested that they would go away, but they certainly suggested that they would not raise the matter in the regular way that they have been raising it for the past several years—as I know to my cost.

Miss Widdecombe: It is the same Bill.

Ms. Richardson: Here we are, not two months later, and those hon. Members are raising the whole thing again.

I was pleased this morning to receive a copy of a letter from Sir George Pinker, the president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which was addressed and faxed to the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham). It stated:

"I am writing . . . before tomorrow's debate to confirm that the College's view would be in support of Lord Brightman's committee's findings and we would support his letter of 19th June in the Times."

I am sure that hon. Members who are interested enough to be in the Chamber now will have read the letter.

Sir George Pinker continued:

"We would not like to see the Infant Life (Preservation) Act insinuated into the provisions of the Abortion Act."

That is a clear and informed decision. The House has a duty to take note—as we usually do—of the views of the RCOG because it is composed of a large number of distinguished people.

I hope tonight that we shall decisively reject amendment No. 4, just as on 24 April we decisively decided to vote as we did. We shall support the amendments tabled by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key). Although there is possibly a technical drafting problem with one of them, I am sure that it could be put right—

Mr. Key *indicated dissent.*

Ms. Richardson: I am glad to note that the hon. Gentleman is shaking his head about there being a drafting problem.

On balance, we feel that his amendments should be supported. I hope that my hon. Friends will join me in the Lobby to defeat this dangerous amendment, amendment No. 4.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I begin by confirming that all four of the amendments that have been selected are the subject of a free vote as far as the Government are concerned. No Whip is being applied to my right hon. and hon. Friends or—as far as I am aware—to any hon. Member. When we refer to Whips in this context, we are talking about briefs that people take from colleagues who are sympathetic to their point of view, which will help to guide them through the amendments.

As this is one of our last debates at this stage of our deliberations on the Bill, I am pleased to record the fact that the House has so far handled the Bill with considerable care. Although there are strong feelings among hon. Members, I am sure that we all regret that a slight note of abuse has begun to creep into the debate.

Although I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) on most of these issues —I have, however, voted with her three times this evening —I have the highest regard for the way in which she puts her case and for the strength of her convictions. Similarly, my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) is a long-time colleague, for whose views I have the highest regard.

I wish to make a few brief factual points about the three less important amendments and shall then deal as briefly as I can with amendment No. 4. First, the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), on selective reduction—amendment No. 30—is correctly drafted.

Mr. Frank Field: So we should be given its source.

Mr. Clarke: Some doubt has been raised about that. Secondly, the amendment would have the effect of clarifying the law as we believe it stands. The best advice that we can obtain is that selective reduction is subject to the Abortion Act 1967 but that there is considerable doubt about the matter. The effect of the amendment would be to clarify the position. The only effect of not accepting it would be to leave the law shrouded in doubt.

Mr. Alton: Will the Secretary of State explain then why the word "miscarriage" is used in the amendment when there is no miscarriage and the baby stays in the womb until it is born?

Mr. Clarke: We have taken advice from parliamentary counsel and others. The difficulty of deciding exactly what selective reduction is, when the foetus is killed inside the womb, makes the position different from that of ordinary abortion. Therefore, miscarriage is regarded as the legally correct description. I am advised that the amendment is correctly drafted to catch selective reduction. It makes it clear that selective reduction can be carried out only if the practitioner complies with the abortion legislation in whatever form it emerges from Parliament.

Amendment No. 29, also tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury, would give the Secretary of State the power to approve a place in relation to treatment consisting primarily in the use of such medicines as may be specified. The amendment anticipates the possibility that drugs such as RU486 will be licensed and approved for use in this country. As the House knows, in France about 30,000 women have chosen that method of lawful abortion. It does not involve surgery or general anaesthesia. If that drug is ever introduced here, it will extend the range of choice available to women and to

[Mr. Clarke]

doctors who prescribe treatment. As the law stands, if no power such as that contained in the amendment is provided, it will continue to be necessary for the patient to have the drug administered in a hospital or other approved place. There is no medical reason for that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone mistakenly suggested that the abortion pill will be given out and taken home. First, no such pill is yet licensed here. It will not be licensed unless the Committee on Safety of Medicines is satisfied when the application is made that it should be licensed. Such a pill would be administered only in closely regulated circumstances under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner.

A question was asked earlier about what type of premises would be used for administering such a drug. It is possible that the pill could be administered in a GP's surgery under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner. The patient would still have to return two days later to be given the pessary.

All that my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury seeks to ensure is that, if such a drug is licensed, the Secretary of State will at least have the power in primary legislation to approve the places and circumstances in which it might be used. If we do not address that matter this evening and if the drug is licensed in a year or two, there will be a private Member's Bill on every Friday for several years about whether the circumstances in which the drug is administered should be changed. It is for the House to decide.

Sir Bernard Braine: Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Clarke: I apologise to the Father of the House, to whom I should normally give way out of respect. However, I am sure that the House does not want me to spend so long on these three amendments that I cut other hon. Members out on amendment No. 4.

There is hardly any difference between my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone and me on amendment No. 28. It deals with whether it should be necessary to record the handicap in the case of abortions carried out on the ground of handicap of the child. There is some point to the amendment. It would finally answer one way or the other the continual claim that abortion is carried out for a hare lip or other such condition. I share the doubts of those who say that that does not take place. My hon. Friend is convinced that it takes place, but we do not know because no one is required to notify what the handicap is. The only argument for the House to consider is how to go about recording handicap.

If amendment No. 28 is accepted, it will be necessary on the green form, a certificate which must be filled in before the operation is carried out, to specify the handicap in every case from no weeks to 28 weeks, or however many weeks we allow. I give an undertaking to the House that if that amendment is defeated the Government intend to introduce regulations to make it necessary for the nature of the handicap to be specified on the notification for a late abortion after 24 weeks. I shall not argue the point because people can reflect on that and decide which method they prefer. I believe that it will be necessary to introduce a record of the nature of the handicap.

9.30 pm

Everyone who has spoken tonight will agree that amendment No. 4 is the one that matters most. We must first be clear about the factual effect of amendment No. 4. Unlike the other three, amendment No. 4 does not relate to a new issue. My right hon. Friend the Member for Selby and my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone are trying to reverse the effects of amendments (i) and (f) that were carried on 24 April. They openly acknowledge that that is their intention, together with the decoupling of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, which resulted from the acceptance of amendment (q). My hon. Friends want to reverse the combination of those three amendments.

Let us be clear what the House did on that occasion, upon which we are now being asked to reflect. The amendments introduced, without time limit, the right to an abortion on the new ground of preventing

"grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman"

Recently some constituents told me that that means abortion on demand, without a time limit, up to birth. That is a travesty of the truth. The amendment deals with cases where the mother is having such difficulties, for example because of hypertension, that she is running the risk of severe permanent damage to her brain, heart, or kidneys. The doctor then feels the need to intervene to terminate the pregnancy, as he must intervene if the life of the mother is plainly threatened. The letter that was quoted in the debate has already revealed that the most reputable practitioners would attempt to do so in a way that saved the life of a viable foetus, if possible.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that in those particular circumstances, where the blood pressure of the mother threatens to damage her kidneys, the doctor could induce the birth without killing the baby?

Mr. Clarke: In effect, that is what the doctor will try to do and that will have the effect of terminating the pregnancy. The doctor will terminate the pregnancy while attempting to save the life of the baby if he can. I believe that there will be few cases in which that will happen, but we must consider them.

On the previous occasion when we considered the Bill the House allowed, without time limit, abortions on the existing ground of the substantial risk

"that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped."

The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) has already said that that covers cases where the child may be capable of life and have the ability to breathe and move after birth, but have no brain. It would be incapable of sustained existence and in that case an abortion could be carried out without a time limit.

I understand how strongly and sincerely hon. Members are arguing that that decision should be reversed. Tonight, the House will vote on whether to reverse the decision to introduce no time limit on the two grounds that I have specified.

It appears that we are being asked to reconsider because people were confused on the previous occasion that we considered the Bill. I must address that point because the Leader of the House and I were responsible for the ordering of that debate and for the attempts to inform hon. Members about what was happening. I have obtained the two documents that we circulated. One was from the

Leader of the House—a copious document—and, because people said that it was long and difficult, a short document was published by the Whip responsible for the Bill, my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight), which was distributed to hon. Members on both sides of the House who wanted to know for what they were voting.

As I said in an earlier intervention, the diagram was absolutely clear. It explained that in relation to grave permanent injury to the health of the woman, amendment (f) imposed no limit, (g) would be 28 weeks, and in the case of a substantial risk of serious handicap, the relevant amendment would introduce no limit, compared with the 28 weeks in the Bill.

The guide produced by the Whip, my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North—it was described as an idiot guide—described amendment (f) as

"Liberalising—provides no time limit in those cases where mother risks grave injury."

That was carried by 337 votes to 146, with myself voting with the majority. Amendment (i) was described in that guide as

"Liberalising—provides no time limit for abortion if child is likely to be seriously handicapped."

That was carried by 277 votes to 201. I voted on the losing side on that occasion, as did the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, because I should have preferred 28 weeks for handicapped cases.

I checked the Division lists. My right hon. Friend the Member for Selby voted the wrong way on both occasions. Knowing his views and convictions and examining those Division lists, I am sure that he did not intend to vote the way that he did on those occasions. I cannot but help think that that is why my right hon. Friend has been asked to move the amendment, for he is the only one who appears to have voted the wrong way.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) voted the wrong way once; he got one wrong and one right. All other hon. Members who voted on that occasion voted then as they are speaking now. They knew exactly what they were doing, and they went down—I went down with them—by 76 votes in one Division, they had a majority of almost 190 against them in the other.

An attempt is now being made to reverse the situation—giving the House a second opportunity, as has been said—but to avoid putting the same Question for the second time, those in favour of that course are using the mechanism of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. They are bringing a confused method back into the Bill by reversing the former decision.

To reintroduce the Infant Life (Preservation) Act, as amendment No. 4 would do, would take us back to the strange feature of that Act, in that before 28 weeks it is necessary for the prosecution to prove that the child was capable of being born alive, and after 28 weeks there is a rebuttable presumption. That has always been confusing, as we all know. I do not claim that it is unintelligible to lawyers. It has not existed in Scotland, although I am sure that Scottish lawyers would have no more difficulty in understanding it than English lawyers.

If the amendment were made, taking the concept of grave permanent injury to the health of the mother back to 24 weeks—I did not vote for that on the previous occasion—the effect would be that between 24 and 28 weeks there would be an offence under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act if it were proved that the child was capable of being born alive; above 28 weeks there would be an offence under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act unless it was shown that the child was not capable of being born alive; and in the case of the child born with serious physical or mental abnormalities, there would be no offence if it was under 28 weeks—none of the long-term protection to which my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone was, I think, referring when she said that she was trying to defend that aspect—but above 28 weeks there would be an offence under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act unless it was shown that the child was not capable of being born alive.

I have selected from a large table circumstances describing the effects of amendment No. 4 on termination under different grounds after 24 weeks. I said on the previous occasion that the legal consequence of reversing the provision in the way suggested would be unbelievably confusing. As was made clear by my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone—the Whip for the evening, if I may use that expression—the effect for doctors would be so confusing that they would know that above 24 weeks they would be at risk from the law if they carried out an abortion in the case of proven brain damage to the woman and above 28 weeks they would be at risk from the law if the child was suffering from severe foetal handicap.

Mr. Alison: My right hon. and learned Friend is drawing our attention to this important document, which is meant to throw light on the path that we have been trying to tread in this complicated debate. The very last sentence of the last annex on the last page of the descriptive brochure issued by the Leader of the House—I refer to annex D—states:

"Where the Abortion Act set a limit of 24 weeks or less, ILPA would apply above that time limit and would put the burden of proof on the defence from 24 weeks onwards instead of from 28."

Because my right hon. and learned Friend has himself introduced subsection (1) (a), which specifies 24 weeks as one of the limited options in respect of so-called social abortions, by that very definition the ILPA has become involved on his initiative, exactly as defined in the specification issued by the Leader of the House. So my right hon. and learned Friend cannot complain that by introducing the 24 weeks to the other three subsections we are creating confusion.

Mr. Clarke: The paragraph from which my right hon. Friend is reading is the last of a series dealing with the last two amendments. It raised the question of what would happen if the House voted to decouple the Infant Life (Preservation) Act, and whether it would then be sensible to go on to vote for another amendment to reduce the ILPA to 24 weeks for non-Abortion Act cases. The sentence to which my right hon. Friend referred makes it clear that that would be logical if it were wanted. By general agreement—I remember consulting my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone—we did not move that amendment because nobody particularly wanted to move it, so the sentence deals with a hypothesis in which no one was interested and which was never moved—and which has not been mentioned since. It does not undermine my basic point.

Furthermore, turning to the page on which my right hon. Friend claims there is a mistake, which deals with exceptions for emergency situations, we read:"no limit (amendment i)". Three sentences below the paragraph about which my right hon. Friend complained we read:

[Mr. Clarke]

"Amendment (f), if carried, would provide that there should be no time limit to the exception on the grounds of grave permanent injury."

If this amendment is carried, the House will have flatly contradicted the two amendments that it passed by large majorities on an earlier occasion. We shall then have to decide what happens next, but I still argue that the House must come to a resolution of all those matters and of the law. Personally, I should continue to go for 28 weeks in the case of handicap to the child. There has been no such operation recently, but we are debating no amendment that would allow us to return to 28 weeks, so, although I lost last time, I should have left the matter there.

I do not agree with a reduction to 24 weeks when there is a risk of grave permanent injury to the mother. If doctors are dealing with a mother who will suffer grave permanent injury if her pregnancy is continued, I cannot believe it moral to make it illegal to terminate her pregnancy while doing everything possible to save the life of the child.

The House was right before; I await the judgment of the House on a free vote later tonight.

Mr. Alton: Four amendments are before us, and before dealing with amendment No. 4, the most controversial, I should like to support the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe), who spoke to amendment No. 28, which would give the House the chance to make case-specific the recommendations made by a doctor carrying out an abortion, so that we can clearly know in future debates whether an abortion has been carried out for seemingly trivial reasons.

There have been disagreements about whether abortions have occurred for reasons such as club foot, cleft palate or harelip. I suppose that to some extent we all rely on our postbags and anecdotal evidence. In one case where the child is my godson, it was recommended that the mother should have an amniocentesis test for the following child because the first had been born with a cleft palate. When she asked why she should have the test, she was told that it would be irresponsible not to do so. The woman, who is a constituent of the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), was then told that she would jeopardise the pregnancy if she did not proceed with the test. Of course the opposite is the case, because amniocentesis carries a 3 per cent. risk of a spontaneous abortion.

9.45 pm

The fact that a doctor would put pressure on a mother to have such a test is reprehensible. The fact that he tried to justify it by saying that an earlier child had been born with a cleft palate and that therefore the next child might have some disability shows the route down which we have gone. It is the eugenics route, a justification of abortion on the ground that in some way the baby may be born disabled.

Anyone listening to our debates and to debates outside would think that the vast majority of abortions were for disability reasons. That is not true, because 98 per cent. of all abortions are on perfectly healthy children and even 92 per cent. of late abortions are on perfectly healthy children and the disability issue does not arise.

Amendment No. 28 would at least require the nature of the disability to be specified, and it would end this argument once and for all because each year we could table parliamentary questions asking the Secretary of State about the returns for that year and we would know the precise reasons for abortions.

Amendment No. 29 was tabled by the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) and concerns the drug RU486. The Secretary of State for Health said that the amendment would pave the way for RU486 and would avoid the need for the House to return to the subject if it so wished. Anyone would think that RU486 was not available in Britain but that is not the case because trials have been undertaken and it is significant that the clinic chosen for the trials is in my constituency.

Clinical trials have shown that in most cases it is also necessary to administer prostaglandin. The pill has side effects such as incomplete abortion and severe bleeding in the mother. It has been suggested that the mother is more likely to suffer from post-abortion trauma after delivering a complete but dead baby. If the amendment is accepted, RU486 will become available.

It is worth bearing in mind that there has been some wide-scale experience in France. The French medical journal of 30 April says that Roussel, the company which manufactures RU486, has sent a circular to abortionists in France telling them of one heart attack and another cardiac anomaly that have occurred in a woman after she had undergone an RU486 abortion.

The company also reported knowledge of more than 3,000 further cases of less serious side effects and said that women must be assessed for risk of cardiac problems before taking the drug, that the procedures in use must be tightened, and that resuscitation equipment must be available and ready for use wherever the drug is administered. We all know that in private clinics such facilities are rarely available.

Let us be clear about the area that we are entering by paving the way in the manner that the Secretary of State has suggested. Amendment No. 30 also stands in the name of the hon. Member for Salisbury; it deals with selective reduction. We often use euphemisms in debates to disguise what we really mean. The *Lancet* recently published a letter which suggested that the term "selective reduction" might be politically unacceptable to the House and suggested that it would be better to use the phrase "pregnancy enhancement".

We should be clear what selective reduction means. It means that, where there is a multiple pregnancy with too many foetuses, or where one is thought to be handicapped, the surplus or handicapped babies can be removed. A doctor using ultrasound to guide the needle stabs the heart of one of the babies and injects potassium chloride. That is usually carried out at nine to 12 weeks gestation, but in some cases—the House has already had drawn to its attention tonight the case of the King's college baby—at 27½ weeks' gestation. Not years ago, but this year, a baby was aborted at 27½ weeks' gestation. That case is currently the subject of a police inquiry.

Mr. Key: It is precisely because of the unclearness of the law at present and precisely because there is enormous dispute in the medical and the legal professions that I am seeking, through the amendment, to clarify the law so that the medical and legal professions know exactly where they stand. We cannot go on ducking those responsibilities.

Mr. Alton: That is precisely the point that I am making. The hon. Gentleman wants us to make legal what I believe

the House should outlaw because it is wrong. At 27½ weeks' gestation, the King's college baby was aborted because it was one of twins which would have been infertile for the rest of its life. In no way was that a life-threatening disability or a handicap.

Ms. Primarolo: That is not true.

Mr. Alton: It is true. I shall give the hon. Lady further details.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Such an abortion would have been illegal if it did not comply with the Abortion Act. What my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) is saying is that the abortion being graphically described by the hon. Gentleman must comply with the Abortion Act. I will not comment on the particular case, but anything of the kind that the hon. Gentleman is decribing would be unlawful.

Mr. Alton: The very reason that the Secretary of State describes is a disability. If that disability is given as the reason for an abortion, it will be perfectly legal to selectively reduce using the handicap provision right the way up to birth unless amendment No. 4 is carried this evening. Therefore, it is all the more imperative that we consider amendment No. 4 in the context of the new amendments that have been placed before the House for consideration only today.

It is vital that we reverse the bad decision that was taken. Whether that was the result of confusion or whether the House knew the reason for it is immaterial. The whole point of a Report stage is so that we can reconsider matters after we have pondered them. But in the context of the other amendment on selective reduction, it is even more important that we ensure that, right the way up to birth, there is protection for the child that might otherwise be removed.

In opposing amendment No. 4, various arguments have been placed before the House. One was that the letter from Professor Finnis and Dr. Keown was in some way misleading. My right hon. Friend referred to the first part of the letter, which says that abortions would be allowed until birth in a wide range of cases, markedly altering the existing law which allows the destruction of a viable foetus only to save the mother's life. Let us be clear that that is precisely what the House has authorised by uncoupling the Infant Life (Preservation) Act from the Abortion Act which my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) put in place in 1967. We ensure that a perfectly viable baby of, say, 23 weeks' gestation would have to be saved. Under the terms of what the House has agreed, that would no longer be the case.

The Scottish question has constantly been thrown in tonight as though that is a reason why, as the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) and the right hon. Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) said, we in some way or other should not ensure that the law does the most to maximise the protections and safeguards for the unborn child. I took the trouble to speak to the Scottish Office during the passage of my Bill. The Infant Life (Preservation) Act did not apply in Scotland but other provisions did, and it is worth bearing those in mind.

The then Solicitor-General, responding to the Corrie Bill, as it was known, in 1979, explained the law as it applied in Scotland. He said in Committee on that Bill:

"In Scotland the medical operation by surgery is essentially an assault if it is not cured by proper medical care and proper medical motivations. The motive must be a proper medical motive in the proper circumstances. The law governs late abortions."

So the law was different in those circumstances.

In this country, abortions are not regarded as an assault. Also, there are joint committees of the BMA, both Scottish and English, which together have drawn up guidelines that have been applied in England, Scotland and Wales throughout the years. The Secretary of State's own Department issued guidelines to every Scottish hospital saying that, for the purpose of common practice, the law as it applied in the rest of the United Kingdom would apply in Scotland as well. As far as common practice is concerned, the ILPA is effectively de facto applied in Scotland, even though de jure it is not.

No medical bodies have ever suggested that there was a need to extend the limits relating to handicaps. To permit handicap abortions up to birth would be unnecessary and barbaric, and an insult to handicapped people. If a normal baby counts as human and is protected in the last two months of pregnancy, why should not a handicapped baby be protected as well? Whatever our views on abortion, we must surely accept that a child is human at birth and must become human some time before birth. Clearly we would be saying that handicapped or disabled babies, simply because they were handicapped, were not human. Can we allow a situation in which some babies are cared for in incubators from 24 weeks or even 22 weeks, while others are deliberately killed as non-persons at any time up to birth?

Before the House reaches a decision on this life-and-death matter, I plead with right hon. and hon. Members to bear in mind what it is that we are being asked to authorise if we were to reject the excellent amendment in the name of the right hon. Member for Selby. One of two methods would be used to abort such babies because they would be so well developed. From 18 weeks gestation, a baby is not a blob of jelly or a lump of tissue but a foot in length, pumping 50 pints of blood a day. Every single one of its organs is in place. Those are the facts of life and death. What we would then allow to happen would be downright barbaric.

A prostaglandin abortion, such as that which occurred at Carlisle general hospital on a baby of 21 weeks gestation, having a skin disease that was in no way life-threatening, involves the insertion of urea, a poison, which left that baby to struggle in that hospital for three solid hours before it was placed in a black sack and incinerated. That is the kind of thing that we allow even under the law as it is tonight in the case of a baby of 21 weeks gestation.

What is it that we allow in the case of dilation and evacuation, which is the other method used in late abortions? The baby's skull is crushed and its spine is broken. It is removed piece by piece. From seven weeks' gestation, no anaesthetic is used. An eminent immunologist, Dr. Peter McCulloch, has said that a baby of seven weeks will be writhing in agony and can feel pain. Let people be clear what it is that they are being asked to authorise.

The right hon. Member for Selby is trying to ensure at least what was the status quo. I plead with the House to vote for that amendment, because it will safeguard the handicapped baby from 28 weeks' gestation. I plead with it also not to allow selective reduction without at least giving it further consideration. I plead with the House to

[Mr. Alton]

look again at the question whether we should require a handicap to be notified on a form in advance of an abortion being performed. That is a perfectly common-sense proposal and one that ought to unite everyone across the divide. With those words, I am happy to support the amendment of the right hon. Member for Selby.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): A number of hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson), have said that the amendment is unnecessary, and that we are covering the same ground within two months. There was a lot of confusion last time, and if the last vote is upheld, I shall regret it deeply, and believe that the House is profoundly mistaken, but at least it will have been proved that that was what the House wanted.

We are dealing with a Bill which has not accomplished its passage through Parliament. It is entirely proper and utterly right that the House should have the opportunity to speak and to vote again on this most profound and most important of issues. So let no one say that what we are doing is wrong. Let no one suggest that we are in any sense abusing the procedures of the House, because we are not.

The Report stage of a Bill is designed specifically for the purpose for which we are using it tonight. I urge hon. Members to bear that in mind as they go into the Lobby.

It being Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker *proceeded, pursuant to the Order [2 April] and the Resolution [20 June], to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 215, Noes 229.

Division No. 254] **[10 pm**

AYES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Leadbitter, Ted
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
McCrea, Rev William
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Reid, Dr John
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buck, Sir Antony
Butler, Chris
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Eastham, Ken
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gould, Bryan
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxton, John
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Sir David
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Turner, Dennis
Walley, Joan
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Teresa Gorman and
Mr. Frank Doran.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: A member of the Government has to move any further amendments. I have taken soundings. It would help the House, Mr. Speaker, if I moved formally all three of the remaining amendments, one by one.

MR. SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on amendments, moved by a member of the Government, of which notice had been given, to that part of the Bill to be concluded at Ten o'clock.*

Amendment proposed: No. 30, in page 20, line 4, at end insert—

'(4) In section 5(2) of that Act, for the words from "the miscarriage" to the end there is substituted "a woman's miscarriage (or, in the case of a woman carrying more than one foetus, her miscarriage of any foetus) is unlawfully done unless authorised by section 1 of this Act and, in the case of a woman carrying more than one foetus, anything done with intent to procure her miscarriage of any foetus is authorised by that section if—

(a) the ground for termination of the pregnancy specified in subsection (1)(d) of that section applies in relation to any foetus and the thing is done for the purpose of procuring the miscarriage of that foetus, or

(b) any of the other grounds for termination of the pregnancy specified in that section applies".'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:-

The House divided: Ayes 236, Noes 166.

Division No. 255] **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Boateng, Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*

Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Eastham, Ken
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gould, Bryan
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lightbown, David
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lord, Michael
Loyden, Eddie
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Walley, Joan
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Teresa Gorman and
Mr. Frank Doran.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fookes, Dame Janet
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCrea, Rev William
Macfarlane, Sir Neil

Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Moss, Malcolm
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Redwood, John
Reid, Dr John
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shelton, Sir William
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. A. E. P. Duffy.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment proposed: No. 29, in page 19, line 42, at end insert—

'(2A) After section 1(3) of that Act there is inserted—

"(3A) That power under subsection (3) of this section to approve a place includes power, in relation to treatment consisting primarily in the use of such medicines as may be specified in the approval and carried out in such manner as may be specified, to approve a class of places".'—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 233, Noes 141.

Division No. 256] **[10.28 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Eastham, Ken
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Fiannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Gould, Bryan
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lambie, David
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walley, Joan
Ward, John

Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Teresa Gorman and
Mr. Frank Doran.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Fookes, Dame Janet
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCrea, Rev William
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Redwood, John
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Shelton, Sir William
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Wallace, James
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. Frank Field.

Question accordingly agreed to.

'(2A) After section 2(1) of that Act (notification), there is inserted—

"(1A) Regulations made by virtue of paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of this section—

(a) may require a certificate to include such further particulars relating to any opinion certified as the regulations may prescribe,

(b) shall require any certified opinion falling within section 1(1)(d) of this Act to include an opinion as to the nature of the physical or mental abnormalities from which there is a substantial risk that the child would suffer if it were born, and

(c) shall require the practitioners or practitioner concerned to send a copy of any such certified opinion as is referred to in paragraph (b), and of any such further particulars relating to that opinion, solely to the person to whom they are required by regulations to give notice of the termination,

and for the purposes of paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of this section such a copy is information furnished pursuant to the regulations.".'. *[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 197, Noes 197.

Division No. 257] **[10.41 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Budgen, Nicholas
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Evennett, David
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fallon, Michael
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.

Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
McCrea, Rev William
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclennan, Robert
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNamara, Kevin
Malins, Humfrey
Mallon, Seamus
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Moss, Malcolm
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Norris, Steve
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Reid, Dr John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Field and
Mrs. Ann Winterton.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Boateng, Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carr, Michael
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Eastham, Ken
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Key, Robert
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lambie, David
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Lightbown, David
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soley, Clive
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tredinnick, David
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David

Wolfson, Mark
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Teresa Gorman and
Miss Kate Hoey.

The numbers being equal——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): In accordance with precedent I cast my vote to leave the Bill as reported from the Committee, and accordingly my vote is with the Noes, so the Noes have it.

Question accordingly negatived.

Order for Third Reading read.

10.55 pm

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

The last vote symbolised the fact that we have talked ourselves to exhaustion with just five minutes left on the Bill. I should like to thank the officials, doctors and lawyers in my Department who helped me and a number of hon. Members during the passage of the Bill.

The Government introduced the Bill because of the need to have legislation on the important matter of embryo research. The House has always agreed that we need to have a Bill either banning research or regulating it. The House took advantage of the Bill to introduce law reform, and there was general agreement that we should take this opportunity to resolve the outstanding issues on abortion law to demonstrate to the public that we could come to a conclusion and settle the issue for some years.

It has been agreed throughout that once the House had made its clear decision in a free vote on all the ethical matters under consideration, it was our duty to present legislation to settle matters in the country so that the medical profession, the public and all those who hold strong views would know where they stood on these important matters. We have now resolved all the issues on embryology and abortion and I hope that we can end on a non-controversial note by giving a Third Reading to a Bill that is obviously needed to resolve this issue for some time.

10.57 pm

Ms. Richardson: I think that this is the first time that I have seen the Whips so mixed up. I suppose that was because we had a dead heat in the vote on the last amendment. There seemed to be some confusion, but there has been understandable confusion throughout the passage of the Bill.

I should like to add my thanks to those of the Secretary of State for Health for the help that his officials have given us in drafting. We are grateful for that. I should also thank the many people on both sides of the argument who have sent us many letters and much information. All our debates and consideration have made us better informed than we were when the Bill started on its way, and that is because of the attention that outside bodies have given to the House. They gave us the information that we needed to make up our minds.

Proceedings in Committee were meticulous, correct and enjoyable and I am grateful to the Minister for Health for her help. I do not think that I have ever had the last word in the House at the closing stage of a Bill. I hope that I shall have the opportnity on future Bills to have the last word again.

10.59 pm

Mr. Michael Jopling (Westmorland and Lonsdale): I am sorry to disappoint the hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson), but I too want to have perhaps the last word by expressing my warmest thanks to my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Government for the way in which they have responded to a point that I made on Second Reading.

Last night the House agreed to amendments to cover a situation which could arise under the Bill whereby the woman who bears a child will always be regarded as the mother except in cases, such as the one that I drew to the attention of the House, where, with the full agreement of the surrogate mother who has a total power of veto, the genetic parents of a child can go to the High Court and ask to be regarded as the true parents—

It being Eleven o'clock, Mr. SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order [2 April] and the Resolution [20 June], to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 303. Noes 65.

Division No. 258] **[11 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Batiste, Spencer
Beckett, Margaret
Bellingham, Henry
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Corbyn, Jeremy
Couchman, James
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Devlin, Tim
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Durant, Tony
Eastham, Ken
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John

Freeman, Roger
Fyfe, Maria
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Haynes, Frank
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Ingram, Adam
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janner, Greville
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lang, Ian
Leighton, Ron
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lord, Michael
Loyden, Eddie
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
O'Neill, Martin
Oppenheim, Phillip
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Wolfson, Mark
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Worthington, Tony
Yeo, Tim
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Greg Knight and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Ashby, David
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, W.
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Budgen, Nicholas
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cormack, Patrick
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Dixon, Don
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Fearn, Ronald
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hume, John
Hunter, Andrew
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCrea, Rev William
McNamara, Kevin
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Paisley, Rev Ian
Parry, Robert
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Reid, Dr John
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowlands, Ted
Sillars, Jim
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Widdecombe, Ann

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Ann Winterton and
Mr. Frank Field.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

That the draft Parliamentary Constituencies (England) (Miscellaneous Changes) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 18th April, be approved.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Question agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 102(5) (Standing Committee on European Community documents).

VETERINARY MEDICINES

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 4228/89 + COR 1 and COM(90)135, relating to the licensing of veterinary medicines; and supports the Government's policy that the basis for decisions in this area rests on a thorough, scientific appraisal to confirm the safety of such to protect public and animal health.

VETERINARY CHECKS

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8062/88 and the Supplementary Explanatory Memoranda submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 13th December 1989, 26th March, 27th April and 13th June 1990, relating to veterinary checks in intra-Community trade in live animals with a view to the completion of the internal market; and supports the Government's view that changes in existing arrangements must reflect the overriding need for the maintenance of effective measures to contain serious disease threats.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Question agreed to.

Education (Calder Valley)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

11.13 pm

Mr. Donald Thompson (Calder Valley): I am here to speak about education in Calder Valley. Were I not here tonight I would have been at a reunion of some of my friends who were educated with me in my constituency. My wife was educated there, as were my children, for most of their school days.

We all receive a constant stream of letters from our constituents on education matters. It might be slightly eccentric, but sensible, to say what I am not going to speak about tonight. I am not going to speak about the William Henry Smith school, nor about Hipperholme and Lightcliffe junior schools and the muddle over its new school building—although I know that the Minister has undertaken to see representatives of both and that Alan Titterington and Terry Webster will be with them.

I am not going to speak about school meals at Riverside, although the governors made an excellent point about the school meals there, nor am I going to talk about annual general meetings at St. Joseph's, and the difficulties associated with them. I shall not talk about the campaign to keep education local. I support it, as I hope my speech tonight will prove to my constituents.

Education in Calder Valley is a complicated web of difficulties which is ensnaring good, dedicated teachers and their pupils. I shall sketch in some of those problems to remind the Department of them. Although Ministers, particularly the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science who is on the Front Bench tonight, have been more than generous with their time, the difficulties should be set out in *Hansard* so that right hon. and hon. Members can read them here, and at home.

The local education authority in Calderdale runs two distinct and separate systems of education, one in Halifax and the other in Calder Valley. The definition is clearly set out in Calderdale's "Admissions to secondary schools 1987", which describes the pattern of secondary education in Calderdale. It states:

"There are two systems of secondary education in Calderdale: the county comprehensive system in the Calder Valley and the selective system in Halifax."

That is reinforced in the document on the reorganisation of Calderdale schools which deliberately alters the present pattern of primary and secondary education in Calder Valley.

The legality of that dual system has been reinforced by correspondence with the Department of Education and Science on several occasions. The two systems are separated throughout the education system, not just at secondary level. Tonight I shall refer to the secondary schools, the junior infants schools, the reorganisation of small schools and the community charge in Calder Valley.

First, I set out the ethos of the schools in Calder Valley as I understand it from 20 years' experience in local government. I recently read the comments of an influential headmaster who is a campaigner for what he calls reform. He said:

"There is an obsession with standards. We need a broad education for young people who can cope with problems and adapt to change."

He added:

"That is what employers want."

He should have added that we also need higher standards in every aspect of learning. He continued with a paragraph about elitist examinations in sixth forms.

The secondary schools in my constituency are comprehensive and cater for 11 to 18-year-olds. They are separated from Halifax by the weight of the local education authority and the Department of Education and Science. Without exception they wish to remain 11 to 18 schools. They do not particularly want to opt out. I can accept a solution to the problems of Calderdale education only if it strengthens those schools and their pupils.

Brooksbank school and Calder high school are deeply rooted in the community and to take away their sixth forms would be an act of educational vandalism. Todmorden is a younger comprehensive school and hence needs stability, not change. It has discovered that it will soon be receiving more children. Like Todmorden, Ryburn was conceived at the insistence of a Labour Government and improves and expands year upon year. It should be encouraged, not broken up.

The Brighouse secondary schools have already offered the Department of Education and Science a plan for their future. I was consulted on that initial plan, but, to my surprise, I discovered that I had not been consulted on the new paraphernalia of reorganisation for my entire constituency. If the first attempts of the Brighouse secondary school governors are not acceptable to the Department, exploration should continue and be encouraged. It would be extremely wrong to follow a plan to cream off and dilute the best in Calder Valley. The document, named in Orwellian double-speak, "A Way Forward", is not satisfactory for any part of Calder Valley. Its instructed paraphernalia of public notices should be rejected by the Government, and the local authority should be asked to think again. Children in Calder Valley schools should not be disadvantaged to the advantage of others, wherever they may be. Parents are not prepared to accept an experimental form of sixth form colleges, or any other system, just to rectify a self-generating muddle in other areas. We will not make the worst better by making the best worse.

Teachers in Calderdale, of whom I have had much experience, are exemplary. However, they suffer from half-baked schemes. Teachers in my constituency, whatever their backgrounds academically, socially or politically, want the best for their children. It seems to me from the correspondence that I have received that none of them is willing to give up one penny to the town hall in Halifax that should rightfully be given to their schools.

The Secretary of State spoke recently at a conference of head teachers, where attention was drawn to metropolitan districts such as Calderdale, which keep 40 per cent. of their cash at the centre. Mr. David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, echoed the Secretary of State's remarks when he said that he believed that some authorities were abusing this discretionary power and will face parents' wrath. He provided a list of what he called offending authorities. In the metropolitan districts, Trafford came first with 42 per cent., Coventry second with 41 per cent. and, I am sad to say, Calderdale third with 40 per cent. Oldham, Kirklees, Sheffield and Solihull followed hard on its heels. The size of the fish is often governed by the dimensions of the pond. Calder Valley children wish to thrive in a European scene, not in the narrow circumference drawn by anachronistic planners.

[Mr. Donald Thompson]

I have been fortunate to meet former Calder Valley pupils in the corridors of Europe and to see young men and women who are confident and able. I have visited laboratories and research institutes and have met people with double degrees, such as doctors, who are all confident and able. I have met, and meet regularly, skilled men and women who work modern machine tools who are confident and able. I have spoken to young women working word processors or the most modern sewing machines who are confident and able. I have been served food and drink by confident and able young people. I meet young mothers with perfect children who are confident and able. They are the elite whom we are trying to produce and are active examples of the standards of excellence that are sneered at by that reforming headmaster. They are my constituents. The staff, in whatever capacity, of all Calder Valley schools are striving for nothing less.

Standards originate in primary schools but those schools are being destabilised, first, through the introduction of the Education Reform Act 1988 and local accountability and, secondly, through Calderdale's inability to come to terms with the community charge. I have seen a press report that a community charge of £297 is reasonable. However, in its commentary on the 1990-91 budget the local majority party said that it was levying a community charge that was almost the lowest in England. It also said that next year the Government would add approximately 40 per cent. to the charge, whatever the party did. That kind of misrepresentation has infuriated everybody, including many of my opponents' supporters.

Calderdale has set a community charge of £450, but the bill is £297 on account of the safety net and a low rateable value grant totalling £163, borne by the Exchequer. If we add two other figures to the £450—£292 paid by business and £270, which is the amount of Government support —the gross cost of services amounts to £1,020.

The Government say that that is 5 per cent. too much. The local authority can reduce that figure only by attacking children and the voluntary bodies. I have spoken to the chairman of Calderdale Primary Head Teachers Association. Mr. Wilkinson was wise enough to come to see me last year. With this latest letter he has included a petition signed by head teachers from all over Calderdale. He says that it would be unfair not to say that he criticises the rapid introduction of the national curriculum and other policies, but that if there have to be expenditure cuts they should not be made in the education budget. He says much more than that, but he emphasises that point.

I have also met representatives of the secondary head teachers. It was an honest, open and straightforward meeting. Mr. David Scott is the chairman of the Secondary Head Teachers Association. In a well-documented and carefully thought out letter he says that the local authority should reassess all growth items and all standstill budgets and that there should be an across-the-board reduction in all budgets. The association agrees with the primary head teachers that education in Calderdale should be safeguarded. I agree with all that, but the power lies not with Parliament, or with the Minister, or with me. It lies with local people. They can persuade their locally elected representatives to reassess the education budget.

I have been encouraged by the careful and detailed way in which the governors, managers and head teachers of schools such as Hebden Royd Church of England school have written to me. They say:

"The Governors of this school, without any exception, are very much in favour of the concept of LMS, but we do, of course, have grave concerns about the way in which the total resources are being allocated, both nationally and locally".

The headmaster of St. Chad's school wrote to me in November. He said that the introduction of the Education Reform Act 1988 was causing serious difficulties due to the speed of implementation. I know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has taken note of that criticism. In his letter he said that the staff support the idea of a national curriculum but that they are worried about the pace of reform. He makes the point that, although we should have an improved pupil-teacher ratio, we should also consider the inspector-adviser ratio especially in small areas like Calderdale where the number of advisers must, in proportion to the budget, be higher than in other areas. The headmaster of Cornholme school in Todmorden expressed similar worries in a letter thanking me for a letter from the Secretary of State. The headmaster wrote:

"I am enclosing his reply, as requested, which . . . says nothing about the armies of administrators and inspectors".

The headmaster of Ferney Lee school in Todmorden is also concerned about those problems.

Those concerns are well known to my hon. Friend the Minister and he and his colleagues have been kind enough to reply to my letters. However, the situation has been exacerbated by the Government requesting a 5 per cent. cut by the authority. It is the first duty of local government to implement the objectives set down by central Government. Therefore, I am amazed that people think that the Government's supervision of budgets is in any way new.

I mentioned earlier that some of the comprehensive schools in Calder Valley were built at the direction of the Labour Government with a threat of the imposition of what I seemed to recall were called commissioners if the job was not carried out. Those same comprehensive schools are now being attacked by the same party with the threat of the removal of their sixth forms. I happened to be the chairman of the local education authority when the directives came from the Labour Government to move to comprehensive education. With the support of local people at Ryburn and Todmorden, that is what we did.

In Calder Valley there are ways of achieving the expected reduction of 5 per cent. without a frontal attack on schools. Those means have been available since the local budget was set, but time slips by. The academic year is closing and the hope of continuity at the beginning of September is receding.

Another aspect of uncertainty is the programme of small school closures. My hon. Friend the Minister has a copy of a document produced by Black Hall school which sets out the objections to the closure of that junior and infant school. That document repays careful study and I draw the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister to page 17. We must remember that pre-schools for comprehensives have a special and different role from pre-schools in a selective system. The author of that document points out the distorting effect of 40 per cent. to which I have just referred. He believes that a disproportionate amount of money is going to other primary schools in Halifax. On page 17 he states:

"If the LEA were to be consistent with their pupil to staff ratios, one particular school would have 179 extra children on the roll with 26·2 teachers"—

the figure for Calderdale is 27, while another school would have—

"139 extra children on the roll with 24·7 teachers. It would certainly appear that some larger schools in the authority are being subsidised by the smaller schools."

The author also encloses a petition signed by many distinguished people who have been involved in local education for many years asking that the school in question not be closed.

When my constituents read of the planned expansion of services proposed in a recent local budget, they wonder where that money will be directed. They fear, as the Blackwood document says, that some larger primary schools are being subsidised by some small schools.

Calderdale education is under threat. We can expect the secondary schools to feel undermined. They are undergoing a transformation in the way that money is being allocated and determined locally. We are asked, in all schools, to deal with the problems in the Education Reform Act 1988. Although many people welcomed the Act and locally determined spending, the 40 per cent. provision and the speed of implementation are upsetting them. The people in Calder Valley can do much for themselves. They must—I emphasise the point again—persuade their locally elected councillors, on a one-to-one basis, to alter their targets.

I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to send back "A Way Forward", to uphold the objections to the closure of small schools and to insist on parity of treatment for all schools in Calderdale with respect to the local management of schools.

I have gone on a little longer than is usual, but I have confined my remarks to Calder Valley. I know that my hon. Friend will say that a great deal is in the pipeline and that he cannot comment because the decision on the community charge is sub judice. However, I know that he has listened. The hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) has also been present for this debate and has listened carefully and courteously.

11.36 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Alan Howarth): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Calder Valley (Mr. Thompson) on securing this debate. I am grateful to him for giving me the opportunity to offer a few comments on these important issues in the remaining few minutes of this debate. He spoke from the background of his many years of experience as someone who has grown up and lived in the area, who has represented it in local government and who now represents it nationally in the House. He speaks with a passionate loyalty to his constituents and to his area, which all hon. Members greatly respect. He speaks, therefore, with a depth of knowledge and he champions his constituents most eloquently.

My hon. Friend referred to a headmaster who had commented—I believe disparagingly—on the Government's obsession with standards. Yes, we have an obsession with standards, and I make no apology for that. My hon. Friend referred to the confidence and ability of the young people in his constituency. It is our objective, and I know that it is my hon. Friend's objective, that the best educational opportunities should be available to all those young people so that they can realise their fullest personal potential. That is, of course, an objective shared by members of the local education authority and by teachers in Calder Valley.

When I recently had the pleasure of visiting Calderdale authority, I saw for myself the commitment to standards in the schools, which is shared by parents and by employers. That explains why we have introduced our reforms. We believe that it is necessary to give the best educational opportunities to the young people of Calder Valley and of Calderdale in the 1990s.

My hon. Friend alluded to the feeling of some head teachers who have made representations to him that the pace of reform is fast and that, in some ways, it is almost too fast to manage. We are sensitive to those concerns. It is right that we should press forward and it is right that the reforms should be introduced with a reasonable momentum. However, I stress the word "reasonable" and we are very concerned. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has very much taken on board the importance of introducing the reforms at a pace that will prove to be manageable by the good professionals who have the responsibility to deliver them.

My hon. Friend also referred to some anxieties that have been expressed in his constituency about the way in which LMS is being introduced. He was especially concerned about aspects of the formula used by the authority. Our purpose in LMS is to secure the status and pride of the school communities and to ensure that the best use is made of the resources. That concern is rightly shared by those who are members of the education authority. If they have addressed the problem of surplus places, we must accept that concern and commitment.

However, it would be wrong for me to prejudge the merits of the primary and secondary proposals which are under consideration and which will be coming to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for his decision. We are determined that there should be the fullest consultation. As my hon. Friend knows, all objections must be gathered in and it is the obligation of the LEA—in the case, for example, of objections to the current secondary education proposals—to forward those objections to us by 3 July. I give my undertaking that we shall give the most careful consideration to a whole range of relevant factors, such as the educational outcome of the specific reorganisation proposals that have been put to us, what the associated costs may be, and the arguments both for and against, including those adduced by my hon. Friend this evening.

My hon. Friend referred with great pride to individual schools in his constituency, including Calder high school. I offer my tribute to the staff, pupils, governors and parents of that school, which I had the honour to visit recently. I was most impressed by the evident commitment to high standards that I witnessed there.

I cannot comment on the proposals and changes that have been put to us, for the reasons that I have already explained. My hon. Friend quoted a headmaster who had observed that standards originate at primary level. I would add that educational standards originate in the home, but I accept the force of my hon. Friend's comments.

It is of the utmost importance that the pattern of primary education that is established in Calderdale should be of the best. I give my hon. Friend the assurance that he sought—that the document from Blackwood Hall school will be carefully considered by us.

My hon. Friend alluded to the Government's decision to designate Calderdale for charge capping. As he knows,

[Mr. Alan Howarth]

that is now in process of formal consideration in the framework of legal constraints and it would be inappropriate for me to comment, except to add that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has made it clear that he has proposed to cap only the authorities which, by any reasonable standard, are spending excessively.

The length and breadth of this land, authorities have been able to establish education budgets within and around the standard spending assessments and well below the level which my right hon. Friend has put forward for capping, and which will provide a good service. Although we must await the outcome of the discussions—representatives of the authority have had the opportunity to put their case personally to Ministers—I do not doubt that it will be possible for the structure of education to continue in Calderdale on a basis that secures the opportunities that we all want for the young people of that area.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at seventeen minutes to Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 22 June 1990

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

Major Peter Thompson

9.34 am

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of my constituent, Major Peter Thompson, Royal Marines, retired, who should have retired from active service on his 48th birthday in 1976. The Royal Marines asked him to extend his service, which, as the loyal officer he was, he agreed to do, and his service was extended by 14 months. Unfortunately, because of the then Labour Government's pay restraint policies, when Major Thompson retired, his pension was effectively reduced, through no fault of his own. Major Thompson believes that, by agreeing to extend his service, the Ministry of Defence in effect promised to protect his pension entitlement. The petition states:

Wherefore your Petitioner prays that your Honourable House at least resolves to have his date of retirement from the Royal Marines amended to that which it should have been, under Service Regulations then pertaining, from his actual date of retirement some fourteen months later, after loyally agreeing to this extension of service which so adversely affects his retired pay now and contrary to what was promised by the Authorities at the time of his acceding to their request.

And your Petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray etc.

To lie upon the Table.

Export Trade

9.36 am

Mr. Lewis Stevens (Nuneaton): I beg to move,

That this House considers that the United Kingdom export trade is a vital factor in the development of the British economy; notes that Britain exports a wider range of commodities than any other country and welcomes the contribution made by the continued growth of the volume of exports over the last ten years; supports the Government's efforts to remove barriers to international trade to free the movement of goods and money; and believes that the promotion of British overseas trade should be a high priority for business and government and that the opportunities arising for increasing exports require a high level of competitiveness from business and trading conditions such that they are not disadvantaged compared to other countries.

I have chosen a broad motion because our export business is a wide subject, involving not only industrial manufacturing but financial services and overseas and inward investment.

By tradition, this country is a trading nation. Since the industrial revolution, we have traded products that were manufactured in this country. Before it, we traded on a merchant basis throughout the world. For a long time, we have not been self-sufficient. Despite moves over the years to make ourselves self-sufficient in various products, we have noted the need to involve ourselves in international trade to make up for our product deficiencies.

It is interesting that, in the past few years, the growth in exports has managed to compensate, to some extent, for the large increase in imports. Mr. Peter Morgan, the director-general of the Institute of Directors, made an interesting comment in an article in "European Freedom Review". He said:

"We are all soldiers in a global economic war. There is a convention which defines the conduct of the war—it is called GATT—but there is no arms limitation treaty. A nation is allowed to put into the economic battlefield any number of its citizens that it chooses—there are no restrictions. Nor are there any restrictions on the training or technology which can be given to our economic warriors.

Some competitors are disturbingly professional about these issues. The West Germans in business behave uncomfortably like the East Germans in sport—they pick their players while they are still at school and then coach them meticulously until they are old enough to compete. They concentrate on developing technical skills. Not surprisingly the West Germans win as many enterprise gold medals as the East Germans win Olympic golds. And there is the suggestion that for the 1992 games, East and West Germany will enter a single team."

That comment is a particular tribute to Germany, and it shows clearly that we are involved in a trade war.

Last week in the *Daily Mail* there was a report of a survey that had been carried out by some Swiss groups. The report had the unfortunate heading: "Unions 'mean Britain trails in trade war'". I may return later to the topic of industrial relations. The report placed us 12th out of 23 nations in competitive trade. That is not an especially good position for us. However, the survey made some interesting points. It said, for example, that Britain exports the widest range of commodities to the second largest number of countries. It also said that Britain scores well for having free markets that allow the free movement of cash, that we invest more of our wealth overseas than any other country and that we receive the most foreign investment. After Belgium, we erect the fewest barriers to

[Mr. Lewis Stevens]

imports and we are the third best for easing restrictions on foreign firms wanting to set up in Britain. The survey also commented on some of our less good achievements.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): My hon. Friend may be about to tell us some of the bad news. Can he inform the House whether that survey covers the effect on British competitiveness of corporation tax? Does he conclude that Britain's ability to compete with the very powerful nations that he has mentioned this morning would be considerably harmed if the British people were ever foolish enough to return a Labour Government committed to increasing the burden of business taxation on British exporters?

Mr. Stevens: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that intervention. The survey does not mention corporation tax specifically, but the business community accepts that much of our success must depend on investment in our businesses. One of the key factors to the success and growth of businesses, particularly the small and medium businesses, must be the corporation tax or the tax levied on those companies. Should any Government move to increase the taxes on those businesses, it would be a serious threat to the exports and development of those companies. It would also be a serious threat to the standard of living of the British people. The survey does not mention that.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): While the hon. Gentleman is thinking about that, he should talk to some of the business men in Bath and elsewhere who have contributed a great deal to our tourist earnings, but who find that the new business rate is working extremely to their detriment.

Mr. Stevens: The business rate is a far smaller element in the costs of most businesses, especially those involved in exports, than corporation tax. In some areas, the business rate has created extra charges for some businesses, but in many other areas, including my own, the new uniform business rate has reduced the burden on many businesses. It has especially reduced the rates for manufacturing businesses which are the key to much of our export trade. I will concentrate more on manufacturing industry than the motion may suggest, mainly because I know that industry best and I worked in it for many years.

The United Kingdom volume in manufacturing is now 55 per cent. higher than it was in 1981. That is a substantial increase in the volume of exports in manufactures. If oil and erratics are excluded, in the three months to April, exports were 11 per cent. higher than in the same period last year. That again is a substantial amount. One does not jump to that degree without considerable effort and success for the businesses involved.

Our impact on world trade, in manufacturing and most other industrial sectors, has declined over many years. Since 1983, the United Kingdom world share of trade in manufactures has been constant following those years of decline. That is possibly one of the most significant events since the Government took office in 1979. What had become almost accepted as an inevitable decline was halted and we started to come back—or at least to hold constant—in a world where trade is growing all the time. That in itself was an achievement and it was reflected in the way in which our gross domestic product grew at an average of 3·2 per cent. between 1981 and 1989 when the figure for West Germany was 3·2 per cent. and for France, 2·1 per cent. That had an automatic reflection on the standard of living of the British people.

In 1948, Rostas published a paper on the fact that our productivity, which is a key to our competitiveness and our exports, was far less than that in the United States. Towards the end of the 1950s, it was suggested that France and Italy—and Germany a little later—would soon be well ahead of the United Kingdom as well. What happened during that time? Little happened, because we continued the decline. Our productivity fractionally improved, but not at the rate of our competitors' productivity.

By the end of the 1970s, we found ourselves in a weak position. That has substantially improved in the past 10 years, but it does not alter the fact that we still need continually to improve. Our volume of exports and our ability to compete in the world market are more important now than they have ever been. We know what 1992 means in terms of our general EEC commitments. However, the recent changes in eastern Europe and in other parts of the world will set a new target, a new area of investment and a new area of competition.

The economy of the United Kingdom needs to grow in the 1990s. Whereas, in the 1980s, there was a rise in oil production, which obviously benefited exports and imports, the concentration must now move towards the industrial sectors. In general terms, it is difficult to define precisely how competitiveness has become better or worse. In general terms, our productivity has increased, which has maintained us on a level base compared to many of our main competitors.

The difficulty is that, while our overseas trade from exports has increased, it has been over-balanced by the large amount of imports. That means that we must increase our exports and that import substitution is involved. That means in turn that new capacity must be established either by United Kingdom companies and/or by inward investment from companies overseas.

Increasingly in recent years, companies from countries such as Japan have invested in the United Kingdom, which is relatively attractive to overseas companies. The United Kingdom's ability to attract such activity will depend heavily on our cost-competitiveness and also on the ability of our firms to provide them with materials and components. If we cannot provide components, we shall become less attractive.

German and Japanese industries have adopted very different strategies. Our attraction lies essentially in the fact that we are becoming more competitive and that our industries have low cost structures. That has meant that we can compete better in simpler products than the Germans and the Japanese, who have responded to the strengthening of their currencies by concentrating on products and services in which technology and other experience can support a high price, so that producers remain competitive despite high domestic costs. That is a desirable practice, should it prove practicable.

One criticism of the United Kingdom is that our work force lack skills, and that restricts our ability to increase our export growth. But we have been successful in many high-technology sectors. The aerospace sector, in particular, has done well. I have in my constituency one of the Rolls-Royce companies. Both before and since its return to the private sector, Rolls-Royce has been able to compete throughout the world with its advanced high

technology products, and strong competition from the United States has not stopped the company's continued development in exports and trade. Rolls-Royce has also diversified its activities, taking over Northern Engineering Industries, for example, which produces Synchrolift platforms for use in dry docks—a high-technology product involving large-scale engineering. That is an example of the way in which we can compete successfully in some areas of high technology, although not all.

No country will have a monopoly on high technology. As international trade increases, even Japan, with its tremendously large high technology range, will gradually be forced to limit the scope of its products because other countries will become more highly specialised. In those aspects of high technology in which we are successful, we can certainly compete.

Exports are most important to our economy. In 1989, for example, our exports were worth £92 billion, which, given the size of our economy, makes them a major factor by any standards. Unless the trend of improvement continues, our living standards will be reduced.

This Government, throughout their lifetime, like previous Conservative Governments, have strongly supported the removal of trade barriers, considering that to be one of the most important factors in encouraging international trade. It is not easy simply to open the door to trade from anybody, anywhere, at any time. At times, one has to consider the interests of our industries and—possibly even more important—ensure that we are playing on a level playing field and all playing to the same rules. But this country has led the struggle to remove barriers, and no doubt we shall continue to pursue the matter well into the future.

GATT is a key to that, although, as with most international agreements, difficulties may arise in enforcing the rules that are laid down. In particular, we may have difficulty in persuading all the countries that should be involved in GATT to accept not only the technicalities but the spirit of the agreement and not to try to invent other barriers.

Despite our free trade approach, there is still concern among those in the textile and knitwear industries in the midlands and elsewhere about the future of the multi-fibre arrangement, which has been in force for many years and has been extremely helpful to companies in those areas. The future of the arrangement is now the subject of talks and it is likely that, in due course, the industry will move away from the MFA into the normal GATT arrangements.

What happens in the transitional period will be most important for many companies, and that is what worries the industry. It is to be hoped that a satisfactory arrangement for a transitional period lasting a few years —there have been many arguments about how many years it will be—will be found during the Uruguay round. That will be an important confidence-booster to the industry. Until the industry is satisfied that it is not threatened with the sudden disappearance of the protection afforded by the MFA, its attitudes to investment and the way in which it views itself will be affected. I realise, however, that not all the competition suffered by the British textile industry comes from the countries that are partly the reason for the MFA being there in the first place.

The United Kingdom's competitiveness largely depends on improvements in productivity. For the past 10 years, productivity improvements in the manufacturing industries have been running at about 4·3 per cent. a year. That is a substantial improvement, given that, between 1974 and 1979, productivity increased by only 1·2 per cent. a year. Productivity is the key that will make the difference between whether we succeed and improve our position or whether we fall behind our competitors.

Our competitiveness also depends upon our ability to invest in the development of industries and to draw in the technologies that we need. Over the years, many of our companies have tended to reduce their size and increase their productivity, which to some extent has weakened our base on which to expand and create extra goods for export. It is true that many of our industries have a far more productive and competitive base and a better technology base; it is simply smaller than the base that we had years ago. We must increase that base, to make ourselves even more competitive.

Our small base forces us into specialisation which can be successful. For example, the British machine tool industry almost disappeared some years ago. However, earlier this year I visited the national exhibition centre, as did the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett), where the change that has gradually taken place in that industry over the past few years was apparent. Once again, we have a machine tool industry. Within its limited range, that industry has been successful thanks to high technology and to being forward-looking and assessing the needs of the industry worldwide instead of simply concentrating on the home and immediate European markets.

As we move towards 1992, the EEC barriers to trade will be removed. However, although some aspects of 1992 are good, there are other aspects about which we should have reservations. Within the Commission there is a desire not to have barriers, to allow free trade. At the same time, there is a danger that with the centralisation of the Community, bureaucracy might create new barriers.

The definition of product standards offers opportunities. The harmonisation of standards of products such as engineering goods will have a considerable effect on the goods and also on safety, environmental needs and consumer protection. At the moment, we often have national testing of products that have already been tested in other countries. That can provide a barrier to trade, because it is easy to insist on a standard different from that in another country. The Commission is keen to have a mutual recognition of standards within the Community. It would be a great advantage if countries within the Community and outside it could accept the same testing standards.

The political changes in Russia and eastern Europe offer challenges to trade. The Department of Trade and Industry has encouraged people and actually taken groups of businessmen to those countries in an attempt to promote interest in eastern Europe. Of course, it is not that easy. We cannot simply say, "Look, there's a country, get in there." However, there are opportunities to open up new markets on a much wider and more interesting basis, but that will take time. The Government have a role to play as companies move into new areas. The British Overseas Trade Board, the Foreign Office, the DTI, which is a prime mover, the Department of Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Welsh Office all have parts to play.

Mr. David Evennett (Erith and Crayford): My hon. Friend has raised an interesting point. With the opening

[Mr. David Evennett]

up of new markets, there is an opportunity for a partnership between the Government and industry. The Government should encourage and give advice; they should not take a definite lead.

Mr. Stevens: That is a very important aspect.

With regard to eastern Europe, there are staff in embassies and at consulates who can assist our business interests overseas. However, as we seek to expand our effort overseas, we must remember that it is not simply a matter of manipulating effort from one area to another. Additional resources will also be required perhaps in terms of people. Today local knowledge rather than diplomatic effort is more important when businesses go abroad. Shifting staff from one area to another—for example, from South America to eastern Europe—might not necessarily be in the interests of trade. We still need governmental organisations in the countries in which our businessmen see markets.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): My hon. Friend was paying tribute to the Foreign Office. I have often wondered whether it is possible to conceive of a world without the Foreign Office and that thought just occurred to me again. If we have what Mr. Delors wants—not what I want—which is economic and monetary union, will there then be a need for a British embassy in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, in the Kingdom of Spain, in the temporary republic of Greece or in the Kingdom of Belgium?

Mr. Stevens: That is a most interesting concept. I am not sure whether that idea would be welcomed. If we follow my hon. Friend's argument a little further, would our trade with France and Belgium actually constitute exports? That might raise many difficulties, and it might affect the figures that I have quoted today.

Mr. Gow: One must never be led astray even by one's hon. Friends, but my hon. Friend puts me in mind of a greater man even than he— General de Gaulle. The general had the marvellous concept of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Mark how far ahead of his time the general was. We now see in prospect that widening of the European family and the opportunities for trade to which my hon. Friend was rightly referring.

Mr. Stevens: I cannot follow that important aspect.

We are trying to encourage more small and medium sized companies to export to Europe and elsewhere. However, there is a problem with the information and facilities on offer to them. Our embassies and consulates now charge small companies for information and I believe that that is reasonable. The information with which companies are to be provided must be useful and tailored, and it must also be a worthwhile investment.

The trouble with many companies going overseas is that we do not necessarily co-ordinate very well as a country. That is a commercial aspect. When companies get together to make trade bids in a competing country, it is not uncommon for syndicates to get together in no particularly natural grouping. From time to time we find our companies going abroad in competition with each other and bidding for bits of contracts rather than for whole contracts. There is a need for commercial interests to combine ideas and to bid for some of the large projects that are available.

There is great enthusiasm for eastern Europe for all sorts of reasons. We are enthusiastic because it is near, and, because of its low economic position, its potential is even more attractive. However, we have been doing a lot in Africa, the Caribbean and south American countries that also need our help in economic development. Our activities in eastern Europe will be in addition to our already developing trade with other countries.

It is well known that companies within the EC and elsewhere get help in one form or another to boost exports. That boost is very welcome—everybody welcomes Government assistance. It is important that our businesses get the same encouragement and help; otherwise, we will not stand a chance of competing fairly. Matters are improving through Government and other pressure. There is no question that things are getting easier in Japan because barriers are being removed. After some changes in tax on whisky exports to Japan, our Japanese exports have boomed by 72 per cent. That is an important market for whisky, and for many other products.

It is important that the Government respond to frequent complaints about people finding ways around the rules. The same applies to some of our EC partners, GATT countries and so on. We want to make people play by the rules and ensure that, if somebody is not prepared to meet a deadline, we do not put our people at a disadvantage.

There is much more that I should like to say, but I have little voice left.

The importance of our exports cannot be overstated. We have a history of trade. In agriculture, industry and finance we have achieved a great deal in a few years by developing and extending our trade to the benefit of the people of this country. It will be to the detriment of our country if we do not push harder the importance of exports developed by our businesses abroad. We have done well over the past 10 years. The future lies in our ability to export and compete.

10.14 am

Mr. Ted Garrett (Wallsend): I am sure that hon. Members sympathise with the disability of the hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens). It is an occupational disease of our profession. A rest this weekend will do the hon. Gentleman's voice much good.

The hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) referred to General de Gaulle, whose concept of Europe does not coincide with mine. General de Gaulle's concept of Europe was from the Atlantic to the Urals—a Napoleonic concept, with France in the lead, not the EC, as we seem to think that it should be today.

It is amazing that, when this debate started, the Opposition side of the House was populated by four hon. Members from the north-east and one who was originally from the north-east, who had the temerity to intervene and then to disappear. I should like to think that that is not his normal custom. He should follow the rules of the House. If an hon. Member intervenes in a debate, he or she is expected to see the debate through. I have always followed that custom, and I hope that other hon. Members will continue to do so.

Two of our major problems are a lack of knowledge about exports and a lack of communication. People involved in export and marketing have an incestuous way of life. They talk to each other in jargon, and the rest of the nation does not seem to be involved. That is a matter of

regret. Among the many criticisms of our educational system, one that stands out is that many polytechnics do not teach the skills that one requires to be an expert on exports and the skills that many manufacturing and exporting companies require. I inquired into the matter and I found that, in the United Kingdom, there are only about three places at which a graduate or non-graduate who wishes to pursue a career in that profession would have great difficulty in finding a place. We should be very proud of that.

I have an engineering background. In my young days, we never saw the marketing people or those who helped to sell the goods that we manufactured. When I was about 18, the management of the company introduced we apprentices to the export manager. It was like listening to someone from another planet. We kept straight lines of demarcation.

Members of the Institute of Export, a most worthy body, cannot get a hearing. They cannot even communicate with the British public. How can we persuade our sons and daughters to follow that worthy profession? It is a skilled profession that requires courage, expertise and damned hard work. If one succeeds, the results are good.

At this stage I should declare that I advise the British machine tool industry, which is a large exporting sector of our manufacturing base, and British American Tobacco plc, which has enormous export and finance facilities and, of course, indirect exports because of its other activities. As chairman of the all-party group for the chemical industry, I am proud to say that a small but influential group of Members of Parliament are conscious of the vast role that industry plays in our exporting capabilities.

There are some anxieties among exporters. The machine tool industry, for example, is worried about the cut in support for inward missions. Inward missions mean that 15 or 20 prospective purchasers from America or any other country that has an industrial base or that wants to buy British machine tools are brought here for 10 days. The industry pays half the cost and the other half is paid with the support of the British Overseas Trade Board, for which we are all grateful.

However, some people still seem sceptical about whether inward missions are a success. The other night, I participated in a public debate on the motion: "That this Government have eroded the nation's export base." I listened to a young lady who was the epitome of a female yuppie, who said, "Inward missions are a complete waste of time." She was immediately challenged by an equally positive example of a male yuppie, who said straight away——

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood): Was it me?

Mr. Garrett: No, it was not the Minister—he is now past that age.

That young man said that that was nonsense. He had been to Mexico, where he had used his export knowledge to sell British goods to Mexican and Latin American companies. He said that it was nonsense furthermore, because some Mexican machine tool importers had then come to the United Kingdom, interested in purchasing machine tools. The inward mission had also succeeded in selling the products of a British company that produces safety equipment for the mining industry. It took over a market that had been held for 20 years by a French company.

That is a side effect of an inward mission. If there were no inward missions, the British machine tool industry would not be able to sell 40 per cent. of its production in the United States. The Americans prefer British machine tools to Japanese machine tools. They are developing a healthy dislike for the Japanese machine tool industry, and we must capitalise on it.

We have mixed fortunes with outward missions, which is when we go to other countries. Those mixed fortunes are due partly to the lack of back-up that is in our embassies for the commercial people we employ. There has always been a grouse at commercial and diplomatic level—and with some substance—that the British are not well-manned or fully geared up compared with our competitors.

I should like to hark back to 1966—I hope that hon. Members will not mind me reminiscing again—when the Labour Government formed the first Select Committees. I was asked to serve on the first Select Committee on Agriculture. We began by inquiring into how British agriculture would interest itself in what was happening in Europe. We thought that we would go to Brussels and Paris. That was an exciting venture in those days, when hon. Members did not travel abroad as much as they do now—at least, not officially. We discovered that we had no agricultural attaché in either Brussels or Paris.

When we reported that fact on our return, the Minister —the late George Brown—did not appear to like our interference in foreign affairs, with the result that Mr. Crossman, who became Leader of the House, abolished not only the Select Committee on Agriculture, but also the committees covering technology and education. Those three Select Committees were aborted and it was some time before a Government—the present Government—thought that it was a good idea to return to a Select Committee system, which is what we have today. I hope that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will forgive that slight digression into history.

I well recall visiting Taiwan, with which, then as now, we did not have diplomatic relations. I was much struck by the fact that, although Germany did not have diplomatic relations either, it had 80 people in Taiwan to promote its commercial affairs. In addition, the Americans, who did not have diplomatic relations, had nearly 300 people there. The Minister should note that the British had only one man, on part-time secondment, who was not even supposed to be there officially, and two secretaries to look after the interests of British exporters and manufacturers. When we reported that back to the Minister, he said, "Yes, we honour our diplomatic agreements. When we do not have a diplomatic agreement, we do not have one." Britain struggled along like that. Although things have improved, it is useful to remember that example.

Those who, like me, visit international trade exhibitions are appalled to realise that our exporters have to struggle damn hard to find a place in the market place of the huge international exhibitions. Only last year, in one of our biggest markets, the local people who represented British commercial interests in Chicago and Detroit found that their employment was to be terminated. Although they were Americans, those people did a damned good job for Britain and British interests.

[Mr. Garrett]

When the Kemp report, commissioned by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, appeared last December, it contained a few positive things, but also some anxieties and worries. British exporters are worried about the financial services that are provided by the Export Credits Guarantee Department. It is not good enough for the House quietly to accept the report without making some form of strong and legitimate protest.

In the past, our major exporting industries have believed that some of the Department's policies were good for their companies. I have to say that: I cannot stand here and be completely negative. Furthermore, the policies have been good for the sub-contractors that supply the main companies. We from the north-east know that that has also been good for the employment prospects of our region. Finally—this is stating the obvious—the policies have been good for our balance of payments.

While the balance of payments is at its present level —I shall not enter a debate on that this morning, because we shall probably hear enough about it next week—it is worth stating some of the things that are causing concern. The Kemp report refers to the insurance services group of the ECGD. The House knows that that provides comprehensive cover for those exporting goods, but not services. Some manufacturers think that the monopoly at present enjoyed by the insurance services group is not in the best interests of the exporters. They feel that the interest charged is too high, and in many ways they are grateful that alternative private agreements can be reached to meet the cost of providing the financial security that the exporters are expected to have.

Exporters also feel, and I agree with them, that, if they are to be successful in exporting and industry, they should be supported at a level equal to that given to our foreign competitors. This support should apply also to the provision of facilities at the cost at which such facilities are available. In other words, it is no good the Government saying that the facilities are available if the exporter is being charged too much for them. We must see whether we can find an easier financial solution to their legitimate complaints.

Some of the premium rates charged by the ECGD are already higher than those provided by other export credit agencies. The new system of calculating premiums will put British industry at a disadvantage. I also understand that the global sum available for cover has to be carefully calculated for each country, that there will be a strict limit on the sums available and that the amount for each country will be calculated. In other words, there is a lack of flexibility, which means that British exporters, who have been successful in China, the USSR, Hong Kong, South Africa, India and Indonesia, will be restricted: in some years, more will be required to offset what is provided to another country or area of export. I hope that we will increase our exports, but if, when we do so, there is not enough cover for the new business, exporters will be somewhat disturbed.

I welcome this debate, about which I could say a lot more. I am disappointed by the attendance today, but it is symptomatic of this nation that we have not got across to the public, the Government or even the Labour party the importance of this subject. When one mentions exports here, people yawn, but if one mentions them in Germany or France, one can see the vigour and alertness with which they respond. The young people in Germany going through their education system are involved with, for example, the vast chemical companies operating there. They gear their educational system to fit into the needs of their companies, both professional and labour. We have to mix our problems on export with a new system of re-education, because, whatever people may say, we are still a strong and substantial manufacturing country. I want that to continue.

10.33 am

Mr. David Evennett (Erith and Crayford): I am glad to have the opportunity to participate in this important debate. I am always delighted to follow the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett). I know of his sincere interest and experience in industry and exporting. I agree with a number of his comments, although not with his analysis. I shall later highlight where I disagree with him.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) on raising this important issue in the House today. His excellent speech highlighted the real achievements of our industry, particularly our exporting industry, and we have a good story to tell, as he said. My hon. Friend knows, not least from the many occasions when we have served together on various committees dealing with these subjects, that I share his interest in industry, training and employment.

I shall concentrate on three areas. The first is the general importance of exports. Secondly, I shall highlight some of the exporting industries in my constituency and the success stories that are to be told there. Thirdly, I shall raise the issue that I believe to be paramount, although it has not yet been addressed—the need for changes in our attitude towards wealth creation and exporting in our educational establishments. The relevance and importance of industry and commerce are too often ignored by the House, and we do not have enough debates on these vital subjects. As the hon. Member for Wallsend said, it is disappointing that more of our colleagues are not here today.

We have endless debates about matters affecting the public sector, yet we give so little time and attention to the private sector, which creates the wealth that we need to finance public sector services. Without the wealth, we cannot provide from the public purse the funds for the services such as education, transport, and the national health service, that we all want and need. It is important that we consider matters affecting industry and commerce, so that we are aware of the difficulties that people in these sectors face and so that we can ensure that the Government, who, unlike so many previous Administrations, are in tune with businesses, will take every step to help business and business men to be successful.

Britain has a long history as a trading nation, and our industry and commerce have formed vital parts of our economy. Our record of trade, and in particular export trade, goes back many centuries, as we have already heard this morning. We have a long history of seeking out and then meeting the demands of new markets around the world. Over the years, there have been many changes as a result both of competition from other developed nations, notably the United States, West Germany and Japan, and of rapid technological advances in the past decade or two.

In his informative speech, my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton gave us some figures that told an interesting story.

At one time, the products of our heavy industries—shipbuilding, heavy engineering, foundry works and so on—were sold throughout the world, but low-technology goods are now produced domestically even in less developed countries. Therefore, the market for such goods from this country is limited. Where we can and do compete successfully is at the high-tech end of the spectrum, in both manufacturing and service industries.

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): There is not a neat distinction between high tech and low tech. For example, in shipbuilding, modern vessels have high-technology equipment. Therefore, the old and new industries can often work together.

Mr. Evennett: I accept that one cannot have hard and distinct divisions in industry or in any other aspect of life, but there are different skills and opportunities. If we took industry as a whole, we would lose and not maximise our export opportunities in our areas of expertise.

Mr. Garrett: The hon. Gentleman pursues the right arguments, but he must also remember that, as my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) said, we are blending high and low technology. That applies to the coal mining industry and what is left of the steel industry. We export the technology for those industries. British companies make the high-technology equipment used in them. There is a follow-through. It is true that we still have some low technology left, and that element will always remain. It is not advisable to decry it too much.

Mr. Evennett: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's comments, and I agree with him. One must have balance in everything. Balance is the important aspect that I wish to put across this morning.

Of course manufacturing industry in Britain is important for employment and for exports, but we must not concentrate too much attention on it and overlook the importance of the service industries, for example, which have an equal part to play. With modern machinery, simple manufacturing processes can often be carried out in many countries. Therefore, there is intense competition in that sector. By contrast, the service industries in Britain have a high volume of export business and sell quality services which are available in few other countries. We have a good record of providing high-quality professional services in all forms of engineering design, technology, architecture, and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton said, financial services.

It is essential to overcome the old idea that manufacturing is more important than other industries, or that it is the only important element. Manufacturing is perhaps of equal importance, but both manufacturing and services must be discussed in any debate on exporting. Regrettably, in certain areas there has been a decline in our manufacturing industry. Everyone in the House must take responsibility for the all too frequent record of decline and disappointment in certain manufacturing industries. We know the reason for that decline. Over the years, many restrictive working practices and economic policies have resulted in so many firms going to the wall and so much export trade being lost. Everyone in the House regrets that, even though we understand that there must be developments and changes within the economy, which regrettably, results in lack of competition in some sectors and jobs and manufacturing industries going overseas.

There has been a tremendous expansion in the service industries. The export market for service industries is not new but it is often decried and it is not debated with enthusiasm in the House. The invisible exports from the City of London, which are so vital to our economy and our nation—such as shipbroking and marine insurance—have played an important part in our economy recently and ever since London developed as a financial centre centuries ago.

The City continues to play an important role in international trade, and constantly develops new products and services to meet world demand, ensuring that the City of London remains a major international centre for insurance, finance, commodities and banking. We must not forget the finance provided by the City for our industries across the country. It enables them to export and create wealth for the whole nation.

My second area of interest is dear to my heart. It is the industry in my constituency of Erith and Crayford. It is historically an industrial area where the heavier end of manufacturing has had a base and exports have been of great importance. Traditionally my constituency was dominated by the engineering industry. The area had strong links with the manufacture of armaments, and a large part of Crayford was developed by the Vickers company to provide housing for its work force. We are grateful for the development that took place last century and in the early part of this century. However, today the large, labour-intensive operations have been replaced by smaller manufacturing and service operations. In general these new companies are leaner and more efficient. They are highly competitive and entrepreneurial and make the best use of a skilled work force to produce goods and services which are sold both at home and abroad.

Many of the companies in my constituency have already developed significant export markets and are working to expand those markets and to identify and develop others. The companies involved in that export business represent a wide range in terms of size and product from large companies, such as BICC in Belvedere, which supplies supertension cables for major power supply projects throughout the world, and Dussek Campbell in Crayford, which recently won a Queen's award for export achievement for the sale of its waxes and oils, to small companies such as Gillies Smoked Salmon located in Crayford, which has developed a new export market selling smoked salmon to overseas airlines.

As one who regularly visits such firms in my constituency, I am delighted with their approach, enthusiasm and success in production and export. I could mention many other local companies, but the important point to recognise is that, regardless of size, product or market, all those successful companies have a common philosophy. They have a good work force, effective management and above all an entrepreneurial approach which enables them to promote themselves and their products and to take full advantage of the opportunities that result.

Businesses in Crayford which have developed an export potential are well placed to take full advantage of the area's geographical location. It is near the channel ports and the EEC. Both my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton and the hon. Member for Wallsend mentioned the EEC but in my area we take a new and greater interest

[Mr. Evennett]

in opportunities beyond the EEC. That is an important point that we must put across to everyone in Britain. As we look to 1992 and the EEC, we must not neglect the American, far-eastern and other markets in the third world, which are vital to industry and exports in Britain.

I regret the fact that we too often look towards Europe because of 1992 and the success of the Department of Trade and Industry in pursuing the 1992 initiatives and the development of trade within Europe and the opportunities therein. However, we must never overlook the fact that Europe is one market in the world and that there are so many others. In my constituency, the export industries are looking beyond Europe. Their management teams and directors travel the world promoting their firms and the services that they provide.

As we have already heard this morning, the development of the European Community as a single market will present a host of new opportunities for business in Britain and for exports. The key will be a shift in attitude so that Europe is not seen as an export market. As my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne said in his excellent intervention, Europe may be part of a much bigger domestic market. We look with interest to the 1990s and the developments that they will bring.

It is important to note that 1992 has been widely publicised, albeit somewhat later than in other European countries, and although the concept was misunderstood in the early days, the campaign has had great success. Everyone in the industrial and manufacturing sector is looking towards 1992.

In Britain we need to realise that business is changing. Business remains what entrepreneurs in this country have always felt it was: exciting, challenging and rewarding as an occupation. Business presents great opportunities, apart from generating the wealth of a country. Business is demanding and stimulating, and requires dynamic, talented, intelligent and trained people.

The present Government are the first in my lifetime who believe in business and have helped and encouraged it in a way that would not have been dreamt of 10 or 20 years ago. They have encouraged and supported entrepreneurs with general policy and with specific initiatives, such as the small firms service, enterprise allowances for those starting out in business, the enterprise initiative—which enables companies to obtain a vast range of expert advice on development—and, of course, the insurance provided for businesses by export credit guarantees. All those initiatives and enthusiasm from the Government have had a major impact on business in this country.

As has been said, manufacturing output and investment have increased and profitability—which is something that we do not talk about enough in the House—is at its highest for 20 years. Sometimes hon. Members have criticised those but they are real achievements, which lay the foundations for a more successful business sector in the future.

The third area of concern is that, despite the positive approach which the Government have adopted and have encouraged others to adopt, and despite the support for the enterprise culture, which has been somewhat slow to develop but is now gathering pace, there is still a shortfall. Enthusiasm and belief in profit and business have been slow to develop and are still in their infancy in some of our schools, colleges and universities. I regret to say that, as a member of the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts who has visited many such institutions, I have found that business is still dismissed in the similar off-hand way in which Victorian aristocrats looked down their noses at those quaintly described as being 'in trade'. Too often, in many faculties within those excellent institutes of learning, there is reluctance to encourage people to go into business or to become entrepreneurs and to make and create wealth.

To ensure that Britain succeeds in the world marketplace, we must change such outmoded attitudes and the philosophy that gives school pupils the idea that working in industry is what one does when one cannot go on to university or higher education, because one's A-levels are not good enough to get a place. We must change the idea that studying engineering—both the previous speakers have been heavily involved with engineering—is not quite as good as studying a pure science, that business administration is not a proper degree subject, and that graduates who go into company management schemes are merely wasting their talents and their time.

Mr. Stevens: I wish to emphasise the point that my hon. Friend made about how unpopular engineering is, even among engineers. A recent survey by Imperial Ventures Ltd. showed that of 14,000 engineering graduates, only 5,000 intended to go into engineering.

Mr. Evennett: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that information, which highlights the point that I have been trying to put across. In the countries that we have to compete with in the world marketplace, the enterprise message has got through, loud and clear, as a consequence of the right attitude and the generally high standard of business education at degree level and beyond. In those countries—America, West Germany, wherever—talented people are encouraged to go into business, with spectacular results, as we have seen, for the export and industrial development of those countries. We need a similar approach to business, industry and exports as entrepreneurs have in those countries.

All hon. Members take trips abroad and we know that many business men abroad regard exporting as a fun opportunity and a challenge as well as rewarding and worthwhile for the nation and for the individual. That is what we have to say to our young people in schools and colleges in this country. We must tell them that that is a way to have a challenging, exciting and invigorating career, and it is just as worthwhile for the well-being of the country as working in institutions of higher education and learning.

Of course it remains true that exports are created not by attitudes alone, but by products of the right quality, at the right price, which other people wish to buy, supported by an effective after-sales service. However, a change in attitudes could ensure that people of talent are available to design, manufacture, promote, sell and service products here and abroad, that would advance Britain's exports to the rest of the world. We have to do that if we want to progress.

In recent years there has been some change in attitude, but more needs to be done as we go into the 1990s. We

remain a major exporting nation, and we should be proud of it and ensure that we approach exporting with new vigour.

The Government strongly believe in wealth creation, enterprise and the entrepreneurial spirit, and they have given us tremendous opportunities. As a nation, we must take them. I believe that, under the present Government, we will take them, and that the results will benefit everyone in this country, because more wealth will be created, as will more exports, which are so vital.

10.57 am

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): The hon. Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) was a bit unfair to universities and schools, which have made progress in the vital area that he was discussing, and which are stimulating people to work in export industries.

Almost all Opposition Members who have spoken or been present this morning represent constituencies in the north-east of England, and we can point to Newcastle university and polytechnic, as well as other higher education institutions, which are involved in export-related activities, and are conscious of responsibilities towards business. Those institutions have grown up with business.

In some areas financial pressures have made it difficult for institutions to provide the service that they want to provide. For example, language teaching is of the greatest importance to exports. An export-inhibiting tendency in this country is that people do not know other peoples' languages sufficiently well. Languages such as Russian and Spanish—which is one of the most useful for export markets—are not as widely taught as they should be. That is partly a result of financial problems, and partly because of an historically wrong structure for language teaching in Britain.

When the hon. Member for Erith and Crayford talked about the City, and the contribution that it has to make, he reminded me of the discussions that we have had this week on related matters. It is important that the City retains its pre-eminence as a centre of financial services, and that is why I should like Britain to lead developments in European currency and central banking—which will take place anyway. I should like a European central bank to be in London. If not—if it is in Frankfurt or somewhere else—the City will have to pay the price in the role that it plays.

I apologise to the Minister and to other hon. Members who may speak later because I have a constituency engagement which will force me to leave early. That is one of the problems with a constituency 300 miles away from the House. One advantage of such a constituency is that it has many exporting industries. For example, Pringle's Knitwear, Hardy's of Alnwick, which is known throughout the world for fishing tackle, and Jus-Rol Frozen Foods are all great exporting industries, along with agriculture, which has had to fight in recent weeks to keep its export markets open. When the hon. Member for Erith and Crayford referred to salmon, I hope that he was not challenging Berwick's role as England's salmon capital, exporting wild salmon—both as smoked salmon and in other products—throughout the world.

In the area that I represent there are great export commitments. Trade figures have been depressing in recent months; the one encouraging factor has been export growth—usually that has been the one comforting note. However, more recent figures have shown that growth to be slowing. There is bound to be a fear that it was mainly a beneficiary of depreciation a year ago, and that it may not be sustained. The appalling trade figures—far beyond the Government's deficit forecast—would be more bearable if the price that we are paying in the form of export restraint were controlling inflation. Our export performance must improve far more dramatically if we are to cope with the tendency towards import growth—a serious problem that can be addressed only if our manufacturers win more of the home market and a larger share of the overseas markets. It is asking a good deal of our industries to expect them to keep up with the British consumer's taste for imports.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sure that I speak for the entire House and for the people of Britain in expressing our deep concern and sympathy for the victims of last night's devastating earthquake, which has left thousands killed or injured. The British people are always ready to respond with generosity in such circumstances, and I am sure that the Government will also be ready to respond with immediate humanitarian aid for the earthquake victims. We know already that appeals have been made for medical supplies, food, tents, blankets, clothing and heavy-duty equipment. We should like Ministers to tell us this morning precisely what emergency action they intend to take in response to the tragedy

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Paul Dean): I am sure that the whole House echoes the concern that the hon. Lady has expressed. Although there have been no requests for a statement, I am sure that what she has said has been heard on the Government Front Bench.

Mr. Beith: I should like to associate myself and my hon. Friends with the concern expressed by the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) about this appalling tragedy. I hope that the Minister will be able—without getting into trouble with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker—to give us any useful information that he may have about Goverment assistance to Iran.

The support for exports in this country is diffuse: it is spread over many Government Departments, not all of which seem to know what the others are doing. The Department of Trade and Industry, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Energy and agencies such as the British Overseas Trade Board sometimes seem to be going in different directions. The Foreign Office recently decided to take more than 20 members of its commercial staff out of Latin American-based work and transferred them to eastern European work. At the same time, the British Overseas Trade Board argued that eastern Europe was not an immediate priority to which resources should be diverted, and that we should continue to work primarily in some of the other markets. A difficult question to answer is how much should be given to eastern Europe now, given the slow pace at which the infrastructure that is necessary for effective trading relations is being created. It appears that different Government agencies are pursuing different policies, which are sometimes in conflict. I wonder how the Government will address that problem.

[Mr. Beith]

Small businesses play an important rôle in exports but it is usually harder for a small business man to penetrate foreign markets and maintain the necessary contacts without adding overheads that it is beyond the resources of his business to maintain. There is, perhaps, a greater rôle for Government in the promotion and assisting of small business exports. However, the charges that are now imposed for export advice are a potential disincentive; a business man may not know how much he will receive from a market, or whether he can recoup his costs, of which the charges are an additional element. Such charges may be insignificant to larger firms, but smaller firms—for whom that type of assistance matters most—may be deterred from entering an uncertain market, or taking a new product into an overseas market.

The Government are contemplating major changes in their export promotion support activities, especially those designed to off load that activity into the private sector. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry would like nothing better than to give almost all the activities of his Department to the private sector.

Mr. Redwood: Shame.

Mr. Beith: Is the Minister denying that? If he is, that is useful information that can be discussed further, later in the debate.

It is not clear that the private sector feels able to take on some of the Government's export credit activities, especially those involving large lumps of insurance concentrated on markets with uncertain creditworthiness. In such instances, it is difficult to obtain any commercial return on the credit. Other countries are continuing to sustain various efforts designed to assist exporters in those markets. Some countries have done more than Britain to support and sustain changes of commerce. With their local business contacts and the direct participation of local business people, they are in a unique position to help exporters: one business man can talk to another in a language that both understand. I want to encourage greater Government support for changes of commerce.

There is a danger of "unilateral disarmament" in the Government's export promotion activities. In their desire to adopt a free-market approach and to remove themselves from activities at which they may not be particularly skilled, or which may seem to be too interventionist, they may be moving faster than Governments in other countries. It is vital for our Government to recognise that their job is not to rid themselves of responsibilities that they think they should not have, but to ensure that they are on all fours with Governments in competing countries, and that we are not providing less assistance. If the level is inappropriate, we should seek an international agreement to ensure that Governments are not as involved as some are. We must attempt to operate by international agreement, and to secure transparency in the export promotion and credit activities of other Governments.

If this country is strict about indicating the loss-making areas of Government export credit activity, we must ensure that the same transparency is available in other countries, rather than send our exporters into a market where they will compete with exporters who have hidden subsidies from their Governments. The Government should divert a considerable amount of diplomatic and negotiating effort into that.

Eastern Europe has recognised all the inefficiencies that result from protection and from state management of economies. What better time to convince Governments across the world that the inefficiencies that they all build into international trading relationships by protection and hidden subsidies are harmful in the long run to consumers, both in their own and in other countries? Let us go with the wind of change in eastern Europe, and recognise that it has implications not just for eastern Europe or third-world countries, but for advanced developed countries such as Japan.

Now it the time to realise that a great many subsidies and interventions in those markets are anti-competitive. They are unfair to exporters in other countries and they are against the interests of consumers in every country. Just as the past year has been a year of dramatic change towards freedom in eastern Europe, let us now aim for a year, or even a decade, of dramatic change towards genuine free trade.

11.9 am

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): I start by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) on winning the ballot, on his excellent speech and on the courage which he displayed in persevering with that speech. My hon. Friend had a virus in January. By common consent we are now in June and I join my hon. Friends and the entire House in hoping that that virus will depart quickly, we hope before the end of the month. I also enjoyed—as I always do—the speech of the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett). So we started today as we shall try to continue, although we shall certainly not be able to better those two speeches.

Richard II ascended the throne of England 613 years ago today. I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs is in his place, not least because he is one of the most articulate exponents of the Government's free enterprise policies. That ascension to the throne of England is an appropriate date to remember because it reminds the House of an extraordinary contrast. We are often told that it is a good thing that many people from overseas come to the United Kingdom. That might be regarded as importing people, yet we are told that importing is not so virtuous and that exporting is the only virtuous thing. We are importing people, which is supposed to be good in the sense that they are supposed to bring money here. But my hon. Friend's motion refers only to the export trade.

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Crawley): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Gow: Of course I shall give way. Let me make it plain to all hon. Gentlemen and hon. Ladies that I shall give way as often as they wish to intervene.

Mr. Soames: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. When my hon. Friend talks about importing and exporting people, is he aware that the Government have recently undertaken some important legislation which could lead to importing quite a number of people from Hong Kong? Does he agree that those people are likely to make an important and valuable contribution to the United Kingdom economy and that they are greatly to be welcomed?

Mr. Gow: My hon. Friend is an expert on the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill and has made several journeys to what is at the moment the Crown colony of Hong Kong. I hope that the 50,000 heads of families to whom my hon. Friend refers, and upon whom we shall confer the right of abode in Britain, will remain in Hong Kong. I do not want to sound in any way unwelcoming; I hope that they will stay in Hong Kong because I want Hong Kong to benefit from the contributions that those people can make to the Crown colony.

I do not know who drafted my hon. Friend's motion, but it bears some of the hallmarks of the civil service. I was not suggesting that civil servants drafted it, only that it bears some of the hallmarks of the civil service. It states:

"That this House considers that the United Kingdom export trade is a vital factor in the development of the British economy;"

Who could quarrel with that? I am about to be really kind to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who is no longer the Chief Whip of the Liberal Democrats but is now the shadow Chancellor; I hope that I have got his designation right. Even the once-mighty Liberal party could not dissent from the proposition that the export trade is a vital factor in the development of the British economy.

The motion continues with the words,

"notes that Britain exports a wider range of commodities than any other country".

What on earth does that mean? I am happy to give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton if I missed that part of his illuminating speech which told us what he meant by

"a wider range of commodities".

Now I come to the most important part of my hon. Friend's motion to which I draw the attention of the shadow Chancellor of the Liberal Democrats and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, who I hope will not be in that position for very much longer. He will not misunderstand what I am saying because seated upon the Treasury Bench is a Lords Commissioner of the Treasury. I hope that the Lords Commissioner will tell my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary that my hon. Friends and I are looking for the early promotion of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State. He is far too good to be an Under-Secretary of State; he should be a Minister of State. I am sure that that view will be shared by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed after he has listened to my hon. Friend's speech. I hope that my hon. Friend will contribute to the debate because it is very important and I shall be asking some questions which my hon. Friend may not find too easy to answer.

My right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary is now in his place so I shall have to repeat the tribute I paid to my hon. Friend the Minister. My right hon. Friend was about to make the journey to his Sussex constituency, but on hearing that tribute to one of Her Majesty's Ministers, my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary postponed his journey and came into the Chamber. Madam Deputy Speaker has just come into the Chamber, so she cannot accuse me of repeating what she did not hear. I was saying that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State should be a Minister of State. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary will cease talking and will listen carefully.

The most important part of my hon. Friend's motion is the words,

"supports the Government's efforts to remove barriers to international trade to free the movement of goods and money;"

It is surprising that the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed did not seize upon those words as being the most important ones in the motion. The Liberal party used to support free trade. I do not know whether the Liberal party still supports free trade. Sometimes the Liberal party wants to restrict trade and to impose controls, but I do not agree with that. I believe in the freedom of people, goods and capital in what is now the European Community, but I go further than that. I should like the free movement not of people but of goods and services worldwide. Some of my hon. Friends will agree that we cannot suggest that those who live in Africa or Asia should be able to come here, but I am in favour of their goods coming here freely. I look forward to the day when there will be free trade not just in the European Community but with other nations, too.

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Gow: Of course I will. My hon. Friend is chairman of the Conservative Trade and Industry Committee and is as knowledgeable about these matters as even my hon. Friend the Minister.

Mr. Grylls: Listening to that, I almost decided not to intervene. Does my hon. Friend agree that one advantage of the strength of the European Community, as it moves towards a free market by 1992, is that it can use its influence as one of the most important trading blocks in the world to bring about free trade in different parts of the world which would add greatly to wealth creation? It should use that influence to the good.

Mr. Gow: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. As in other matters, my hon. Friend and I have identical views. I agree with him, and I agree with myself.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton, despite his illness, referred to the European Community. I am surrounded by hon. Members who have strong views on the European Community. I was rebuked by the hon. Member for Wallsend—at least I think it was a rebuke, but it was a courteous and friendly one——

Mr. Ted Garrett: It was a historical correction.

Mr. Gow: It was either a rebuke or a correction. I frequently plead guilty to charges that are levelled against me, which often are only too well founded.

I am a student of de Gaulle, whose story is fascinating. It is appropriate we should be talking about him, because was not last Monday, 18 June, the anniversary of the first occasion on which he saved France?

Mr. Soames: The appel.

Mr. Gow: Yes.

Before General de Gaulle returned to power in May 1958, and before the treaty of Rome was signed on 25 March 1957, he had been the leader of the Rassemblment du Peuple Francais. He was the only leading political figure in France who was opposed to the signing of the treaty of Rome. Although the treaty was signed in 1957, it did not become operative until 1 January 1958. I remind the House of those dates because in May 1958—a year after the treaty had been signed and four and a half months after it had become operative—de Gaulle became

[Mr. Gow]

the last Prime Minister of the fourth republic. By the time that he had formed his administration, which included Ministers from all parties, France was already a member of the Community. But because de Gaulle believed in the solemnity of treaties entered into by France, when he became president of the fifth republic the following January he set about fashioning the institutions of the Community so that they should be in the best interests of France. I do not rebuke the general for doing that, and in a moment I shall mention my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, who has sought, without as much success as de Gaulle, to fashion the institutions of the European Community, notably its trading arrangements.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my hon. Friend recall that when Adenauer and de Gaulle met for the first time, de Gaulle subsequently recorded in his memoirs:

"We discussed Europe at length. Adenauer agreed with me that there could be no question of submerging the identity of our two nations into a stateless institution"?

Mr. Gow: I do not recall those words, but I remember the meeting of those two relatively old men, who were the heads of the Governments of France and Germany. When de Gaulle became president in May 1958 he was 68 and Adenauer was almost the same age. They both lived through the first and second world wars and it was left to those two statesmen to ensure that an essential element for peace in Europe was friendship between France and Germany. It was infinitely more difficult to be the architect of that policy in the years following the war, when bitterness was so great and all the signs of the destruction were evident—not just the blood spilt but the buildings that had been destroyed.

I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) reminded me of the role of Adenauer and de Gaulle and how they set about creating friendship. I remember vividly that de Gaulle kept only two stars on his kepi, when lesser men had promoted themselves to field marshal. He visited Germany, at Adenauer's invitation, to inspect the flower of the reviving German army, which I found moving. I must not be led astray into de Gaulle and Adenauer, not least the amazing contribution that de Gaulle made.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stafford read some words to the House about the relationship between Adenauer and de Gaulle, which reminded me of another famous phrase of de Gaulle's. We have reminded ourselves of the phrase "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals." That phrase earned me a rebuke from the hon. Member for Wallsend. De Gaulle coined a phrase which reflects the views of my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), who believes in the concept of a Europe des patries. I give way to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): Having been pulled to my feet, I entirely endorse the sentiments and observations of my hon. Friend.

Mr. Gow: A Europe des patries is endorsed by my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills. That is a terrible name; I have never liked the boundary commissioners. They should never have given my hon. Friend's constituency that name. Castle Point is another example. My right hon. Friend the Father of the House is a delightful man, but I have never understood why his constituency is called that. We might have a debate on the boundary commissioners.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): My hon. Friend mentions the changes that the Boundary Commission makes from time to time to the names of our constituencies which he regrets. Whenever I have had the pleasure of listending to one of my hon. Friend's speeches, he has referred to my constituency as "Gelding". I am grateful for this opportunity to remind him, before he mentions my constituency and perhaps makes an inadvertent mistake, that it is Gedling.

Mr. Gow: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. His father represented a constituency called Basingstoke. The boundary commissioners abolished that constituency and renamed it Hampshire, North-West, but I still think of my hon. Friend's father as the Member for Basingstoke.

My hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) is in his place, as he usually is. Later today, he will make the journey to Crawley. I remember when that constituency was called Horsham and Crawley. The folk who live in Crawley are no longer represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) but are represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley.

Mr. Soames: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is a continuing disgrace and a source of the deepest anxiety and unhappiness to many hon. Members that my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) does not sit upon the Treasury Bench?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that we will not get too far away from the subject of United Kingdom export trade.

Mr. Gow: It continues to astonish me that my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham is not in the Cabinet, promoting exports—I think that that brings the discussion within order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friend should be in the Cabinet. I mean no disrespect to my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley)—who would wish to be discourteous to him?—but my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham would be as excellent a Secretary of State as my right hon. Friend. Incidentally, we cannot rebuke the boundary commissioners for calling my right hon. Friend's constituency Cirencester and Tewkesbury. It is a delightful name and conjures up a vision of the finest English architecture in a beautiful part of the world.

I wish to return to exports and to the Common Market. By one of those happy accidents, I have before me an extract from the *Official Report* of 29 June 1989. It records the famous occasion when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister had returned from the kingdom of Spain and the so-called Madrid summit—and came to the Dispatch Box from which my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs will speak soon. Unlike many other Heads of Government, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, wholly in character, came back directly from Madrid to the House to give an account of what had taken place and to submit herself to examination and cross-examination by my hon. Friends and even by the spokesman—now absent—of the once-mighty Liberal party, the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed.

We may pause here to note that the Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household—my hon. Friend the Member for

Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones)—whose weekend appears to have begun already, judging by his attire, has torn himself away from his constituency to listen to a debate on exports. He knows more about exports than almost any other man, because he contributed to cementing friendship within the Community by marrying a girl from the kingdom of Spain. That marriage took place when Spain was not in the Community. One might say that there is a direct link between my hon. Friend's marriage and the accession of Spain to the Community, because Spain acceded a long time after we joined on 1 January 1972. At that time, my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) was First Lord of the Treasury. Unaccountably, my right hon. Friend is not in his place. No doubt he is conducting an orchestra in a distant land —I suppose that he is contributing to exports. I think that some of my hon. Friends would like to export my right hon. Friend, but who would purchase him? That is an interesting point. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will tell us the answer.

Mr. Redwood: Perhaps it is an audible export rather than an invisible one.

Mr. Gow: Did my hon. Friend say "audible"? He did not say "inaudible"?

Mr. Redwood: No.

Mr. Gow: Anyway, that was a fair point to make.

I said that my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup might be contributing to an export drive, but before then I was talking about the journey made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister from Madrid to London in June last year. Did she make that journey alone?

Mr. Soames: No.

Mr. Gow: My right hon. Friend did not. When she returned from the Madrid summit, no one believed that she was alone on the aeroplane. She was accompanied by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), who at that time was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Surrey, East (Sir G. Howe), who at that time was Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, so there was a kind of trinity on the aeroplane. I shall not lay myself open to a charge of blasphemy by trying to describe their different roles, but there was a trinity—although I must say that that point was not original; Aneurin Bevan once said it.

Mr. Soames: Would my hon. Friend care to speculate on what events following the Madrid summit—at which a good deal of discussion on exports took place—led to two members of that trinity no longer holding the same posts that they held then?

Mr. Gow: Each hon. Member knows that no Minister can continue in the same office for ever. Indeed, one might say that I am living proof of the truth of that proposition. Therefore, we should not be too surprised if those who held office in June last year do not hold the same office today.

My hon. Friends may say that there is one dramatic exception to the rule that no one can hold the same office for ever, because my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has held the same office since 4 May 1979. That was the day—my hon. Friend the Member for Watford remembers it with great clarity—on which the Queen summoned to Buckingham palace the first woman in the story of these islands ever to hold the office of First Lord of the Treasury.

My hon. Friend the Member for Crawley put a question to me and I shall try to answer it, but first I should like to return to the *Official Report* of 29 June 1989. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills put a question to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. Her words are relevant to the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton. All of my hon. Friends who are here now were here on that occasion. *[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Crawley is leaving the Chamber to get some further works of reference. I hope that he will catch your eye a little later, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made her famous statement on 29 June 1989. By an extraordinary accident, Richard II came to the throne in 1377. I thought that the column number of my right hon. Friend's speech in the *Official Report* and that date were the same, but I now find that they are not.

My right hon. Friend said:

"the Council"—

that is, the Council of Ministers—

"agreed that the measures necessary to achieve the first stage of progressive realisation of economic and monetary union will be implemented from 1 July 1990."

Let us pause there. Mark how timely this debate is. Is not today 23 June? No, it is 22 June, but we are not very far away from that date.

I see that my hon. Friend the Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household has apparently joined the Liberal party. He is wearing yellow today, which is very odd. However, we do not want to be misled into that subject.

The Prime Minister said:

"The first stage of progressive realisation of economic and monetary union will be implemented from 1 July 1990".

That is the first day of next month, which is eight days away. That is why my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton tabled the motion for debate today. He realised the significance of the words of the Prime Minister and thought that it would be timely to hold a debate a few days before 1 July.

The Prime Minister said:

"These"—

that is, the measures—

"include completion of the single market, abolition of all foreign exchange controls".

I entirely agree with that.

I remember the reaction of the Labour party when my right hon. and learned Friend, who is now the Lord President of the Council, abolished exchange controls in the autumn of 1979. The Labour party was strongly opposed to that and said that if exchange controls were abolished, all sterling would go out of the United Kingdom. My hon. Friend the Minister knows a great deal about that. Was he not in the think tank at the time?

Mr. Redwood: Not quite.

Mr. Gow: My hon. Friend should have been.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Surrey, East (Sir G. Howe) fashioned the policy of abolishing exchange controls in conjunction with the Prime Minister. They were supported by my hon. Friend the Minister although he was not an hon. Member at the time.

[Mr. Gow]

I have never believed in exchange controls. I believe in the free movement of people, goods and capital. Exchange controls were imposed in 1939 when war broke out. It was left to a Conservative Government to dismantle exchange controls, and although the Labour party predicted that there would be a great flight of capital, a direct consequence of their abolition is that the United Kingdom now has one of the largest holdings of overseas assets. The fact that Britain now has massive assets overseas has contributed greatly to our exports and to our trade. That is why my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton tabled the motion.

The statement of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister after the Madrid summit was of far-reaching consequence. She said:

"As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer"—

my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson)—

"has made clear, stages 2 and 3 of the Delors report would involve a massive transfer of sovereignty which I do not believe would be acceptable to the House."

How much I agree.

Mr. Grylls: My hon. Friend has put his finger on a very important point. I entirely agree with him.

Mr. Gow: The Prime Minister went on:

"They"—

that is, stages 2 and 3—

"would also mean, in practice, the creation of a federal Europe."

That must be music to the ears of some of my hon. Friends.

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To one or two of our hon. Friends.

Mr. Gow: It would not be music to them all. If my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup were here, I do not think that he would be applauding quite as much as my hon. Friends who are here—*[Interruption.]* I thought that my hon. Friend the Treasurer wanted to intervene, but obviously I was wrong.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister continued:

"The Government support the objective of closer monetary co-operation, but will work for solutions which leave crucial economic decisions in our own hands."—[*Official Report*, 29 June 1989; Vol. 155, c. 1109.]

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: Does my hon. Friend agree that the remarkable speech the other night by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer follows that statement by the Prime Minister? It is a remarkably constructive and helpful contribution to the development of the EC and of Europe more widely.

Mr. Gow: I agree. I make it plain to my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton that there is a consistency of policy all the way through from the Madrid summit to the speech of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor earlier this month.

We may note the absence of any representative from the Liberal party. The Labour party is, of course, well represented.

Mr. Don Dixon (Jarrow): Hear, hear.

Mr. Gow: I agree with the hon. Gentleman. What has happened to the Liberal party? The Liberal party often claims to be deeply interested in industrial matters and in exports, but when the House holds an important debate, there is not a single Liberal Member here.

Mr. Cash: Does my hon. Friend recall that the great Liberals of the 19th century such as Cobden and Bright were the apostles of free trade? Where are all those great Liberals now? What contribution have the present Liberals made to the great and weighty matters to which my hon. Friend refers?

Mr. Gow: My hon. Friend makes an excellent point. I give an undertaking to my hon. Friend. When the next Liberal Member enters the Chamber, I will instantly give way to him.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: I must point out to my hon. Friend that the popularity of the Liberal party has sunk so low in the opinion polls that the party is considering employing the services of Jacques Cousteau to see whether anything can be done to resuscitate it. Is my hon. Friend aware that the reason why no Liberal Member is here is that Liberal Members are engaged in a futile but brave attempt to save their seats at the next election?

Mr. Gow: My hon. Friend has given an explanation for the absence of any representative of the once-mighty Liberal party, but the representatives of the Labour party and my hon. Friends believe that if one is a Member of Parliament, a responsibility that should have priority is attendance in this place. Labour Members and my hon. Friends are demonstrating this morning that they believe that this place has an important role.

I began my speech on exports and imports. Tourists are one form of import, which one might think is a bad thing. However, we may have been blinded into thinking that it is wicked to be an importer and that it is virtuous to be an exporter. The Department of Trade and Industry and the Central Statistical Office are involved in those matters. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will tell us which Minister is responsible for the Central Statistical Office. A Central Statistical Office document published last month is supposed to be all about exports; that is why I have it in my hand. The document appeared on 23 May and another one has probably been issued this morning. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister has the figures with him, because he knows the figures long before we do. If he has not, we shall have to wait until we can go to the tape. But at least I have last month's statistics.

In trying to measure our exports and imports, we have been rather blinded by statistics. Let me ask my hon. Friend the Minister this: what would happen to the human story if we ceased to keep any of these statistics? Would the world come to an end? I find in this document, compiled at enormous expense, every category, real or imagined—some unreal and unimagined—of exports and imports. For what purpose are the figures compiled? Why does it help us to know that

"estimates of invisibles are based on a variety of sources, mostly inquiries of those engaging in the various transactions"?

It is absolute gobbledegook.

My hon. Friend the Minister may think that I am reading from Lewis Carroll, but I am not. I am reading from a publication produced by Her Majesty's Government and paid for by the Minister's poor constituents.

Mr. Soames: Is my hon. Friend aware that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, for whom he and I both have a high regard, shares his concern about the quality of our statistics and the cost of counting them? One of the many imaginative programmes that the Chancellor has put in hand—even before his excellent speech on the future of the hard ecu—is the complete reform of the gathering, consideration and publication of all Government statistics. Does not my hon. Friend agree that that is a far-sighted and important step, which should have been taken many years ago?

Mr. Gow: Of course I share my hon. Friend's admiration for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But apparently the Chancellor is not going quite as far as I want him to go. He proposes the reform of the statistics; I propose the abolition of the statistics. Would the world come to an end if we failed to gather these statistics? Moreover, the statistics are always wrong.

Mr. Richard Shepherd: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Gow: I shall give way to my hon. Friend but I hope that he is not going to tell me that all statistics are right and necessary.

Mr. Shepherd: I would not presume to tell my hon. Friend any such thing. He is on to an important point. But the abolition of statistics can create the most speculative of markets. The mood of markets can be translated into imagined flows across the exchanges, and that can have consequential effects on our standard of living, the retail price index and so on.

The criticism of the accuracy or otherwise, of the statistics which now run through our economic life is severe. The inaccuracies that have been recorded and the correction of items in subequent months have been reflected in sterling's external value and that, in turn, has had repercussions for our inflation rate. That is why I would support my hon. Friend if he maintained that, rather than abolishing statistics, we should have accurate ones.

Mr. Gow: I think that we should commit to the permanent records of this place the entry and instant departure of the Liberal Democrats' spokesman of financial affairs, who used to be the Chief Whip. Imagine being Chief Whip of the Liberal party; what a task that would be.

What I would say to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley and my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge and Brownhills, if there is an "and"——

Mr. Richard Shepherd: We have a hyphen.

Mr. Gow: Oh, I see: it is like Beaumont-Dark.

What I was saying when I was interrupted by the transient presence of the Liberal Democrats was that, unless one had read the Central Statistical Office document, one would not believe what was in it. I shall give you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a copy; you may like to frame it for your study. These are the words fashioned, by somebody in the office of my hon. Friend the Minister, on the subject of invisibles.

"These are usually sample inquiries, and are variously held on quarterly, annual or periodic bases. For some components, data for recent periods are therefore incomplete and subject to significant estimation errors."

Out of their own mouths, the statistics are condemned.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton made an excellent speech. The House and, I hope, the nation, are grateful to him for having initiated the debate, and it is with mounting impatience that Mr. Deputy Speaker and I await the Minister's reply.

11.56 am

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): I welcome this debate on exports, although at times during the unusual speech of the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), I was not entirely certain that that was the subject that we were discussing. I congratulate the hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) on his good fortune in being able to initiate the debate, because it concerns an important matter which, despite the low attendance, is dear to the hearts of many hon. Members on both sides of the House.

The motion is somewhat curious. Reading it, one would certainly never guess that we have one of the largest balance of payments deficits in our history; that does not emerge from the motion at all.

The motion welcomes

"the contribution made by the continued growth of the volume of exports over the last ten years".

It does not mention the fact that, sadly, the annual growth rate of our volume of exports—3·5 per cent. in the 1979-89 period—was the lowest of any EEC country and also lower than that of Japan or the United States. That is a great pity and to be deplored.

I agree with the hon. Member for Nuneaton that it is important for British business and British exports to be guaranteed the same level of support as is given in other countries. We would all at least say that we agree with that and that there should be a level playing field in terms of support for exports.

Many hon. Members have stressed that trading is vital to our economic health, but unfortunately, over the past 10 years, our record has been little short of disastrous. Between 1979 and 1986, our share of world trade fell by 15 per cent.—a larger fall than that experienced by any other industrial country. In 1988, our current account trade deficit reached £14·5 billion. That was larger than the total of all the United Kingdom's deficits over the previous 40 years. Then, 1988 was followed by the record deficit year of 1989, when the figure reached more than £19 billion. Presumably the total combined deficit of 1988 and 1989 was larger than all the previous United Kingdom's deficits in recorded history. We should bear that in mind when considering exports.

In 1978, we had a £5 billion surplus on the balance of payments. Before this debate, I looked through some old *Hansards* for that time and noted that plenty of Conservative Members were worried that the surplus was so small.

In manufacturing, our trade performance has deteriorated dramatically, with 1983 marking the first year since the industrial revolution in which manufacturing imports by Britain exceeded our manufacturing exports. In 1989, our manufacturing deficit with West Germany was £9·6 billion, and with Japan it was approaching £5 billion. However, it seems that the Government are not prepared to look those figures squarely in the face and recognise that action is vital.

The hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) gave some interesting figures about the growth in exports, but he took 1981 as his base year, and, as we all know, that was

[Ms. Joyce Quin]

a very poor year for our economic performance. Therefore, that was a low base on which to give further figures.

There is considerable cause for concern when the figures are broken down into sectors. My hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend, (Mr. Garrett) mentioned the machine tool sector about which he is concerned. In that sector, 47 per cent. of our market was taken by imports, but in Japan the corresponding figure is only 7 per cent.

The hon. Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) referred to old and new industries, the situation in both is very worrying. In some of our old industries, which I believe still have an important role to play, we are losing badly in terms of exports in comparison with other countries. One of the great sadnesses for me, coming from the north-east—I know that it is also a great sadness to my hon. Friends the Members for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) and for Wallsend—is the demise of our shipbuilding industry and the fact that our yards are facing the bulldozers at a time when shipbuilding worldwide is experiencing a great boom.

To reinforce a point that I made to the hon. Member for Erith and Crayford, I believe that in shipbuilding the old and new industries can work very well together. It is foolish simply to dismiss older industries in which there are skilled workers and a great deal of expertise as industries in which we do not want to be involved, when it is clear that there will be a market for those products in future and those products also have important links with the high-technology sector.

The trade deficit in textiles, another of our older industries, was £1·5 billion in 1989. We are also concerned about the steel industry at the moment. It is sad that our steel industry is still considerably smaller than the steel industries in other European countries, particularly those of West Germany and Italy. Perhaps the Minister will comment on the prospects for high-technology investment in our steel industry.

In our recent debate on the future of the Ravenscraig steel plant, my hon. Friend the Member for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray) said that Ravenscraig could be well placed to receive high technology investment along the lines of such investment in the United States and Italy. I hope that the Minister will refer to that. Solutions should be sought in the steel sector which can safeguard the help of all the existing steel plants and ensure that those plants can survive and prosper in future.

The hon. Member for Eastbourne said that perhaps we should not consider imports as basically evil and exports as basically good. I rather agree with him, but we want to see them to be in better balance. The imbalance and the size of our trade deficit are worrying us. Of course we need to import, just as we need to export, but we need a better balance between the two.

The trade figures are to be published today and I understand that there will be a drop in the current deficit from about £1·6 billion to £1·3 billion. While I strongly welcome any drop in our trade deficit, we are still dealing with a substantial deficit. In previous years, such a figure would have been greeted with absolute dismay instead of relief. The hon. Member for Eastbourne also tried to pour scorn on statistics generally as a convenient way of overlooking the scale of the problem. However, the weight of all the statistics taken cumulatively concerns me, not the fact that individual statistics may be less accurate than we would wish.

I want now to consider the export services that the Government provide. I was glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend laid such stress on the importance of the future of the Export Credits Guarantee Department. He referred quite rightly to the real anxieties felt by industrialists at the Government's proposals for changing ECGD.

Although it is true that many people in industry have welcomed the Government's proposals to privatise the short-term insurance sector, there is now concern among industrialists that, if it is privatised in that way, it may fall prey to a takeover bid from its main competitor in this country. Perhaps the Minister will refer to that. Exporters are worried that a private monopoly might be created by such a takeover. That would not be in the interests of the services provided to exporters.

Obviously, if the Government go ahead with their proposals to privatise that part of ECGD, there will be discussions and presumably legislation which will be debated by both sides of the House. That might be the most appropriate time to consider the misgivings that have been raised over the common services provided both to the short-term side of ECGD and to the long-term project side. That will be the time to raise worries about whether those common services might be weakened as a result of the policy of privatisation which the Government seem to be pursuing. As we have such a huge trade deficit, now is not a good time to be reorganising, hiving off and weakening ECGD in that way. I can understand the concern of industry about that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend also referred to the project side of ECGD. Once again, industry has been vocal in expressing its fears to hon. Members on both sides of the House about that. My hon. Friends have told me that many firms in their constituencies have expressed concern about the future of the long-term project division and about the increases in premiums, some of which have already taken place and others of which seem likely because of the Government's commitment to the portfolio management system for ECGD.

None the less, we are grateful that the Government have decided to maintain a commitment to the project division of ECGD, because there were unpleasant rumours that certain Government Departments favoured the so-called zero option—taking support from the long-term project division. Industrialists greeted that suggestion with widespread alarm. That commitment to ECGD is very important.

In reply to a written question of mine this week, the Government said that they are now going to consult further before deciding whether finally to introduce the portfolio management system. I am glad to hear that. The reservations expressed to us by industrialists made us worry about prospects for exports if the system had been introduced in the way in which the Government originally envisaged. ECGD and the project side is not just some marginal benefit that is given to companies. It can mean the difference between winning and losing an order. Often fairly minor costs determine whether an order is won.

Mr. Ted Garrett: The Minister will agree that a question of morality is involved. Industrialists like to think that the Government are interested in what they are doing

and that the Department in particular is very keen to help them. There has been a tendency to drift from that view. The Minister may challenge that remark, but manufacturers think that the Government are drifting from being interested in their interests.

Ms. Quin: My hon. Friend makes a valid point, and I reinforce it. Many people in industry feel that the avowedly non-interventionist, hands-off approach that the Department of Trade and Industry wants to espouse is not in the best interests of industry, particularly when it seems that many of our competitors are adopting a different approach.

The hon. Member for Nuneaton said that he felt strongly that the playing field should be level and that we should not be disadvantaged by the extra support that other countries might be giving. That reinforces my hon. Friend's point. Opposition Members are committed to ECGD and the short- and long-term aspects of its business. ECGD is not feather-bedding industry. It does not absolve companies in this country from going out and winning orders, complying with the technical requirements that may be laid down by overseas customers, and delivering in terms of quality and punctuality. Exporters must still comply with all those things, but they need the export credit assistance that seems to be available to our main competitors.

Ministers have occasionally expressed the view that large companies in particular are sufficiently equipped to look after themselves, but I remind the Minister that large companies subcontract a great deal of their work to smaller companies, and the economic health of large and small companies is therefore linked. Measures that may be taken because large companies can stand on their own may have an unpleasant spin-off effect on smaller industries, and I hope that the Minister will bear that point in mind.

We do not want business to be deterred from winning export orders, particularly, as was mentioned by the hon. Member for Nuneaton, in the newly opened markets of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. One of the worries that have been expressed to me is that the premiums for ECGD-supported business to the Soviet Union have increased considerably of late. Although, I understand that, in the changing situation in the Soviet Union, the commercial risk looks rather different from what it was in the past, the Soviet Union, whatever one thought of its regime, was a reliable customer and never defaulted. This is not the time to make it more difficult for companies to do business with the Soviet Union, particularly when, politically, we want to make the point that we support the reforms taking place in that country. We do not want to create more economic and political difficulties in that country. Although I can understand some of the commercial judgments behind the increase in premiums, the political aspect must be borne in mind.

Several hon. Members have mentioned the help that other countries give exporters. It is difficult to find accurate information on the level of export support that other countries give, but I was supplied with some figures from EEC sources in a publication entitled "First Survey of State Aids". It certainly seems as though France, in particular, and Italy spend a good deal more on state aid to trade and exports—2 billion ecu for France and 1 billion ecu for Italy, but only 749 million ecu for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cash: If the hon. Lady is seeking to suggest that state aids are good in the context of the single market, will she bear in mind the fact that the consequence of giving unfair subsidies in the form of state aids in any sector within the single market is bound to distort the market and, in turn, lead to a situation in which we do not have a level playing field? We will end up giving unfair advantages to one part of the community as against another. That is the way to destroy, not to improve, the benefits of the single market.

Ms. Quin: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that we should stop state aids and let everybody else give state aids. If that were the outcome, our position would become even worse. There must be EEC and wider international agreement on a range of state aids and subsidies. Agreements already exist. Sometimes we understandably worry that those agreements are not always being properly respected, and we must pay attention to that matter also. It is not helpful to talk about state aid as a distortion when we are trying to tackle our economic and export performance at present.

Mr. Cash: It would certainly be true that, if agreements could be arrived at through GATT in which we eliminated the distortions, that would be fine. However, an unlevel playing field is the difficulty. That is the point that I was making.

Ms. Quin: We have all agreed on the need for a level playing field. The hon. Gentleman and I might disagree on what kind of EEC and international system of subsidies we might like. Many of us, including myself, regard regional assistance as an important element and think that it should allow for all countries in which there are clearly demonstrated regional difficulties. In the general sense of wanting a level playing field, I agree with the hon. Gentleman.

We should examine the amount of direct aid to exports that other countries are giving and see whether we can learn something from the services that they provide. It is a matter not of criticising high levels of aid but of looking at the ways in which other companies are successful in promoting exports in certain sectors and across the board.

The Government have made some strange decisions lately regarding exports and our presence in trying to promote British commercial interests in events and exhibitions abroad. The Minister will know that we have had correspondence about the British Government's failure to accept the invitation to be partner nation at the Hanover trade fair in 1992. That trade fair has been described as Europe's biggest industrial marketplace. It is an honour to be chosen as partner nation. It would give us advantages in the number of exhibits and attention to us and our products.

It is most regrettable that the Government have decided not to take up the opportunity. I understand that the French were very keen to take the opportunity when we declined it. The decision seems to have been made for cost-cutting reasons rather than anything else. Perhaps the Minister will address that point.

There have also been reports, especially in *The Guardian*, about our strange attitude towards the Seville Expo in 1992. I stress that 1992 is an important year and our presence at those events should be as strong as

[Ms. Quin]

possible. Perhaps the Minister will tell us in what ways Britain is hoping to maximise the benefits of the Seville event.

The hon. Member for Nuneaton referred to the Government's decision to introduce a range of export charges for firms that want various types of export advice. Although it is clear from the Minister's replies to my written questions that the introduction of the charges has had a mixed result, it seems as if they have acted as a deterrent in one or two sectors. Although it could be argued that, if people pay for something, they are committed to it and believe that they will get something worthwhile from it, I believe that export charges could deter casual inquirers, such as people who feel that the export business might be able to offer them something, but who are not sure. They are the very people we want to attract to exporting. We are all agreed on the need to improve industry's awareness of the export business, and I believe that charges could act as a deterrent in that respect.

I do not know the costs and benefits of the charges in terms of adminstration and collection. Perhaps the Minister could give us some details of that. However, there is little evidence that the charges have had a good effect, and some evidence that their effect has been negative.

There has also been a steep cut in support for export marketing research. I am not sure why the Government took that decision, but it certainly does not seem helpful at present.

In response to an intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend, I referred to what has come to be known as the "non-interventionist, hands-off" approach of the Department of Trade and Industry. The *Financial Times* recently reported that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was considering whether the private sector should take over the Department's work of providing export support. It appeared as though the Department might get out of the job of export promotion altogether. I hope that the Minister will give us a clear assurance today that there is no possibility of that.

Hon. Members have referred to some of the campaigns run by the Department, such as the enterprise and export initiatives and the "Europe—Open for Business" initiative. Although such campaigns are important in promoting awareness—I am certainly not decrying them—they must be followed up. The Department should monitor the take-up to ascertain what can be done to improve it in those areas where it has been low.

I should be grateful if the Minister could concentrate on the role of the European accreditation centres, which are responsible for testing goods and certifying that they are in accordance with the EEC standards that were agreed under the 1992 programme. I have been told that there is a dramatic shortage of such facilities in this country and that some firms have to wait up to two years before receiving their certificates.

However, the Department of Trade and Industry recently said in reply to a written question that it did not have information about the average length of time that firms in different parts of the country had to wait for testing facilities. Perhaps the Minister can assure me that the Government now have that information and that, if firms in certain areas are having to wait an inordinate time for their products to be tested, the problem will be rectified quickly.

A recent article in the *Newcastle Journal*, which is concerned about the shortage of European accreditation centres, pointed out that the testing facility is important for more than just exports. A company that operates in Gateshead and sells to another firm in another part of the north-east must meet those standards and be tested in accordance with them. Therefore, the testing facilities are important not only for our exports to other European countries but for our internal domestic trade. I hope that the Minister will take that point on board.

Perhaps the Minister could also direct the Government's attention to the role of the excellent Euro-information centres that were set up recently, which provide information, especially to small businesses, about events in the European Community, and directives and proposed directives that might affect them. There is an excellent Euro-information centre in Newcastle. I have also visited one in Birmingham and I know that both those centres, which were pilot centres under the EEC scheme, are worried that the temporary funding from the European Community is being phased out. They now have to rely on business sponsorship, which is proving difficult to get.

It is important that the Government make a commitment to the future of those centres and to their valuable work, at least until 1992 but also thereafter, if at all possible. It would be helpful if the centres could know that for the next few years their finances will be on a sound footing, instead of having to worry every day about where the next penny is coming from. That will mean that they can provide a service and get on with the job of supplying the firms in their regions with the information that they have found—and I am sure, will continue to find—so useful.

I recognise that that is not directly the responsibility of the Department of Trade and Industry, as it involves small firms and comes within the purview of the Department of Employment. None the less, as it is so important to small firms and to exports, I hope that the Minister will bear in mind what I have said.

We need to learn from what many other countries, especially Japan and Korea, have done in targeting markets and co-ordinating various export promotion instruments to ensure that we can do better in various sectors and various markets in the future than has been the case in the recent past.

The hon. Member for Nuneaton referred to eastern Europe, which is obviously an important area for us in the future. I recognise that the countries of eastern Europe cannot buy expensive imports from west European countries with hard currency. However, given the importance of regenerating the economies of those countries and of tackling their severe environmental pollution, it is important that we consider a trade and aid package that would involve British firms in supplying much of the equipment needed, either to tackle environmental pollution or to help regenerate those economies. Again, perhaps the Minister will comment on that.

It is depressing to note that, last year, not only did we have a bad trade balance with most of the countries of western Europe but we had a negative one with East Germany, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and

Romania. The gloom was relieved only by the small surplus that we had with Hungary and Bulgaria. The figures for trade between western and eastern Europe show the domination of West Germany and the poor United Kingdom position. While we admire German success, it would not be healthy for the future balanced economic development of Europe if the figures for exports and imports remained as they are.

As the House of Commons Select Committee on Trade and Industry noted, we have opportunities in eastern Europe, particularly as we have a language advantage, because in many of the eastern European countries, English is the most widely spoken foreign language. We should capitalise on that important asset.

The Labour party is keen to see an active and decentralised Department of Trade and Industry working with industry and firms in the regions, and providing them with regional export service. Such regional departments would co-ordinate with the other bodies concerned with export promotion, such as the chambers of commerce, which are increasingly active in this sector.

I strongly support what my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend said about the need for a professional approach to the business of exporting. He quoted the interesting example of Taiwan, where it was clear that we were falling behind other countries in trade promotions. The need for a more professional service is as important as it ever was. We should encourage the recruitment into the Department of Trade and Industry or the Foreign Office export service of people who already have experience in exporting but who have not gone through the Civil Service career structure. Towards the end of the last Labour Government, proposals along these lines were introduced, but I believe that they have never been acted on.

The Library has provided with me with some interesting information, which clearly shows that we run a substantial trade surplus in military equipment and identified defence equipment. As we know, there are concerns about the prospects of that export sector. That is why the Labour party believes that the arms diversification agency that we have suggested, which would encourage and assist firms to find new markets and move away from their traditional products, is vital.

I was perturbed to hear a Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry say recently during question time, in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett), that firms were fully capable of changing their production and finding new markets. The Government must take a considerable and active interest in this sector to ensure that we do not lose. We do not want the surplus in the military trade to be lost and diversification in that sector to lead to an even more outrageous deficit on our balance of payments.

Mr. Grylls: What role does the hon. Lady see for the Government in this process of switch or diversification from military to civil work? How can they help firms to diversify? The real incentive to diversify is the firm's, because if it does not do so and its armament orders drop, it will go out of business.

Ms. Quin: A firm that sees its markets declining will have a real incentive to diversify, as it will have to move into other markets to survive. However, Government bodies, particularly the export service, have a certain amount of expertise, even if it is not as great as many would like, and they can do a great deal to advise firms. In the past four or five years, France has worked hard to improve, and has improved, its balance of payments position, which was weak. It has done so by a co-operative effort between the Government and industry. That is a good example of how we should be working more actively, and we should follow it.

Export assistance from Government is not the only important factor. The general economic climate is also of enormous importance in determining whether firms will be able to export successfully or even survive. The Government have been responsible for many failures and the deterioration in the economic climate in recent years. The regions of the United Kingdom continue to lag behind the rate of manufacturing investment in 1979. The figures from 1979 to 1987 show that there was a decline in manufacturing investment in the northern region of 43 per cent. That is an enormous reduction.

Investment, training and research and development are vitally important for the future health of our economy and future opportunities for our firms to export. The Confederation of British Industry has rightly criticised the Government's failure to invest in transport infrastructure. It pointed out that the lack of adequate transport infrastructure is responsible for creating considerable economic difficulties for firms. Most Governments would see investment in transport as a clear Government responsibility.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) mentioned the difficulties that firms experience in certain areas as a result of the introduction of the uniform business rate. The publication *Forum of Private Business* said recently that it had warned the Minister of the dangers of the uniform business rate, and claims that its 1990 survey proves it right. The survey showed that 45,000 businesses failed, 135,000 jobs were lost and various sectors incurred steep rises in costs following the introduction of the rate. Despite its name, it is clear that the effect of the uniform business rate has not been uniform. Businesses in some areas have found their circumstances better than those in others. It is clear that the burden of the rate has fallen heavily on particular businesses in particular parts of the country.

I have raised many issues to which I hope the Minister will respond. We all agree that exports are an important matter. Initially I was surprised that the hon. Member for Nuneaton chose the subject, given the Government's record, but I accept that he is worried about the future of British industry. As he has a constituency in an area such as the west midlands, I am not surprised. The exports record of the past 11 years has been very bad indeed, and the best alternative for Britain is to turn to Labour.

12.37 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood): I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for calling me at this stage in the debate.

Before I begin, I wish to reply to the point of order of the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) about the earthquake in Iran. The House will be delighted to know that Britain is sending relief supplies to the victims of the earthquake in Iran. We hope that they will be there by the weekend. The emergency aid will be flown on specially chartered planes and will include medicines,

[Mr. John Redwood]

blankets, tents and other relief supplies. That follows the departure early today of a team of British experts from the International Rescue Corps, which sent 17 of its volunteers to help with the search-and-rescue operation. I pay tribute to the speed of its response and wish the volunteers well. Of course, the Government wish to be associated with the expression of sympathy of the Labour party and the House. We are deeply disturbed to read of the tragic loss of life and the difficulties that the families of the victims must be experiencing.

Ms. Quin: I thank the Minister for his statement about the aid provided for the victims of the earthquake. We welcome it. I also thank him for responding to the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd).

Mr. Redwood: I am grateful to the hon. Lady.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) has performed a great service to the House by raising an important batch of issues related to our manufacturing and export performance and the progress made by our industry in recent years. My hon. Friend comes from an engineering and industrial background. That makes his comments carry even more weight. It is good tc see hon. Members present on both sides who have a similar background and who can bring their experience of industry to bear on these important issues that shape the nation's future.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton is also an extremely good constituency Member of Parliament, and we often hear from him in that connection. I know that in his constituency the textile industry is of considerable importance. I heard what he had to say about the multi-fibre arrangement negotiations. The Government are proceeding with our partners in Europe, because negotiations on the MFA are conducted on behalf of this country and the other 11 member states by the Commission, and it is a common western European policy. The Government have worked with our partners to make it clear that transitional arrangements and protection against surges in imports need to be built into the system.

The House should also note that 83 per cent. of textile imports last year came from developed countries and not from MFA countries. Therefore, the proportion of our imports in the textile sector that is affected by the MFA is quite modest. However, in my hon. Friend's constituency clothing is more important and it is true that the proportion of clothing imports from MFA countries is higher, and is therefore a matter of considerable concern in that sector. That is why we are trying to negotiate satisfactory transitional arrangements. Those issues have been set out for the House on several occasions, by myself and by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, in debates reflecting hon. Members' concern on the subject.

I want to reassure the House that, through the European Community, we are actively pursuing dumping cases if we think that they need to be investigated or that action needs to be taken. Hon. Members may like to know that the EC already has anti-dumping remedies in force against polyester fibre from the United States, Mexico, Romania, Taiwan, Turkey and Yugoslavia; polyester yarn from the United States, Korea, Mexico, Taiwan and Turkey; and acrylic fibres from Mexico. Complaints about alleged dumping of cotton yarn from Brazil, Egypt, India, Thailand and Turkey are currently under investigation as well as of spun polyester yarn from Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, India, and China, and of terry towelling from Turkey.

The Government will forward any representations or allegations about dumping to the European authorities. We are keen to see genuine cases of dumping pursued with great care, and with all due speed, so that remedies can be imposed and domestic industry is given the reassurances that it needs.

The hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) and my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton also asked what the Government are doing to assist and promote British trade and investment in eastern Europe. My hon. Friend may know that I and my colleagues have been active in recent months taking parties of business men to the countries of eastern and central Europe. We have been keen to take them there to introduce them to Ministers, senior officials and those who will be running state enterprises and privatised industries there, and so that the business men may identify the opportunities. Also, we have been keen to allow our business men to work with us to explain to the Governments of those newly democratic countries what steps they should take to facilitate trade with the West, and to create a more attractive climate for investment by western companies and countries. We have been pleased with the responses of British industry, and of the countries that we visited, which were courteous hosts and keen to learn from us about the legal and financial framework that is needed to make them attractive to western investors. We shall continue to pursue that vigorously.

Our policy is buttressed by the know-how funds that have been established in several of those countries. It can make money available for those wishing to undertake feasibility studies or other work in eastern European countries governed by the funds.

With other member state colleagues we have contributed to a large know-how fund at EC level, which is also open to approaches from British businesses. In addition to our work as tour guides to British industry, the Department and Foreign Office posts in those countries are making information available so that British business men will know more about the changes under way in the law codes and the investment climate, and about whom they should meet and what opportunities are available.

I take issue with the hon. Member for Gateshead, East on one point. She said that none of the eastern European countries would have a significant amount of hard currency with which to purchase western exports. Let us consider the special case of East Germany. Shortly, it will have a large pool of deutschmarks as a result of the conversion of the ostmark to the deutschmark. On a recent trip to Berlin, I observed a considerable inclination on the part of East German companies—especially those in the retail sector—to use some of that spending power to buy western goods. They expect a surge in demand for western-style products immediately after monetary union.

East German consumers are likely to say that they want western-branded goods and western-style packaging and marketing, and, initially, many of those goods will come from the West. I encourage any British business man who thinks that he may have goods to sell that would be an important element in the restocking and re-merchandising of East German stores to make an approach as soon as

possible, as that task is already well advanced in the run-up to monetary union. Major promotions and sales are under way in shops in East Berlin in our attempt to remove the traditional COMECON goods and make way for new stocks—many of which, as I have said, will come from the west.

The hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) made a good speech: I was delighted to hear him speak up for British industry and manufacturing—as he always does—and acknowledge that British industry has done a good job in recent years. I take it as a compliment that he thinks that I am too old to be a yuppie. On a busier day, most of the yuppies in the House can now be seen on the Opposition Benches, as they busily carry out the instructions of Mr. Mandelson to put on collars and ties and ape the yuppie style of dressing.

The hon. Member for Wallsend remined the House that it was a Conservative Government who introduced the Select Committee system, and a Labour Government who damaged parliamentary scrutiny. I am proud that this Government have nothing to hide, and are happy to see their policies and actions probed—rightly—by Select Committees, with regularity and often with some incisiveness.

Many other hon. Members—including the Labour party's Front-Bench spokesman, the hon. Member for Gateshead, East—have drawn attention to the Export Credits Guarantee Department. I shall ensure that the views expressed in this debate are passed on to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and also to my noble Friend the Minister for Trade, who will be examining the way in which the new system can be implemented. My noble Friend will also be carrying out consultations in the way that the hon. Member for Gateshead, East described. Of course, we wish British industry to have access to a good service, in this as in all other areas where the Department of Trade and Industry supports and helps industry and commerce, as business men go about their task of exporting and representing Britain abroad.

There have always been controls on the amount of credit risk in any given country; that will not be a new feature of the portfolio management system, which is a mechanical device—an aid to analysis—to settle realistic premiums in relation to the risk of the country concerned. That may mean that some go down and others up. The Ministers making those decisions will examine the balance of the package and the results of the risk assessment when deciding how to implement the ideas for change.

The hon. Member for Wallsend asked about missions. I agree that missions are an important part of commercial life. They can be valuable to the business men who take part, and sometimes lead to good follow-up business and orders as a result of the contacts made. There has been no intention to circumscribe or cut them down. For example, last year the number of inward missions increased to 84 from the previous year's 69. The number of outward missions—145—was similar to the 152 of the previous year; money had been offered for 160, but only 145 were organised because of various problems with some of the countries originally targeted.

Mr. Grylls: I am sorry slightly to run over what my hon. Friend said earlier, by returning to the credits available to industry in exports. My hon. Friend rightly said that there have always been restrictions per country. Will he assure the House that, when he considers future policy, he will bear it in mind that Britain has always been very successful in many major exporting projects and competes in a very tough world, and will he make sure that our large firms that compete for orders, together with the small firms that they bring in their wake and that are also extremely important, are not disadvantaged compared with firms in other countries such as Japan and West Germany, which compete in the same markets? Although we certainly do not want unnecessary subsidies, if there is to be any scaling down of subsidies, will my hon. Friend ensure that it occurs only in parallel with what is done in other countries so that we are not disadvantaged? I am sure that he will be the first to accept that it is extremely important that we maintain our share of the export market.

Mr. Redwood: I shall make sure that my hon. Friend's comments are drawn to the attention of the Ministers who will be thinking through the next stage of policy for the ECGD. I am grateful to him for his contribution to the debate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) told us a fascinating story about the structural changes in industry and commerce under way in his constituency in recent years. Many other hon. Members could tell similar stories of the changes that have taken place in their parts of the country. There has been a fantastic process of regeneration, renewal and change, most obviously in towns such as Corby, where the steel industry closed in 1980 with devastating consequences for employment and for the state of that town. Ten years later, Corby is a flourishing, enterprising town with a whole host of new jobs. More than 11,000 new jobs have been created since the collapse of the steel business there. Many of those jobs have better pay and conditions than the ones that they replaced. Of course, we all recognise that the transition was unpleasant and painful, but we should pay tribute to the towns that have managed to recover so well.

Mr. Ted Garrett: Does the Minister agree that it would have been more painful had Corby not had a reservoir of skilled people from the closure of the steelworks and the ancillary industries that supported the steel industry?

Mr. Redwood: I agree that the skills of the local work force were an important part of Corby's renewal, as was the creation of the enterprise zone, the work of all levels of Government to promote Corby and, most importantly, the work of a large number of inward investors in the private sector who backed Corby, gave it a chance and turned it into one of the most enterprising towns in the country in a short time.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who unfortunately has had to leave the Chamber, alleged that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was trying to get rid of his entire Department into the private sector, but that is simply not true. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his ministerial team believe that there are important roles for the Department to fulfil and we are making sure that those roles are properly fulfilled and have the right resources to back them up. We do not intend to wind up the entire Department in the way that the hon. Gentleman alleged.

I agree with the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed that there needs to be transparency in other countries on subsidy and aid patterns. That is one of the intentions behind the Commission's monitoring of state aids throughout the European Community. The Government

[Mr. Redwood]

are giving strong backing to the European Commission, particularly to the Competition Commissioner, to make sure that the right data are collected about state aids across the Community and that follow-up action is taken by the Commission to deal with those flagrant abuses of the state aid regime that can distort competition and therefore distort the markets unfairly in the creation of the single market, which we are backing strongly.

I also agree with the hon. Gentleman about the importance of the GATT round, which has to be concluded by the end of the year. The GATT round is attempting to take on entirely new sectors and to include in its remit agriculture and services as well as making further progress in the traditional area of industrial goods. It is vital to the trading prosperity of the entire world that the GATT round makes good progress in the closing months of this year, and the Government are fully committed to doing what they can with their European partners to achieve a good resolution in that GATT round, as we believe that that would make an important contribution to further world growth in the 1990s.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) paid a tribute to me. I promise the House that it was unsolicited and that no bribe or anything improper passed between us. When he enticed me into making a frivolous intervention, I was referring to the categorisation of orchestra exports; I do not wish to be associated with comments that he made about right hon. and hon. Friends, all of whom I much value.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne asked me a serious and important question about what would happen if the Government no longer collected statistics. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to conduct economic policy if we had no idea what was happening to the economy. My hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and I share concerns about the accuracy and reliability of some of the statistics, which is why the Government have set out a plan for improving the reliability of data, especially on invisible trade, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne drew attention when quoting from the Central Statistical Office's press release on the previous month's balance of payments. He asked what the reporting line is for the CSO, which is through the Treasury and not the Department of Trade and Industry.

Several points were made by the hon. Member for Gateshead, East. She cited certain industries that are in trouble and drew attention to machine tools, shipbuilding and textiles, but there are many success stories within those industries. I hope to show later how an industrial revival is taking place and that it is spreading ever more widely across industrial sectors and across the country as the most difficult regions participate and become the leaders in the next phase of growth, as some are showing signs of doing.

The hon. Lady's question about our single market campaign and backing information for Europe spans more than one Department, but I promise her that the single market campaign run by the Department of Trade and Industry will continue until the completion of the single market in 1992. It goes through phases, and we are beyond the phase in which the main purpose was to explain to businesses that 1992 will happen. That was a successful campaign, and almost every business is aware of it. The campaign is now working, through the regional offices, seminars and other mechanisms, to advise and to work with companies on the coming of the single market.

Mr. Cash: Does my hon. Friend agree that the information aspect of the campaign is immensely important? I pay tribute to him for the work that he has done on it since he took up his responsibilities. Does he agree that it is essential to convey the message not only that, through marketing and distribution techniques, companies can export their goods to other countries, including eastern Europe, but that they must produce goods of the highest quality with the highest productivity? It does not matter what companies are trying to sell if their products are not good enough, because they will not be sold.

Mr. Redwood: My hon. Friend is right. Quality and value for money are essential ingredients to penetrate the wider marketplace. That lies behind the enterprise initiative that the Department of Trade and Industry is fathering, to help smaller and medium-sized companies in particular, which have not always had the resources, to build quality into their systems, and to attack new markets abroad—where there may be language problems, or familiarity problems about how those countries do business in fairly distinct national markets in western Europe—and to help them with production processes and other matters that may be important to achieve the right quality.

Manufacturing can benefit from BS 5750 and all the other standards, which provide a discipline to companies that wish to build quality into their systems. Often, companies that approach that somewhat hesitantly and say, "Oh dear, this will be an added cost and difficulty", discover that it not only lifts the quality and lowers the reject rate of goods but cuts costs by imposing better disciplines on stocks and by cutting the reject rates so that fewer raw materials and inputs are wasted. As my hon. Friend says, that is an important part of building success in the single market.

The hon. Member for Gateshead, East was right to say that campaigns must be monitored. We are all well aware of that and, in one way or another, we monitor what happens as a result of the campaigns. The hon. Lady said that Labour would like to see active and decentralised Department of Trade and Industry offices. There are already regional offices and they have an important role to play in the enterprise initiative and in the current phase of the single market campaign.

The business rate point is an own goal, for two reasons. It offers to business men and women the guarantee that, once the transition is over, the business rate will not go up by more than inflation. It protects them from Labour councils that were doing untold damage to industry and commerce in Labour-controlled areas by producing high increases in the rates in a way that was impossible to predict from year to year, making business planning difficult. It rebounds against the Labour party, because the revaluations and recalculations that form part of the introduction of the unified business rate produce substantial benefits for businesses in the north, especially industrial businesses, which Labour Members represent.

For years, the Labour party has said that we should tackle that problem. This positive measure will help industry in those towns and cities.

Recently, an important financial commentator in the City, one of the big investment houses, said that the 1990s would see Britain becoming the Hong Kong of Europe. The commentator explained clearly that that meant that Britain would become a centre of manufacturing excellence, based on the productivity and skills of our work force. That conclusion has been reached not just by analysts. It has been shown by the inward investment from Nissan, Toyota and Honda. Those companies have said it in ways that speak louder than words. They have brought major manufacturing plants to this country to expand and revitalise the British motor industry. Not just car makers are involved—Bosch, Fujitsu and Motorola are among many major overseas investors that are coming to this country because they recognise that Britain in the 1990s will be an exciting manufacturing centre. It is part of the western European market but has many natural advantages because of its industrial work force and the climate created by the new labour relations legislation of the 1980s and the Government's successful economic policies.

Overall, industrial investment has surged by more than 50 per cent., in volume terms since 1982. That is a sign that overseas investors and investors that are already here are backing Britain and British industry in the most tangible way possible, by spending their money here and by expanding and modernising their factories.

My hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford pointed out that it was not just a case of manufacturing success and that Britain, too, is an important service provider. I agree with him on that point and I agree that it is invidious to make distinctions between the contribution of manufacturing and the contribution that service providers make to the wealth and creativity of this country. Both are equally important. To achieve a successful modern economy, we must understand the mutual dependence of the service sector and industry and the way in which both need to develop in particular directions.

The British service sector, especially financial services, made an important contribution to British economic growth and success in the 1980s. The international stock exchange, for example, accounts for 65 per cent. of all the international trade in equities that takes place outside the country of origin of the quoted company. That is two thirds in London alone—more than in New York and Tokyo combined. It is a towering achievement. London is the world's foremost foreign exchange centre. It is not second to Tokyo or third behind Tokyo and New York. It is the biggest and is an important marketplace. London contains within the confines of the City and the over-spill of the City further east and west a vast concentration of insurance companies, investment houses and other service providers and support businesses. In 1989 there was a huge surplus of £8·9 billion for the balance of payments on the financial services that we exported over and above the services that we imported. In addition, thanks to the massive overseas investment in recent years, £4·6 billion of net income came from abroad across the services account.

Not so long ago, Labour Members cheered up and took delight in possible misery because they thought that the invisible account had dipped into deficit. We started getting a series of questions as to why the account was in deficit and how terrible that was. The figures have been reworked and we discover that the invisible account has never been in deficit. I hope that the Opposition will share my pleasure that there was no deficit. The enormous contribution made by our service sector should not go without remark.

Ms. Quin: The Opposition were glad that the reported deficit turned out not to be a deficit. None the less the Minister would be surprised if we did not comment on serious trade figures. We are concerned about our overall trade deficit and I hope that the Minister is too.

Mr. Redwood: I am, of course, concerned to see that Britain trades well. I agree that it is important that invisibles should trade well. That has been happening and will continue to happen. In the first quarter of this year, there was a surplus of over £700 million on the invisible account despite the fact that we are still making heavy payments to the European Community. Those Government transfers are deducted from the money made by our private sector service providers.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): Does the Minister realise that those figures explain why we are so alarmed? A surplus of £700 million is derisory. In the past invisibles held the balance and we always had an adequate surplus to outweigh the deficit on visibles. This is not happening any more. The £700 million goes nowhere towards meeting the £16 billion deficit on manufacturing alone.

Mr. Redwood: The right hon. Gentleman has foreseen my next subject. If we are to address the balance of payments deficit, we must first ask how big the deficit is. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne for pointing out that the figures are often inaccurate and often revised.

Last year, there was a £15 billion black hole in the figures. I do not know whether the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) wants to contest that point. The statisticians themselves admit that they cannot pin down £15 billion, which is almost the whole deficit. Why might that have been?

There are two serious explanations, which we should examine. One possibility is that we were exporting more services and that the invisible account was far stronger than the figures revealed. An element of that black hole is accounted for by just that point. Why do I believe that? Work has gone on in the United States, which has had a similar problem with a large apparent deficit and a large black hole in the figures. The Americans have carried out additional sampling and issued questionnaires in their service sector and have discovered that the old samples and the old questionnaires were not capturing the growth, the dynamism and the changes within the service sector itself. There was a great understatement of service exports in the United States, which is now being detected through new questionnaires.

An element of that could be seen in the British figures and I welcome the decisive move by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to improve the quality of the statistics. We shall discover that some service exports are underrecorded.

Mr. Cash: My hon. Friend will know that 60 per cent. of our trade deficit is with the European Community. Difficulties may be presented in invisibles when services that we could provide are prevented from entering

[Mr. Cash]

Germany, for example. That creates the sort of imbalance that enables the trade of Germany to have a surplus with the whole of the rest of the European Community of 70 per cent. Will my hon. Friend comment on that?

Mr. Redwood: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), who is quite right that on the stated figures the deficit with Germany is large and that it is an important component of the total. One of the complaints that we have had in recent meetings of the Internal Market Council, which I attend on behalf of the Government, is that, having opened up our market in manufactured goods and welcomed many German imports of good quality machinery and consumer goods we expect reciprocity in the marketplace for services. We think that our investment and insurance companies have something to offer the German public, which they might like to buy if the market were less constrained by regulation.

My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that, at the IMC this Wednesday, we made some progress because the other member states agreed with us—not with the Germans—that we had to make progress in liberalising the insurance market. We agreed a motor services directive, which does not go nearly as far as we should have liked, but which will be an important signal to the Commission and to the Community as a whole that most member states want progress in insurance, and we expect a much more dramatic move from the Commission when it brings forward its two passport directives for insurance, which will mean that British insurance companies meeting our regulatory requirements will be able to trade in Germany or France with little additional regulatory hassle.

That is what we intend to deliver for Britain, and we are now building support in the Community. My hon. Friend is quite right to say that the market must be fair and we must be able to export goods and services that we are good at providing as well as importing goods and services that our partners are good at providing.

The second possible explanation of the £15,000 million black hole in the figures is that there has been a major underrecording of inward capital flows. I immediately agree that that is a likely explanation for a substantial part of the black hole. What that means is that we have been a much more impressive magnet for inward investment than even the Government have been led to believe by the figures that we have had before us so far. That would be all at one with the picture of a country growing far faster in recent years than its trend rate of growth in the 1960s and the 1970s and with the analysis of many outside commentators and business men, who say that Britain is now a foremost manufacturing and investment centre in Europe and an attractive place to which to bring business.

The growth of manufacturing and the success of the economy have produced some problems, with rapid growth in demand in the past couple of years sucking in a large number of imports. Our problem has not been a shortage of exports or an inability on the part of our exporters to do well. Several of my hon. Friends have already pointed out the great export success that we were recording in the 1980s. It was because domestic demand had grown so quickly and because imports were being sucked in rapidly that the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced measures to curb domestic demand, and those measures will begin to have an impact on the import of consumer goods. Figures published today show that the import of cars, for example, is now declining, which is exactly what one would expect after years of rapid growth based on a major expansion of real incomes.

The successes of the 1980s are quite astonishing: national income up by more than a quarter; exports of manufactures up by more than half in volume terms; real take-home pay up by about a third; manufacturing productivity up by more than half; and car output up by a third. Those are remarkable achievements. Those are the successes that we could never achieve in the 1970s with the interventionist policies that then ruled the roost, and the successes that we were told could never be achieved in the 1980s with our policies. Yet they are there for all to see. Our performance has been one of the most impressive in the western world in all those respects. At the same time, in 1979, Britain had a mere £12,000 million-worth of net overseas assets, whereas today it has £110,000 million-worth of net overseas assets. That represents a ninefold expansion of our national savings abroad, routed through the financial markets in which we are so successful.

How has all that come about? My hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton drew attention to the way in which the aerospace industry, Rolls-Royce in particular in his constituency and ICI in some of its high-tech areas, have been successful in developing new ideas and exploiting market opportunities. I agree with my hon. Friend.

Mr. Ted Garrett: And the pharmaceutical industry.

Mr. Redwood: As the hon. Member for Wallsend says, the pharmaceutical industry has also been successful. I also pay tribute to it because it is a prime example of a British industrial success story. Several major companies based in the United Kingdom export to the world and have a research and development record second to none.

I have three examples, in addition to the examples refered to by my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford and my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton of wht can happen in particular industries. My first example is the printing industry.

The British printing industry did not have a particularly good reputation when the Conservative Government took office. Parts of it were definitely dogged by labour relations problems and other difficulties with investment and developing for the future. However, there was a tremendous transformation across the board in the printing industry in the latter part of the 1980s. An important part of that was permitted by the legislation that we passed to allow more sensible relations between managers and men and to allow individual trade union members rights to decide and influence the shape of their union's policy and to choose the people who led them. With the efforts of management, that has resulted in a massive expansion in technology and productivity.

In the latter years of the 1980s, the printing industry was cutting its unit labour costs and by so doing was becoming more competitive and doing well in world markets. That industry has continued to have a balance of trade surplus which is a useful contribution to this country's economy at a time when, in several industrial areas, because of the massive expansion in demand, imports have grown even more rapidly than exports.

My second example relates directly to the Government's care and concern for manufacturing as

revealed in our pursuit of privatisation policies. The transformation in the British steel industry in all respects is staggering. In 1978-79, it took 14·3 man hours to make a tonne of steel. Today it takes 4·7. The productivity increase has been over 200 per cent., and that increase is now protecting jobs in the steel industry where, in the 1970s, there were massive job losses because there was no productivity improvement and the industry constantly lost market share. Those improvements have led directly to a surge in profitability which enables investment in new plants and technology to be undertaken.

In 1979-80 total losses including write-offs of capital amounted to almost £1,800 million. In 1988-89 British Steel's profits were £733 million. It is important to understand the central role of profits in providing the cash and the incentives for investment. That has made British Steel once again a force to be reckoned with in world steel markets. Building on that success should sustain that industry in future.

Ms. Quin: The Minister's words will sound hollow to the 800 or so workers at Ravenscraig who are worried about their jobs and to the 1,000 workers at the Brymbo mill in north Wales. Will the Minister respond to my point about the prospects for new technological investment in Ravenscraig, which should be a centre for the new technology that is being tried in the United States and Italy?

Mr. Redwood: The essential point is that jobs would not be safe in the steel industry if the industry was not productive, competitive and making money. Of course, the profits give British Steel several options as to where it invests and how to build for the future. However, it will have a future only if it has that money. I cannot give the hon. Lady any guidance on the individual investment plans of British Steel. That is a matter for the board of British Steel. I am sure that the hon. Lady can elucidate that information from the board in the normal way.

The third industry is the motor industry, where it is a different story again. The first story was of a competitive industry in the private sector that responded to new legislation. The second story was of a nationalised industry that was transformed by privatisation. The motor industry had been reasonably successful in the private sector, but it had a poor performing public sector component in the 1970s. It is now being expanded and developed at a rapid pace because there has been a big influx of new technology, new ideas, new money and new factories led by Japanese investors.

What did the Opposition say about that? A few years ago, the Leader of the Opposition roundly condemned what he called the colonisation of British industry. He was trying to make it as unattractive as possible for people to come here, and he was scornful of industry. Some of his right hon. and hon. Friends cast aspersions when investors came here, saying that they would be only screwdriver factories and were not worth having. At least they were better than the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist), who called for the nationalisation of Vauxhall, Ford and Peugeot. What an incentive that is to a new inward investor trying to bring private investment into this country.

Mr. Alan Williams: Hon. Members have heard a degree of preposterousness that I cannot allow to go by. The Department must have briefed the Minister. Is he aware that inward investment did not start in 1979? In that Department I provided the grants to bring Ford to Bridgend, and conducted the negotiations to bring Hitachi and Toshiba to this country. We had an active policy on inward investment. We also had a bipartisan attitude towards it. I can remember when the first Minister of State in the Department of Trade and Industry, Adam Butler, talked to a group of Japanese would-be investors. He undid the bipartisan approach by saying how much worse it would be if ever there were a Labour Government. There were Japanese looking for long-term investment having to accept the fact that there are different Governments. We have always played on a bipartisan basis. I am astonished that the hon. Gentleman is taking that line. I assume that he has a brief.

Mr. Redwood: I have done my homework and I have seen the quotes that substantiate what I have been saying. I am delighted that the right hon. Gentleman agrees about the value of inward investment. I am sure that some Opposition Members would wish to associate themselves with that process. I pay tribute to those who have done so.

There has also been an unwelcome strand of criticism from some Opposition Members, and aspersions, such as the "screwdriver" aspersion, have been cast. That is unhelpful. The Japanese are bringing in design and technology, and they are seeking to employ highly talented British people to manage and design within their plants and factories. I hope that everyone will accept that that is the way to go forward, in exactly the same way as many Labour and Conservative Members welcomed inward investment from America several decades ago, which was an important part of the growth of the motor industry in those days.

The question of the magic ingredients for export and industrial success is often raised. Sometimes people urge us to follow the Japanese more closely. There are many things about the way in which the Japanese go about business that we can emulate or learn from. They have been particularly active in introducing just-in-time systems. They have the idea that design should proceed by incremental advances and steps, improving products bit by bit in their approach to quality and to labour relations in many of their factories. We can learn from all that.

The Opposition also said that we should learn from the amount of money that the Ministry of International Trade and Industry uses to subsidise and encourage Japanese industry. I do not know whether the Opposition have done their homework. If we were to follow exactly what Japan does by way of subsidy and grant to industry proportionate to our GNP, we would have to reduce our current level of subsidy and grant. That may not be what people have in mind.

Others say that the Japanese are still too protective by tariff. If we are to reach the point at which EC tariffs are in line with Japanese tariffs, on average the EC tariffs will have to come down, not the Japanese. However, we hope that the whole world will make great progress on tariffs, multilaterally through GATT. It is to that that we intend to turn our mind, and to dedicate our efforts in the closing months of this year.

The message from successful exporting industries, whether in this country or among our leading competitors overseas, is that the first prerequisite of export success is a lively domestic market. The Japanese vehicle and electronics industry, the German chemical industry, the

[Mr. Redwood]

United States computer industry and our British pharmaceutical industry have all established world leadership in many products and export successfully. They all have a similar formula. They are based on several competitive major companies in the country concerned and they are often—this is especially true of Japan—based on a substructure of dozens, hundreds or even thousands of highly competitive small and medium-sized enterprises that work as suppliers, advisers and service providers to those industries.

Those are the conditions that we have been re-creating in this country and which account for the staggering growth in productivity, exports, and general economic performance in the 1980s.

As we look to the 1990s, our trade performance and our general manufacturing performance will be more and more determined by the disciplines of the European Community. I agree with my hon. Friends who say that British industry and commerce have always looked far more widely than western Europe, and must continue to do so. Of course, there are huge opportunities in the English-speaking world, where the markets are even more approachable because of the common language, and there are also many market opportunities in the developing world, where we have strong links and are often highly respected.

However, the policy framework is based on EC policies of more competition, no recourse to devaluation as a policy instrument, a prohibition on most types of state aid and subsidy, and growing strength in policing the state aids regime. In that climate, it will be even more important than in the 1980s for industry and commerce to turn their minds to constant improvements in quality, value added, and in manufacturing productivity. Only with such a concentration can we hope to survive and prosper in these competitive markets of western Europe and beyond, in the post-GATT world of the early 1990s.

It is a disappointing spectacle to look across the Chamber, asking oneself what advice the Opposition are giving us on policy. Their policies are all either rehashed policies from the 1970s or retread policies from the 1960s. They say that we need a new DTI, with greater stature, but what they are recommending looks very like the Department of Economic Affairs that they tried in the 1960s and which failed so miserably.

Do you remember that, Madam Deputy Speaker? They were left holding a national plan that was a pure figment of their imagination. There were endless rows with the Treasury, which would never surrender the power of the purse—and nor should it, because it is the Treasury that must provide the economic and financial discipline to run the economy and our economic policy. However, that is what the Labour party is recommending again for the DTI, and, if it were adopted, it would fail again.

The Opposition also advocate a national investment bank. It is a rerun of the old National Enterprise Board, which lost money and destroyed jobs. That is exactly what a revamped national investment bank would do, but on a far grander scale.

The Opposition also propose a national minimum wage and a training levy. That means a massive increase in industry's costs, which would make it far more difficult for us to be competitive in the competitive world of the 1990s.

Labour's income tax policy would soak anybody on more than £20,000 a year. That policy is targeted to hit the middle managers, the designers and the marketers—those who go out and sell our exports, the very people who are essential to building the strength of this country's industry and its success in world trading.

There is also the Opposition's idea about more and more subsidy. I must advise the Labour party that that would be illegal under the treaty of Rome. The whole point of the Commission's attack on state aids is to ensure that such a policy is not pursued in any member state.

Finally, there is the incredible budget—the £20 billion to £50 billion of spending pledges that are to be financed by no tax increases on the bulk of the population. That one simply will not wash. There is no way that we could follow a policy like that, because it suspends the laws of arithmetic.

The way forward is through GATT, and through co-operation within Europe to get a fair and level playing field for all our businesses. It is through building on the great successes of British industry in the 1980s, increasing productivity, stressing quality, going forward with new products and being proud again to be British in the markets of the world. That is why there has been such a restoration of fortunes in the 1980s and that is why the 1990s will be even better.

1.30 pm

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): This debate, initiated so well by my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens), is one of the most important for the House, particularly because of the debate about the development of the 1992 market and economic and monetary developments in Europe. Against such a background, it could not be more important for us to have a debate about the general trade position.

There has been a certain amount of discussion about the balance of payments. The hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) spoke about the deficit in our balance of trade. However, as the EEC market develops, we may shortly be looking at it rather differently. We shall be concerned more with the figures on trade between the EEC, perhaps an expanded one, and the rest of the world, than with those on made between us and the EEC, which will be irrelevant. We shall come to see trade within the EEC rather as the United States sees trade between California and Florida. That will be a great change. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), who has had to leave, made several points about statistics, and they are well known to be inaccurate. A lot of time and taxpayers' money is spent on getting these figures, but I doubt whether they are accurate.

It is easy for Members of Parliament to slip into the habit of criticising imports and saying that they are bad and only exports are good. One cannot export if one does not import. Trade has to be balanced. Perhaps it is just a matter of justified pride that we like to see our goods and firms doing well in the overseas markets, and British products on the shelves of shops overseas. Many of us like to buy British goods in our high streets, and that is proper. In the free trade world that both sides of the House want to develop from the current international negotiations, some of those factors will be less important.

I shall spend a few minutes on one aspect of export trade. Not many years ago, the House would have been

unlikely to debate export-import business and trade. It was assumed that most firms were able to undertake their own exports. If they were successful, they were successful, and if they were not, they were not. They went round the world doing their business and getting their orders and needed no help—certainly not from the House of Commons. They might have needed some help from the export department, the ECGD and other such organisations, and from foreign missions, but by and large, it was not necessary for Parliament to take an active part.

That is probably still true today of most large companies, which are able to find their export markets and to till the ground in important markets without any great help or encouragement from the Government. It is perhaps those firms which are not so successful—the rather more flabby firms—which sit back and say, "The Government should help us and encourage us more." I am not sure that it is really necessary for the Government to help them.

I intervened in my hon. Friend the Minister's speech to mention help for some construction firms. All our construction firms must compete on the international market. I shall leave aside the large firms which, by and large, can look after themselves. I wish to concentrate on small and medium-sized businesses.

About 70 per cent. of all businesses in Britain do no export trade whatever. Therefore, there is a vast pool of businesses, many—probably most—of them small and medium-sized which have not yet put their toe in the water of exporting. In that area the Government have a role to play. They must encourage, help and lead such businesses forward until they take the plunge into exporting throughout the world. Of course, Government expenditure on encouraging exports must be cost-effective. We cannot spend large sums of taxpayers's money unnecessarily. Of the 1,400 new businesses created—it is nice to see the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) on the Labour Front Bench agree with me and say what good news that is. He always welcomes good news for Britain. The good news is that there is a net gain each week of 1,400 new firms, taking into account firms which go out of business for one reason or another.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): I make it clear to the hon. Gentleman that I am not agreeing with what he says. I am chastising the Minister for his speech not so long ago.

Mr. Grylls: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will think again about any chastisement. I should be the first to leap to the defence of my hon. Friend the Minister. He gave an intelligent and broad-ranging speech. The hon. Gentleman has not been in the Chamber for the entire morning so perhaps he has not yet picked up the flavour of the debate. He should think again about chastising my hon. Friend and I hope that he will not chastise me.

As I said, 1,400 new firms are created each week. There is a vast pool of businesses which should be able to export. In all seriousness I say to my hon. Friend the Minister that we should encourage our export departments, overseas posts and commercial offices to pay greater attention to those businesses. They should encourage the pool of non-exporters to put their toe in the water and take advantage of the huge opportunities.

One of the greatest myths or popular misconceptions put about is that a firm can export only if it is a global business. It is a silly, facile phrase written in articles and so on, but no one understands what it means. There may be a need for global businesses in some areas but it is mainly the smaller firms which will get up and go.

I participated in a trade delegation to Tokyo about 18 months ago. It included delegates from about 16 small to medium-sized firms. None of them have ever been to Japan before, and many had done virtually no exporting. The firms employed on average 50 or 60 people. When we arrived in Tokyo I asked if I could help in any way. The business men looked at me as though I was crazy because as soon as they arrived they simply got stuck in. To them Tokyo was like any other market. They had done their research. Appointments had been made for them extremely efficiently by the commercial department of the British embassy in Tokyo. Although Tokyo was a strange city different from anywhere else that they had been, they got cracking. By the end of the visit many of them said that they believed that they would do business.

Some months later I invited those business men to the House for a drink to find out how they had done. Without exception they were doing business as a result of the trade delegation. That impresses me because they were not moaning and groaning about trade barriers and problems in Japan—which is a difficult and demanding export market because the country is very rich. They started exporting.

Firms in the delegation that I mentioned had their fares subsidised and, to that extent, were given a leg-up. Therefore, we can help, not necessarily by subsidies, but by encouraging people and giving them information. In this age of information technology surely we should be able to persuade even quite small firms to have a VDU so that information on potential contracts could be flashed round the country simultaneously. It would take ages to do that by letter and that would be nonsense today. I hope that we can get information to the hundreds of thousands of British firms which could be exporting if they were given more encouragement.

Also it would be useful to encourage small firms to set up subsidiaries overseas. Sometimes it is assumed that only large firms can afford overseas subsidiaries, and that has generally been the case in the past. However, I can offer an example in France where an organisation was set up a few years ago called APIME—an association of small and medium-sized businesses—to help establish overseas subsidiaries, among other things. When Renault was setting up a plant in Morocco, its management asked APIME to help it get suppliers of nuts and bolts in France to set up subsidiaries in Morocco. The company thought that Moroccan businesses should supply it, so that all the parts did not have to come from France, but Morocco had no indigenous suppliers of motor car parts. A number of smaller firms which supplied Renault in France set up subsidiaries to supply its plant in Morocco, and those companies started to do very well. That is a lesson from which we can learn. We must encourage small and medium-sized firms to set up subsidiaries overseas. Assistance need not necessarily come from the Government. Large British firms which are successful overseas could help, as did Renault.

If a small or medium-sized firm has half a dozen subsidiaries round the world, it will become a stronger firm generally, and will be more able to compete effectively in the international market.

The Minister has given a good account of what the Government have done to encourage firms to sell overseas.

[Mr. Grylls]

In future, can we concentrate that much more on small and medium-sized firms, which have an increasing part to play in the expansion of Britain's export trade?

1.43 pm

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): In the past the hon. Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls) and I have agreed on a few issues, but we have disagreed on many more. However, I agree when he says that in general we welcome investment overseas, but we must bear it in mind that that is not necessarily always beneficial. Investment overseas is beneficial only if profits are repatriated. Investment overseas requires a capital outflow and a loss of exports, which will be produced in the local market abroad rather than being exported from Britain. Unless profits are repatriated there will be a net capital outflow, and a diminution of the balance of payments figures.

During his brief and welcome appearance at the Dispatch Box, my hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) mentioned the Minister's comments. However, he missed the real gem—the Minister's reference to the new business rate. He had, he said, discovered that businesses throughout the country welcomed it, because it had put an end to the drip of blood that they had endured under the old rating system. The Government have come to the rescue: they have slashed all the arteries. The Minister seems to believe that killing off businesses quickly is an act of kindness.

Earlier, the Minister referred to the need for meaningful and accurate statistics. My hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield would have enjoyed that, too. How, the Minister inquired of one of his colleagues, can policy be meaningful if those who developed that policy do not know the basis on which they are working? That, of course, is quite true; but, if it is true when applied to an analysis of trade and industry, it must also be true when applied to an analysis of unemployment and poverty. While working to improve the accuracy of statistics in the commercial sector, the Government have indulged in practices that have rendered those other, social statistics virtually meaningless.

The time of the debate is propitious, as yet another set of trade figures has been published today. The Minister seemed to find them encouraging. Certainly they are not as bad as the last lot, but the deficit is still running at more than £15 billion a year: that should not please any Minister.

The key to the balance of payments problem lies in manufacturing. According to the Minister's predecessor —now Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office—the trouble was that the Opposition were dewy-eyed about manufacturing, and did not understand the potential of invisibles. Given the factors to which the Minister attributed the poor trade in visibles, he will surely understand why we regard manufacturing as crucial to the country's long-term survival.

Whatever the Minister may say, the evidence of one simple set of figures cannot be ignored. When the Government came to office, the manufacturing trade surplus was £3 billion; now the deficit is £16 billion. That enormous transformation accounts for most of our present difficulties. But the problem is not just the reversal from surplus to deficit; it is the fact that it has happened in the high-technology sector. We have a £1.5 billion deficit in office and data processing equipment, telecommunications and sound equipment and electrical machinery, and a £7 billion deficit in road vehicles.

Not only did the Government destroy 20 per cent. of our manufacturing when they came to office; they completely failed to recognise the need to exploit the high-technology and high-value-added sectors.

Mr. Redwood: Is the right hon. Gentleman denying that, in volume terms, manufacturing exports increased by more than half over the 1980s? Does not he understand that, in a fast-growing economy with a large amount of demand, good export performance can co-exist with deficits in some sectors? The fact that people are buying even more than we are producing in this country is a sign of the strength of the economy.

Mr. Williams: With respect, when we are exporting anvils and importing Porsches, we are not getting a very good deal. That is why a manufacturing surplus of £3 billion has become a deficit of £16 billion. Does the Minister not understand the figures? They are quite simple and straightforward, and I have specified the sectors in which the deficits are occuring.

Mr. Stevens: Does not the right hon. Gentleman accept that the electronic and computer sectors, which involve fairly advanced technology, were already in deficit in 1979, although competition has been broadly maintained since then and the deficit has roughly kept pace with the expansion in the industry?

Mr. Williams: Inevitably, some tend to be in deficit and others tend to be in surplus, but if one looks across the spectrum, high-technology industries tend to be in deficit, and I shall explain the reasons for that. The hon. Gentleman referred to the screwdriver industry and that is relevant to my argument. We are into assembly and low-technology industries, but we are not into high-technology industries.

Just a fortnight ago I asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what manufacturing investment would have been in Britain over the past decade had we sustained the average rate of growth that occurred in 1974-79—a period that he and his party condemn as a time of failure. The Chancellor's answer, which can be checked in *Hansard*, was that we would have invested £30 billion more in British industry had we maintained the growth rate of the 1970s. Those figures are almost meaningless, but if we put it another way, that is the equivalent of 50 Sunderland Nissans. That success was cast aside because, as soon as the Government took office, far from recognising the importance of manufacturing, they cut manufacturing investment by 30 per cent. and spent the next 10 years getting back to where they started.

I put it to the Chancellor that perhaps it is unfair to expect the Government to maintain the high standards of manufacturing investment that were reached under a Labour Government; what would have occurred had they managed to match the growth rate of the French in the 1980s? The Chancellor told me that over a period of eight years we would have had £16 billion more in manufacturing investment had we matched the performance of the French. I asked him what would have happened had we matched the performance of the Germans and he replied that again there would have been

£16 billion more in manufacturing investment had we matched the rate of increase in manufacturing investment attained by the Germans. So when we compare the Government's performance with that of the Germans, the French or the previous Labour Government, it is clear that the black hole to which the Minister should be referring is the black hole into which our manufacturing investment has disappeared. It is no coincidence that we have a £1 billion deficit with France and a £10 billion deficit with Germany, in manufactures. It reflects the decade of neglect of manufacturing investment.

If we take not the £30 billion difference between the Government's growth rate in manufacturing and that of the previous Labour Government, but the £16 billion figure, we should consider what that could have meant in terms of investment, had we been pumping that money into putting new equipment and the latest technology into our manufacturing industry.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Is not it true that the great problem in the early 1980s was the resistance of the trade unions to change? Any proposed change was met with arguments about demarcation. Only when the power of the trade unions was broken were people prepared to invest in Britain.

Mr. Williams: That is not true either. As I said earlier, people were investing in Britain on a massive scale. In 1979, the year we left office, we had the highest level of manufacturing investment ever achieved in the United Kingdom. It increased by 14 per cent. in the previous year and a similar figure in the year before that. There were many inward investment projects, to which I referred in an intervention. I was fortunate enough to be involved in some of them. Hoffman-la Roche made an investment of about £140 million at the time. With respect to the hon. Gentleman, I shall not give him a longer reply. I aim to sit down and enable him to speak so I shall move on to my next point.

The complete turn-round on the manufacturing account reflects the Government's failure to invest in industry to enable it to compete internationally. Superimposed on that, because of the deficit, we are locked in a financial trap, which works against the interests of industry and makes us keep the hot money here to finance it. Therefore, interest rates and sterling must be high, which makes it more difficult for exporters but easier for importers. That helps to explain the figures for the past two months.

The reality, whether the Government recognise it or not, is that we are back on the edge of a new stop-go and the pre-oil position, Sadly, the only hope that the Minister offered was the possibility that in his long-range telescope he may have found a black hole in the statistics.

1.55 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): The debate has turned largely on exports. Much criticism has been made of export statistics, but for us to understand what is happening in Europe—the global village that we now inhabit—we must have comparative performance statistics.

We must tackle Britain's relationship with the rest of Europe, because 60 per cent. of our trade deficit in 1989 was with the European Community. We must carefully consider that important figure. Almost one third of our trade deficit was with West Germany and one fifth was with Japan. The lesson from that is that we cannot allow the European Community to develop simply on the basis of a system dominated by one country's powerful economy. That is not in the interests of the United Kingdom, it certainly is not in the interests of France, which explains much about French policy on the European Community since 1957 and, in particular, it is not in the interests of the European Community as a whole or West Germany. Given the movements in eastern and central Europe, the problem will grow when West Germany merges with the German Democratic Republic.

Last week, I attended a conference in Hungary at which many people were considering the opportunities for investment in eastern Europe. It emerged—I found this extremely disheartening—that the eastern European countries export only 4 per cent. of their gross national product instead of the 60 per cent. necessary to provide an effective framework for trading relationships.

German trade has a tremendous influence on eastern European countries. Austria makes 30 per cent. of the foreign investment in Hungary, and the bulk of the balance is German investment. The political implications go far beyond statistics and to the heart of the future Europe. If the eastern European countries become economic dependencies of the German and French centre of gravity, and if the management, shareholders and profits of those German companies are attracted back to that centre of gravity by the use of cheap labour and subsidies in eastern Europe, there will be a difficult political problem.

What will happen if there is a hard-core federal system —my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Cabinet have made it abundantly clear that we will not allow this to happen—within which the single market operates and which is dominated by one or two countries or a cluster of alliances round the economic power base of Germany and/or France? The political power of other countries in eastern and central Europe will be subordinated to the increasing centre of gravity in Germany. The resulting dependency will create division, jealousy and differences of a kind that the European Community is designed to avoid. For that reason, we must ensure that we keep to the central theme of a wider Europe, rather than a hard-core federal system. The economic and political consequences of that are far too dangerous.

The Uruguay GATT round has been going on for some time, but in fits and starts. Now that the European Community cannot be seen as a system that will enable free trade to operate exclusively within its boundaries—there is a global problem as well—it is becoming increasingly necessary to ensure that GATT works. I hope that we can encourage my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State to ensure that every effort is made to free up trade throughout the world and, in particular, to use the GATT mechanisms to achieve that objective.

In the G7 countries, two general criteria have been developed to improve the world economic environment. World savings are the first. Goods of the necessary quality cannot be created without investing in machinery and technology. World savings must be generated and money must be made available for research and development to underpin efforts to improve export performance. We must have monetary and tax policies designed to achieve that.

[Mr. William Cash]

It is interesting that, for all the criticism from the Opposition about the economy, they forget that we have a substantial trade deficit, partly because—as I said in an intervention—we cannot easily get into other markets. Their regulations, policies, company law structures and organisation of industrial and banking systems are designed to prevent us from operating on the level playing field that is necessary for the single market to work effectively. It is absurd for people to talk about the necessity of having a single market if we do not have a genuine competitive framework within which to operate. That in turn must dovetail with GATT at the international level, so savings are needed for investment underpinning. Monetary and tax policies are needed to free the economy and to allow individual enterprises to operate effectively. It is also necessary to ensure that we do not have improper restrictive regulations in other countries. That is what the single market is all about.

The developing countries are also important. I was glad that the Minister referred to the developing countries in this context. I have recently returned from Uganda. The resources of a continent such as Africa are phenomenal. We must make the most use of mutual and reciprocal trade not only in the Community, but in the wider Europe to which I referred, so that we do not create the political difficulties that will occur if we fail to create the wider Europe that is needed, including EFTA. We must also operate globally. In this context we must have regard to other countries, for example in Africa and in South America, which is seldom mentioned.

We are living in a single world. It is true that we need to localise democracy and to ensure that it works effectively on the ground. However, we must operate with the kind of vision on trade that Adam Smith and the East India Company considered as a matter of course in the 18th, 17th and 16th centuries when Raleigh, Drake and other well-known figures lived.

The world is our oyster, but we must produce the goods to enable us to sell in it, and we must have the commitment to working together with our European partners to make it a success.

2.7 pm

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) for the opportunity to raise this important matter which is fundamental to the future of the British economy. Britain depends on the export of manufactured goods. We have always had either to export or to die. That must be our watchword for the future.

At the risk of being parochial, I will address my remarks to the regional perspective of export trade from the north-west of England. Recently Peat, Marwick, McLintock carried out a survey of 100 chief executives of major companies in the north-west of England. It established a reassuring picture, but one that raises several matters about which there should be concern. The survey showed that the economic prospects for the region were still seen as very good, despite high interest rates and the balance of trade. The feeling that the economic prospects are good is based on a mixture of real success—because we have been highly successful—and somewhat less tangible optimism.

The north-west of England has embraced the opportunity that has been offered by increased inward investment. Many new industries have grown up and they, too, have exported. Over the past three years, we have seen a massive reduction in our unemployment problems. Very few people now talk about the north-south divide because the truth is that many parts of the north-west compare admirably with Godalming and other parts of Surrey and with other more prosperous parts of the south-east.

Interestingly, the survey suggests that 90 per cent. of business decision-makers in the region perceive good prospects for their companies. But they say—and this is a cause of anxiety—that key opportunities are seen for increasing sales probably in the United Kingdom market. I take this opportunity to say to businesses in the north-west that they must be much more outgoing in their approach to Europewide and worldwide trade than is suggested in the survey.

One worrying revelation is that 40 per cent.—an increase on last year—see the single European market having little or no effect on their businesses. Our competitors in Europe will not just stay at home and service their home markets. They will be looking to penetrate our markets and compete against British industry in the sectors that it dominates at present. British industries must worry not just about securing their market share against their British competitors; they must be concerned about those overseas who will come in and try to take their markets. Industry must realise that it is essential to consider exports.

The 100 chief executives identified two matters, both of which have been mentioned in the debate, as essential if exports are to improve. The first is the need to enhance customer service and attain total quality standards. The executives regard that as a key issue and it is something that we must develop and encourage industry to achieve. I believe that the failure of British exporters in the past has been attributable to lack of quality control and of adequate after-care services. That has resulted in our losing export trade.

The second factor, which is also vital, embraces the question of languages referred to by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who is no longer with us. The training of key staff—whether in production or in the knowledge of the countries where a company wishes to sell a product or have an export drive—is most important and can be achieved if companies tackle their training needs on an in-house basis. British industry is beginning to take that point on board. I was interested to note the other day figures which show that British industry is now spending £18 billion annually on training its staff. That figure excludes the £3 billion that the Government are spending, through the various training programmes, to train the unemployed and make them available for work. If we in the north-west are to be fit to help our export drive, we must bear those matters in mind.

Let me do a bit of special pleading about the things that are vital if the north-west is to develop further. I welcome British Rail's announcement yesterday—we must have improved rail links—that it will spend £350 million on upgrading the north-west lines to London. That means that we shall have faster freight rail links, which we will inevitably need when the tunnel is opened. I shall not bore the House by saying too much about that but, in the long term, the logic of building a fast link from London to the tunnel, to be connected to the various high-speed links

from London to the provinces, is inescapable. I hope that the private sector and British Rail will get together to build that essential infrastructure link.

For the north-west, the King's Cross terminal is part of that and will help our export trade. We need fast freight links from the north-west to the channel tunnel, which will be one of our major export outlets to the Community. People in Merseyside and Greater Manchester want to be able to put their freight for their customers in Europe on to trains in marshalling yards in the north-west and have that freight taken on to Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris and Milan—the markets that are necessary to our businesses.

If such a link does not exist for freight, the north-west will be peripheral. I accept that industry and commerce in the north-west must acknowledge the advantages offered by 1992 and the single market. As a consequence of the survey to which I have referred, I hope that much of north-west industry will say to itself, "Perhaps we are being a little too relaxed about 1992. We need to look positively at exports and take advantage of the opportunities in future."

I want briefly to consider several matters that have concerned me and companies in the north-west. I declare an interest because I have economic ties with one of the companies to which I will refer. The Soviet Union offers a major opportunity to expand overseas trade. Over the past few years the old communist regimes in the eastern bloc have been broken up. The advent of enterprise economies in those countries has opened a fantastic opportunity for British industry, and British companies have an opportunity to export there.

Although the Soviet Union is not one of the world's great economic powers, when we consider its mineral resources, population and geographical size, within the next 30 years it must become one of the world's major industrial powers. Britain has an opportunity to take advantage of that market.

I urge the Government to think carefully about upgrading the Export Credits Guarantee Department facilities for the Soviet Union. A company in Manchester —Doctus plc—has negotiated a £2·6 billion deal with the Soviet Union. Timber will be imported into Europe and sold worldwide and in return the Soviet Union, through a joint venture fund, will buy technological equipment, computers and necessary manufacturing hardward from the west. Those goods can predominantly be British provided that we set up the appropriate arrangements.

The present provision of £240 million of ECGD funds is admirable, but it will not be enough in the long term. The Department of Trade and Industry has an opportunity to help British companies, perhaps through the kind of arrangement that was made—dare I say it? —with Iraq through the ECGD. Under that arrangement a consortium of British banks set up a sum of money which was guaranteed for three months by ECGD. If the national economic bank of the Soviet Union were to be involved in the long term in a similar arrangement, British trade would go to the Soviet Union which might not otherwise have gone there.

I hope that we will see a greater awareness of the need for Britain to export. That is vital, and I commend once more my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton for giving us the opportunity to discuss this subject.

2.20 pm

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) on choosing this subject. It was a stroke of genius.

As my hon. Friend the Minister said, during the 1980s there was a remarkable transformation in this country. During the 1980s, at long last, this country realised that the world did not owe it a living and that, to make progress, it simply had to roll up its sleeves and get on with the job. That was due to the inspiration of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. When firms were closing down and people were losing their jobs, she said, "No amount of protection sill save you or us from the decision that has to be made. We must sell the right goods at the right price, at the right quality, and at the right time. It is as simple as that." That message is now accepted throughout this country. People did not want to hear it at the time. One of my right hon. Friend's greatest achievements was to get that message over to the people.

Our growth in GDP is the highest of any European country, apart from Spain, which is more or less on a par with us. During the 1980s, total investment in this country was higher than in any other European country. The profitability of our manufacturing and industrial companies has gone up four times. During the latter part of the 1970s, when the Labour Government were in power, profit was a dirty word. Profiteering was a bad thing. People were condemned for making profits. But profits bring investment into the country, encouraging our people to invest here rather than abroad, and produce good things for the people who work in our companies.

Rewards have been spread. The take-home pay of the average man with two children went up by one third during the 1980s—a remarkable achievement. The main complaint in my constituency and in the north of England is that the roads are chock-a-block—they are full of cars. My constituency is on a flight path to Manchester airport. Many of the aeroplanes bring people home from Majorca, Greece, the Canary Islands or further afield, and a very good thing, too.

Ms. Quin: The hon. Gentleman has waxed lyrical about the progress that has been achieved over the past 10 years. Will he explain why there is such a huge trade deficit and the fact that our annual average rate from 1979-80 was lower than in any other EEC country?

Mr. Favell: There is a trade gap. As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said on many occasions, the reason for the trade gap is simply that demand has outstripped supply. That is admitted by the Government. We are spending more as a nation than we ever dreamed would be available to us. People are a lot better off. The working man has one third more to spend than he did 10 years ago. Unfortunately, our supply side has not grown as fast as the availability of money to buy goods. It is as simple as that.

We must look at the trend—it is good news. During the three months to April exports were 11 per cent. higher than they were in the same three months last year—that is, in volume terms—whereas imports were only 3 per cent. higher. During 1989 exports increased by 11·5 per cent. —the highest annual growth for 16 years. When the Opposition were saying that the country was on its knees, we were exporting more and at a faster rate than at any time for 16 years. That is very good news.

[Mr. Favell]

Of course, it is taking time to turn the country round. When the Government came to power in 1979, we were a joke. We were the sick man of Europe. Whenever one went abroad, people said, "What has happened to your once great country? What are you going to do about it?" The country did something about it—it elected a Conservative Government. We have had a Conservative Government throughout the 1980s and there has been the most extraordinary transformation. Nowhere is that more evident than in my constituency of Stockport in the north-west. Simon Engineering has a small head office in my constituency, but it employs 16,000 people worldwide, carrying British technological expertise and engineering into every country, including China, Russia, Africa and America.

British Aerospace is another large employer in Stockport. For the very first time a civil airliner—the brand new advanced turbo prop aircraft—is being produced there and is selling all over the world. The Opposition say that we are not technologically advanced, but what about our aerospace industry? We are selling aeroplanes all over the world. British Aerospace is acknowledged as one of the finest aircraft manufacturers anywhere.

About 90 per cent. of the bowler hats throughout the world are made by Christy in Stockport. It is said that we in Stockport can tell when the Japanese Government are about to change because we get an order for top hats.

None of that has come about because of grants or subsidies—there are no grants in Stockport. It has happened simply because people have rolled up their sleeves and worked together as a team. The chamber of commerce has worked with the schools, the college and the work force. We have encouraged new businesses through the Stockport Business Venture. We are a northern industrial town—like Liverpool, we are on the Mersey and we often hear about the problems of Liverpool—but we have 4 per cent. unemployment. The problem now is to find more skilled people for Stockport. It is a wonderful town—and it is wonderful because it listened to the Prime Minister's message in 1979 when she said, "The world does not owe you a living. Roll up your sleeves, get on with the job and prosperity will come to you." Prosperity has come to us and, if that message is understood, it will spread throughout the country.

2.27 pm

Mr. Stevens: With the leave of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, I should like to reply to the debate. First, I thank my hon. Friend the Minister for giving his time today to answer my debate. In addition to thanking all my right hon. and hon. Friends who have been present, I thank Opposition Members for their attendance, especially the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) who has been present throughout the debate and who made some interesting points.

The hon. Lady referred to Russia and to our export performance there. One article in a newspaper only this week was headed:

"Slow payers spoil fun of Kiev fair".

That is a problem in Russia at the moment, which we hope is temporary. However, there was also the good news that John Brown, the engineering division of Trafalgar House, has decided to take on a large project in Russia. There was also news about ICI and Rank Xerox, which showed that although there may be reservations, some major British companies are keen to move into Russia.

Inward investment has made a great difference in the past few years. Last year 304 companies came to this country and I am pleased that 86 of them came to the west midlands. They join companies such as Peugeot, which is located just beyond my constituency, and which has made a considerable difference to the engineering industry in the Coventry area. The success of Jaguar has almost renewed it as a car manufacturing area.

Hon. Members have spoken of our trade balances. For example, we have a bad trade balance with Japan, with a deficit of £1·4 billion last year. However, encouragingly, that was 9 per cent., less than the previous year. Even in that, there is improvement. Every hon. Member who has spoken has stressed the importance of exports for our economy and our people. Success in exports depends on our ability right across the board to train people and develop our economy.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Orders of the Day

Private Members' Bills

SEXUAL OFFENCES BILL

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question —[11 May]—That the Bill be now read the Third time.

Hon. Members: Object.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Debate to be resumed what day? No day named.

MARRIAGE (REGISTRATION OF BUILDINGS) BILL

Not amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Motion made and Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 56 (Third Reading), and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

HARBOURS, DOCKS AND PIERS CLAUSES ACT 1847 (AMENDMENT) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 6 July.

PLANNING BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Bill not printed. Second Reading what day? No day named.

TRADE UNION ACT 1984 (AMENDMENT) BILL *[LORDS]*

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

RAOUL WALLENBERG (MEMORIAL) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Second Reading what day? No day named.

CHLOROFLUOROCARBONS (CONTROL) BILL *[LORDS]*

Order for Second Reading read.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consideration what day?

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): With the permission of the Member in charge of the Bill, now.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

Mr. Hughes: May I raise a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Madam Deputy Speaker: In a moment.

ABOLITION OF DEER HUNTING BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday next.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No, I shall first take the point of order from the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes).

Mr. Simon Hughes: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I wrote to the Secretary of State on Tuesday asking for an explanation of the Government's objection to the Chlorofluorocarbons (Control) Bill *[Lords]*, to be given by today. He has been telephoned three times. There is a conference going on just over the river on the Montreal protocol, which deals with this issue. Is there anything that you can do, Madam Deputy Speaker, to facilitate an answer? A negative answer is better than none, but a Government who say that they are in favour of the ban but who block a Bill like this are a Government whose policies are all over the place.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman will know that that is not a matter for me. However, as he has raised it, I am sure that those on the Treasury Bench have heard it.

Mr. Corbyn: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. In objecting to the Abolition of Deer Hunting Bill, would not it have been right for the hon. Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) to have informed the House that he is chairman of the British Field Sports Society? Should he not have declared that interest in blocking this Bill, which is designed to prohibit cruelty to deer through hunting with hounds?

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is a somewhat remote connection and I would not necessarily request that an hon. Member declare an interest at that stage.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is not usual for hon. Members to declare their interests when objecting to Bills at this stage. I do not know what interest the hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) had in objecting to the Sexual Offences Bill, but none was declared at the time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: We should now proceed with the business.

PROCEDURE (FUTURE TAXATION) (No. 2)

Resolved,

That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the practice of the House relating to the matters which may be included in Finance Bills, any Finance Bill of the present Session may contain the following provisions taking effect in a future year—

(a) provisions relating to building societies, deposit-takers and investors;

(b) provision amending section 663 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

WAYS AND MEANS

Resolved,

Gifts to charity

That provision may be made about gifts to charity.

Paired shares

That provision may be made in relation to paired shares.

—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Monday 25th June, the Motions in the name of Mr. Neil Kinnock relating to Police may be proceeded with, though opposed, for three hours after the first of them has been entered upon; and, if proceedings on the first Motion have not been previously disposed of, Mr. Speaker shall, at the expiration of that period, put any Questions necessary to dispose of them; and no further such Motion shall then be made.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS (JOINT COMMITTEE)

Ordered,

That Mr. Timothy Kirkhope be discharged from the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments and Mr. Patrick Thompson be added to the Committee.

[Mr. Garel-Jones, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]

Electoral Registration

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

2.34 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I wish to discuss electoral registration in the United Kingdom. I shall outline the matters that I intend to cover in case I do not have time to deal with all of them adequately. First, I wish to talk about the poll tax and the impact that it has had on the electoral register. It was clear that the poll tax would have an impact in principle, because it would upset the electoral register, and it has also had an impact in practice. I shall give some details to show how the universal franchise has been undermined.

The second area that I intend to cover is the legislation on expatriate votes which is entirely undemocratic in principle and wide open to fraud and manipulation in practice. The third area is expenditure on encouraging and ensuring full electoral registration. Such expenditure is inadequate and insignificant in the United Kingdom. It is a disgrace in a country which claims to be a democracy.

Fourthly, I shall talk about the wide shortcomings and frauds in the electoral system and their impact on general and local elections and on boundary reviews. Finally, I shall mention courses of action which must be taken to tackle the serious problems.

I have raised this matter on many occasions. I have raised this aspect of the poll tax legislation many times since the Second Reading of the Local Government Finance Bill on 16 and 17 December 1987. On many other occasions I have raised the matter with the Government, the Leader of the House, the Prime Minister and the Home Office. I have raised it within the Labour party and the parliamentary Labour party. Yesterday I had a half-hour meeting with the Leader of the Opposition about this serious issue.

Much of my campaigning activity and my writings in opposition to the poll tax were associated with the effect on electoral registration. In today's *Morning Star* there is an article entitled "Franchise Farce" which explains some of the points that I shall make.

From the Government's much-vaunted principle—which they claim is a democratic principle—of accountability arises a great problem with the poll tax legislation. The principle of accountability means that almost identical criteria are used in compiling the poll tax register as in compiling the electoral register. The two are interlinked. The poll tax in particular has an adverse impact on electoral registration and leads to the loss of many people from the register. Anyone could see that that would happen.

Those exempted from appearing on either the electoral or the poll tax register are visiting members of overseas forces, diplomats, prisoners, tramps and vagrants, and the severely mentally handicapped. However, the exemption of severely mentally handicapped people from poll tax registration has nothing to do with financial problems. The severely physically handicapped are not excluded from paying the tax, as they qualify for inclusion on the electoral register. There are some areas of division between the two registers, but they are small in comparison with the considerable overlaps.

Some of the categories excluded from the poll tax register were a result of amendments during later stages of

discussion on the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Monks and nuns were granted exemption at some stage, on the grounds that they have taken vows of poverty. That would seem to be a good argument for saying that people who have had poverty thrust upon them by the Government should also be excluded. But, that is not an argument that the Government accept. Some extra categories of mentally handicapped people who may appear on the electoral register have been exempted from the poll tax, although the definition of that category is not yet clear.

The only people who are excluded from paying the poll tax but appear on the electoral register are those who are in full-time education up to the age of 20 who attend colleges, reside at home and are not students in receipt of a grant, and also retired people who live in hostels or similar groups. Otherwise, there is more than a 90 per cent. overlap between the two registers.

People who in desperation seek to avoid paying the poll tax may not register for it, and may avoid inclusion in the electoral register. Whatever is done about the poll tax, that will remain true. If the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) gets his way and we have graduated poll tax payments, the same principle will operate. What might occur is that people who pay high poll tax will get out of that by selling their enfranchisement rights, as happened in the 14th century when a new type of poll tax was introduced after the introduction of a flat-rate tax. The people who did not pay then were the people at the top, not people at the bottom.

The problem is serious in principle and in practice. What happens in practice? The computer links between the poll tax and the electoral registers—and with other registers—are checked out. If a poll tax registrar—who is often also the electoral registrar for an area—does not interlink on the two registers, the district auditor will pressurise him to do so. Otherwise the registrar is not considered to be taking sufficient action to raise funds through the operation of the poll tax.

It is not merely the general principle that convinces us that there is a problem with the registers. Statistical evidence, too, points in that direction.

I shall quote some selected instances, and then talk more generally. In Glasgow in 1988, 1989 and 1990 35,000 people were lost from the electoral register—about 6 per cent. That has happened in other Scottish cities. Of course, other factors could be at work—there could be some movement out of the cities—but the figure seems to be too high to be accounted for by such factors.

In Liverpool, 35,000 people disappeared off the electoral register in 1989. The numbers have recovered slightly in the past year and 10,000 people have been replaced on the register because, if they can be found for poll tax purposes, they can be put on the electoral register. However, over a period of two years that is a shortfall of 7·5 per cent.

In Finchley in 1989-90, about 8·5 per cent. of people have disappeared off the electoral register. I sent a letter to the Prime Minister, inviting her to attend the debate, as I am mentioning her constituency. I am interested to know who or what is fiddling the franchise in Finchley, so I extended the normal parliamentary courtesy, but the right hon. Lady has not managed to arrive yet. But we live in hope.

The specific instances that I have quoted could be argued with. One can always find selective instances to back up a particular case. However, general arguments begin to be of much more significance, and some of them have been set out in early-day motion 892, which I tabled. Statistics from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys show that 600,000 people, or more, are missing from the electoral registers in Scotland, England and Wales. The only reasonable assumption can be that the bulk of that loss is caused by poll tax factors. The electoral register in Northern Ireland is in a healthy state; there has been none of the decline that we have seen in England, Wales and Scotland. The difference between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom is that there is no poll tax in Northern Ireland.

Until 1987, the franchise in England was always closely related to the estimated number of people over 18 in the relevant year. If people are doing their jobs correctly in compiling census information and supplying information for the electoral register, we should expect a rough-and-ready fit; in fact, the electoral register was always linked to 99·9 per cent. or more of the appropriate population. However, there has been a decline of 1·5 per cent. between 1987 and 1990, and that involves a significant number of people.

If we examine the list of attainers—those who have come on to the electoral register for the first time—we discover that since 1986 there has been a 3·3 per cent. fall. There is a fear that in some families the person who is missing from the electoral register is the person who was not on the previous register. That person has been excluded in a desperate attempt to save money in the household. In Wales, the drop has not been so dramatic —probably because poll tax in Wales is lower than it is in England—but the figure is 1 per cent. less since 1986. In the previous period, the figure was always above 100·1 per cent. of the relevant population. The number of attainers has fallen by 5 per cent.

In Scotland, the figure is more serious: the drop overall is 1·7 per cent. and the drop in the number of attainers is 5 per cent. During the same period in Northern Ireland, there has been a 0·6 per cent. increase in the franchise, although it is not easy for Northern Ireland to maintain its population, as people move from depressed areas to find work elsewhere. The number of attainers has increased by 18 per cent.

The statistics show a worrying position. It seems that about 600,000 people are missing from the electoral register. Before the poll tax, elections were guaranteed to be free, and operated on a universal franchise. A 1275 Statute of Westminster guaranteed free elections; the Representation of the People Act 1985 drew together previous representation legislation, and was based on a list of guarantees to extend the franchise—first to all men, and then to all women—that had been fought for since 1832. Now, certain practices have undermined the operation of those laws. It may even be that the Representation of the People Act 1985 has been altered and amended within the law, because an Act cannot bind later legislation. Even if nothing is mentioned in the schedules or the amendments about changing earlier legislation, the courts may interpret that it has been changed. That is why I am not paying my poll tax, and why I am keen to challenge the matter in the courts. I would like the opportunity to find out whether the law has been changed and the Act has been undermined. That would be most serious.

A number of hon. Members, including my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), fought vigorously

[Mr. Harry Barnes]

in the House to oppose the Representation of the Peoples Act 1989. That is an unprincipled piece of legislation: it is an open attack on the franchise, whereas the poll tax is a hidden attack. It gives the franchise to people overseas who left this country up to 20 years ago, who are not part of our society, are not concerned with services and provisions here and who do not pay any poll tax—or indeed any other taxes—in this country. They operate on entirely different principles. Furthermore, it is a voluntary franchise in addition to what is supposed to be a compulsory franchise, but the compulsory franchise has been undermined. That does not make sense. That is why I made three speeches against that legislation and voted against it six times. On five occasions I acted as teller, stepping down only for my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), who had tabled a specific amendment.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) on his sustained efforts, not only in regard to the fall-off in electoral registration, which he and I believe is due almost entirely to the introduction of the poll tax. I also want to thank him for raising the scandalous business of the Government introducing a Bill that allows people who have been away from the country for 20 years and who have gone to South Africa or any other part of the world to vote in Britain without paying taxes, and that allows young lads and lasses who left the country at four or five years of age to choose almost willy-nilly the constituency in which they vote. It is a serious indictment of the Government that they have legislated to allow people who have emigrated to South Africa and elsewhere to vote in marginal constituencies because they were not on an electoral register when they left the country. My hon. Friend is on to a serious matter and the Home Office must give an assurance that every single overseas voter is registered to vote in the constituency where his family originally resided, otherwise we shall be challenging the results in some marginal constituencies. Once again I thank my hon. Friend for the wonderful job that he has done.

Mr. Barnes: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments. He has illustrated further problems associated with that legislation.

The legislation is not the only cause for concern. Another issue should bother everyone, whether they supported or opposed the original legislation. It arises in comments that have been made in several newspapers, initially in the *Morning Star* and then in *The Independent*.

On 10 June Stephen Castle, the political correspondent of *The Independent*, wrote:

"Tory expatriates have been encouraged to break British election regulations by registering in marginal constituencies where they have no right to vote. Guests at a lunch in Nice last month were told by Patrick Middleton, an unpaid adviser to the local branch of Conservatives Abroad, that they could bypass regulations without detection. Conservatives Abroad is co-ordinating efforts to register Tory sympathisers".

The article continues:

"One of those present at the lunch . . . was John Priestman, a retired diplomat and former private secretary to Sir Anthony Eden, who described the speech as, 'an open invitation to cheat'.".

That issue was also mentioned in Private Eye. The hon. Member for Dorset, West (Sir J. Spicer) wrote to *Private Eye* under the name Sir James Spencer attacking Backbiter, who wrote the original article, and stating:

"His suggestion that there is a fraudulent plan to register all expatriate voters in marginal seats is not only ludicrous, it is impossible. Electoral Registration Officers have to carry out meticulous steps to satisfy themselves that the overseas applicants have lived in their constituencies within the previous 20 years."

Unfortunately, the hon. Member for Dorset, West was incorrect because meticulous steps do not have to be taken, according to a Home Office circular LXN/89 1/89/4 sent out to electoral registration officers. The circular sets out the conditions in which the registration of overseas electors should operate and suggests that the British Library should be contacted to find electoral registers. It states:

"In some cases copies of old registers may not be available locally and the only available source may be the Electoral Registers Room at the British Library. They would prefer to receive enquiries in writing and will normally reply in the same way . . . Old registers are not held on site."

It is not easy to obtain information. The circular continues:

"You will appreciate that the British Library can handle only a certain number of inquiries without becoming swamped."

The clear impression that is given is: do not put pressure on the British Library and accept what is taking place.

The circular gets worse. "'Young' applicants"—those who were not 18 when they left Britain and who were mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover—"are required to send with their first application a photocopy of their full birth certificate."

Under what other legislation on immigration or anything else is a photocopy of a birth certificate adequate? A photocopy can be fiddled.

The circular deals with people who have guardians of a different name:

"The relationship with a guardian is difficult to establish conclusively . . . The form gives as an example of a reason the statement 'the person named above adopted me and became my guardian in (year)'. In many cases such a statement could, in theory, be checked but we do not suggest that you should do so; we suggest rather, that the statement that a named person is a named guardian might be taken at face value."

If time permitted, I could give other examples of things being taken at face value rather than a check being made. The circular is disgraceful and is not in line with the legislation. The Home Office should carefully consider that.

My next point is about expenditure on encouraging people to enfranchise. In 1988-89, £322,000 was spent on that, 0·3 per cent. of the total Government publicity budget. It is peanuts. They are spending £760,000—twice as much—to inform people overseas of their right to vote in Britain. In addition, unlimited amounts can be spent by the Tory party and its friends overseas on encouraging people overseas to vote.

In 1989, Abbey National held a ballot on it becoming a public limited company. To make people aware of their rights to vote, it spent £6 million—20 times as much as the Government spent on electoral registration.

Mr. David Evans (Welwyn Hatfield): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Barnes: I apologise, but I do not have time.

The consequences are serious for future election results. The legislation manipulates future election results and has

serious effects on boundaries. The poll tax has caused some people to remove their names from the electoral roll in some areas, but expatriates have been fiddled on to——

Mr. Evans: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the hon. Gentleman allow the Minister to apply?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): It is usual, in an Adjournment debate when an hon. Member raises issues and asks questions, for the Minister to have an opportunity to respond.

Mr. Barnes: I am sorry to have taken so long, but it is a wide issue. The fewer interruptions I have—not your interruptions, Madam Deputy Speaker—the sooner I shall finish.

First, the poll tax and the electoral register should be separated. If the Government wish to know how to do so, they should read my Re-enfranchisement of the People Bill. Secondly, they should withdraw the Home Office circular on expatriate votes and produce a tougher measure. Thirdly, they should provide funds to the British Library so that it can do a proper job. Fourthly, they should set up an electoral fraud squad to ensure that the Tory party overseas is not involved in this massive manipulation. Fifthly, they should switch advertising expenditure from privatisation and other useless activities to electoral registration. Sixthly, they should set up an independent commission to consider the state of the franchise in this country. Above all, they should repeal the poll tax and the expatriate vote legislation and substitute democratic legislation. As a first step towards achieving that goal—this might be the only point on which the Minister has an opportunity to speak—I suggest that we should have a full debate in the House, rather than a debate at the dog end of the week, when few hon. Members are here.

2.59 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peter Lloyd): I congratulate the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Ms. Barnes) on securing this debate. He took up a large section of it. He has had a long interest in this subject. We have exchanged correspondence with him and I have taken down a mass of notes and points. I shall not be able to deal with them all. If the Opposition would like to use an Opposition Day to debate these matters, I should be delighted to respond more fully then.

The first concerns of the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East were with the community charge.

Mr. Skinner: Deal with fraud first.

Mr. Lloyd: For once, I shall take the hon. Gentleman's advice. Absolutely no fraud is involved. The Representation of the People Act 1989 properly extended to British citizens living overseas who were last resident in the United Kingdom within a period of 20 years the right to vote in our elections, bringing us into line with most other modern democratic countries.

Mr. Skinner: They do not pay tax.

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman shouts, "They do not pay tax." Much of the speech of the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East was based on his belief—which was wrong—that the right to vote in elections was dependent on paying the community charge. If the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) objects to voters abroad who do not pay tax being able to vote, why on earth should the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East object to voters in this country being required to pay tax? They are not required to pay tax because they are voters; they are required to do so because they are citizens in receipt of services from their local authorities.

Community charge officers look at the electoral register to ensure that their registers are as fully up to date as possible. By exactly the same token, electoral registration officers can look—we encourage them to do so—at the community charge register, which is likely to be far more up to date, to see whether there are people who have not been registered for voting and they follow that up. That is the guidance that we give local authorities. The existence of the community charge and the community charge register will ensure in the long run that the electoral registers are more, not less, up to date. I hope that the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East will express some satisfaction at the advice that we give electoral registration officers to use community charge registers. His prime concern may be that people who are elegible to vote should be on the electoral register. Our advice will help to achieve that.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the constituency of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and noted that the electorate had decreased. There are various reasons why the numbers on an electoral register may change. They include the techniques that the local electoral registration officer uses to build up the register. Many carry the names on one year's register on to the next. In Barnet, the electoral register officer has ceased that practice. One would expect that that would produce a substantial change, and it appears to have done so in that constituency. The names of those who were not entitled to be on the register were removed. As Barnet has more than an average number of elderly electors, there are likely to be on the register the names of people who have moved or died.

Mr. Harry Barnes *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman shakes his head. How can he explain the increase in the size of the electoral registers in the constituency of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary and my constituency? According to the hon. Gentleman's arguments, the numbers should have decreased, but they have not.

The hon. Gentleman referred to advertising. Like him, we are concerned that those who are eligible to be on the register——

The motion having been made after half-past Two o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, Madam Deputy Speaker *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at four minutes past Three o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 11 June 1990

ENVIRONMENT

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Stockton, North, *Official Report*, 9 May, column *159*, on the disposal of toxic wastes at Atomic Energy Association technology sites, he will make a statement on the specific material provisions for the management and disposal of toxic wastes; and what financial resources have been committed to the development and execution of the programme.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It is the UKAEA policy to minimise toxic waste arising so far as is reasonably practicable and to dispose of any arisings in accordance with legal authorisations. Costs incurred by the UKAEA are part of the normal operating costs of each site.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Quentin Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the net incremental cost of exempting from the community charge *(a)* all persons over the age of 70 years and *(b)* all persons above the age of 75 years, taking into account the number of such persons already receiving rebate, transitional relief or exemption from the charge by reason of residence in registered residential or nursing homes or others.

Mr. Chope: I estimate the additional cost of exempting persons over the age of 70 from the community charge would be about £950 million whilst exempting persons over 75 would be about £600 million. Both figures are in addition to reductions already received in respect of transitional relief and community charge benefit.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will produce in tabular form for each district council in England and Wales the percentage figure of non-payment of the community charge.

Mr. Chope: This information is not available.

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his oral reply of 23 May to the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) *Official Report*, column 280, when he expects to be in a position to reply to the letters of the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills of 19 March and 10 May concerning proposals by Walsall councillors to direct resources and services away from wards on the basis of how they vote.

Mr. Chope: I have now written to the hon. Member.

Housing, Basildon

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the average value of a Basildon new town corporation three-bedroomed house;

(2) what is the average length of tenancy in a three-bedroomed Basildon new town corporation home.

Mr. Chope: The information is not collected in the form requested. The Commission for the New Towns in Basildon estimates the open market value of a typical three-bedroomed house to be £57,000, and the average length of tenancy to be 18 years.

Druridge Bay

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the Northumberland wildlife trust and others regarding sand extraction at Druridge bay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I have received no representations from the Northumberland wildlife trust. Representations have been received from the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) and Councillor K. L. P. Flaherty of Northumberland county council that the Secretary of State use his powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 to revoke the planning permissions for sand extraction. However, the county council has the necessary powers themselves under the 1971 Act to review mineral working sites in their area and to revoke or modify planning permissions as they consider necessary.

Environmental Assessment Directive

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to whom his Department has let the contract for monitoring the implementation of the environmental assessment directive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The contract for the research project on "Monitoring Environmental Assessment and Planning" was let to the EIA centre of the university of Manchester's department of planning and landscape on 3 May 1990.

Nature Conservation

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will obtain a copy of "Economics of the Environment: the Conservationists' Response to the Pearce Report", produced by the British Association of Nature Conservationists for his departmental library.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My Department already has a copy of this publication and I understand that a second is on order.

Marine Pollution

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what plans he has to reduce the imput of dichloros into the marine environment, in accordance with its red list status;

(2) what records he has of the inputs of dichloros into the marine environment for each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It is estimated that around 15 tonnes of dichloros were input to United Kingdom coastal waters in 1989; figures are not available for earlier years. At the recent North sea conference, Ministers agreed that inputs of dichloros into the North sea should be reduced by the order of 50 per cent. by 1995. The Government intend that such a reduction should be achieved for inputs to all seas around the United Kingdom.

Recycling

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to whom his Department has let the contract for the removal, sorting and recycling of waste paper and other waste from the Palace of Westminster; how long they have had the contract; and what guarantees have been written into the contract to ensure that no paper set aside for recycling ends up in landfill.

Mr. Chope: Following competitive tendering a contract for the disposal of waste from the Palace of Westminster was let to the city of Westminster cleansing department on 1 November 1988 for three years. The paper is collected free of charge as salvage so it is in the contractor's own interest to ensure that it is used to the greatest economic advantage.

Commission for Local Administration

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much the service of the Commission for Local Administration in England costs; and what steps have been taken in recent years to measure the efficiency of the service.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The grant to the Commission for Local Administration in England for 1990-91 will be £3,834,119. Management consultants carried out a study of the working of the commission in 1989.

Planning Application, Brentwood

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is considering calling in planning application No. BRW/772/89 Wash road, new industrial area, Brentwood.

Mr. Moynihan: Brentwood district council has been directed not to grant permission for this application without the consent of the Secretary of State. As the application affects land in the green belt, the district council have decided to advertise and consider the application formally when they publish their draft district-wide local plan for public consultation. At that stage, we will consider whether or not the application should be called in.

Beaches

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to require the water companies to clean up the beaches which do not meet the safety standards set by the European Community within a stated time limit.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My right hon. Friend announced on 5 March at column 452 that in general all municipal sewage should receive secondary treatment, but that primary treatment would be more appropriate for discharges to sea where it can be shown that this does not adversely affect the environment. The estimated cost of this new programme is around £1·5 billion. It will be fully integrated with the £1·4 billion programme announced last year to improve bathing water quality and it will be completed as soon as practicable. Discussions with the National Rivers Authority, the Office of Water Services and the sewage undertakers are taking place to work out the arrangements for implementing this policy.

Reservoir Pollution

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what research he has commissioned following human poisoning and pollution by blue-green algae of reservoirs; and what action he proposes to take to prevent a similar occurence this summer.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My Department has not commissioned any research following the occurrence of toxic algae in reservoirs and lakes. However, the National Rivers Authority has just announced a monitoring campaign to detect the occurence of potentially toxic blue-green algae at some 500 sites concentrating on those which are used regularly for water sports and to which the public has ready access. The NRA has at the same time issued a leaflet which incorporates advice from the Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food about the effect of toxic algae on humans and health. There is no evidence that treated water supplied from reservoirs with algal blooms is detrimental to public health.

Environmental Conferences

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the future environmental conferences, seminars and meetings which Ministers or officials in his Department will be attending in the next four months and the date of each.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Over the next four months Ministers are to attend the following environmental conferences, seminars and meetings:

June	
7–8	EC Environment Council (Luxembourg)
8	British Steel Tin Plate Environment Programme
12	92nd Annual Waste Management Conference
16	EC/Eastern Europe/EFTA Environment Meeting (Dublin)
19	National Council for Voluntary Organisations White Paper Seminar
20–24	Opening Green Show (Birmingham)
20–29	Second meeting of Montreal Protocol Parties (London)
21	International Building Bureau Conference on Energy Efficient Buildings (London)
21	Mineral Industry Research Organisation Conference on Mineral Wastes
24	Sevenoaks Summer Festival—Environmental Question Time
25	East Midlands Recycling City Seminar
26	Association of Municipal Engineers Annual Conference
27	Food, Industry and the Environment Conference
29	Fourth Environmental Education Conference for Secondary Schools
July	
3	United Kingdom Environmental Law Association Conference on the Protection of the Rural Environment
4	Royal Society for the Arts Conference on The Future of the Countryside
9–10	European Parliament (Strasbourg)
10	Department of Trade and Industry Seminar on Waste
11–12	Meeting with senior officials at the OECD (Paris)
17	Engineers and the Environment Conference
August	
1–3	Session of UNEP Governing Council (Nairobi)
September	
10	Institution of Environmental Health Officers Congress
12	Landcape Conference on Landscape Design (Durham)
13	Business in the Environment Conference

18 UNEP Seminar on Clean Technology
20 International Conference on Acid Deposition and Implications
21 Royal Institute of Public Administration Conference on Greening the Administration
25 National Association of Waste Disposal Contractors Annual Conference

October
4 EC Environment Council (Luxembourg)
4 Polite Society Conference on Noise
5 Somerset County Council Environmental Conference

Officials will be attending all of these meetings and many more.

Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth will be sent a reply to his letter of 26 March concerning Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Morgan of Kenilworth.

Mr. Chope: I replied to my hon. Friend's letter on 7 June.

Regional Planning

Sir David Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the policy planning guidance note on structure plans and regional planning guidance.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, entitled "Regional Planning Guidance, Structure Plans and the Content of Development Plans", was published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office on 25 May. I shall send my hon. Friend a copy.

Oil Pollution, South Devon

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether any oil pollution still remains on the south Devon coastline following the holing of the supertanker Rosebay.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I understand from reports received from the South Hams district council, which, as the affected local authority in Devon, has the responsibility for dealing with oil pollution once it is washed ashore, that all holiday beaches in their area are clear.

The local authority is continuing to monitor beaches but there are no reports of further oil landing apart from a small quantity sighted at Hope Cove and Thurleston over the weekend of 2-3 June. There is still some oily scum around the more isolated rocky coves and some remaining bagged oily waste will be cleared from Gull and Causewell coves this week.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to find suitable sites for the long-term storage and ultimate dumping of polluted sand and seaweed scraped off the beaches of the south Devon coastline; and if he will make a statement as to progress to date and the proposed timetable.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The responsibility for identifying sites for the storage and disposal of polluted sand and seaweed lies with Devon county council as the relevant waste disposal authority.

I understand from the Department of Transport's marine pollution control unit, which set up a joint response centre with the local authorities involved in the clean-up operations following the incident, that the county council are currently considering, on the basis of MPCU advice, various options for the treatment and disposal of the oily waste collected.

These options include: assisting the natural degradation of the oil by bacterial treatment prior to disposal to a registered landfill site; stabilising the material to prevent further leaching of oil by treatment with quicklime and then, either disposal to landfill or use of the stabilised waste as a bedding for road building or car park construction.

The timetable will be set by the method eventually chosen and the wish of the county council to avoid any adverse traffic effects that might be caused during the busy summer season by the movement of the mass of collected material.

This material amounts to approximately 1,500 cubic metres and is currently being held in temporary lined holding sites.

Hunterprint

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the company Hunterprint had, or has outstanding, any printing contracts for work associated with the privatisation of the water industry.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Hunterprint was employed last year as sub-contractors to Burrups for the printing of water privatisation documents. There are no outstanding contracts with the company.

Hydrofluorocarbons

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department is to propose any controls on HFCs for non-essential usage.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No.

Methyl Chloroform

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his Department's policy on phasing out the use of methyl chloroform; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It is the Government's aim ultimately to phase out all ozone depleting substances. In response to a United Kingdom initiative, the EC Environment Council have agreed to press for a 50 per cent. cut in methyl chloroform production and consumption by the year 2000 in the renegotiation of the Montreal Protocol.

Urban Organisation

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what support Her Majesty's Government are giving to the European Community proposals on the protection of people living in big European cities against health and environmental hazards produced by bad urban organisation.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* I have not seen the proposals described although I understand that

the European Commission is publishing a Green Paper on the urban environment. The Green Paper will be the subject of consultation with member states and we will give it careful consideration.

Wildlife Protection

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list his responsibilities in relation to Her Majesty's Government's responsibilities and policies on the worldwide protection of wildlife.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Formal responsibility for the conclusion of all international agreements and conventions rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Within the context of collective Government responsibility, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment implements our obligations under the Washington convention on international trade in endangered species (CITES), the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance, the Bonn convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals and the convention for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. He also has responsibility for formulating the United Kingdom's contribution to the world-wide development of those conventions.

ENERGY

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the annual load factor achieved by *(a)* the Central Electricity Generating Board nuclear power stations and *(b)* the South of Scotland electricity board nuclear power stations for each month within the last financial year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: This is an operational matter for Nuclear Electric plc and Scottish Nuclear Limited.

Gas Turbine Electricity, Wales

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has received for the private generation of electrictity by gas turbines by DREH Resources of Milton Keynes in Clwyd and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: On 24 May 1990 Deeside Power Development Company Ltd., in which I understand that DREH resources is a partner, notified my Department, pursuant to regulation 6(1) of the Electricity and Pipe-line Works (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1990, of its intention to make an application for the Secretary of State's consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct a 450 MW combined cycle gas turbine power station at Shotton in Clwyd and to submit an environmental statement with its application.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the impact upon the Merseyside and North-Western electricity board of proposals to construct a gas turbine electricity station in Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tony Baldry: This is a matter for MANWEB plc.

Connah's Quay Power Station

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the future of Connah's Quay power station; and what is the estimated value of Connah's Quay power station and its surrounding land.

Mr. Baldry: Decisions on the future of power station sites are a matter for the day-to-day management of the generating company concerned. The estimated value of a power station is a commercially confidential matter.

Radiation and Nuclear Waste

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any plans to establish a scheme to assist redundant or former nuclear scientists of the Atomic Energy Authority and Nuclear Electric to provide technical assistance to foreign nuclear generators in radiation and nuclear waste management under article IV of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Baldry: No, though the United Kingdom makes every effort to meet its obligations under the terms of article IV of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Plutonium

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many permanent withdrawals from safeguards of plutonium under article 14 of the 1978 tripartite safeguards agreement between the United Kingdom, Euratom and the International Atomic Energy Agency, have been made; what were the quantities involved; and what were their isotopic compositions.

Mr. Baldry: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) on 21 May 1990 at column *12*.

Tritium

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what safeguards measures exist in the United Kingdom to ensure detection of the diversion of tritium from peaceful to non-peaceful applications.

Mr. Baldry: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer) to the hon. Member for Meirionydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas), *Official Report*, 30 November 1989, columns *400-1*.

Hunterprint

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether the company Hunterprint had any printing contracts for work associated with the privatisation of the gas industry or has any outstanding printing contracts for work associated with the privatisation of the electricity industry.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Hunterprint were involved in printing material used in the flotation of British Gas plc. The question of their participation in the forthcoming privatisation of the electricity industry is a matter subject to commercial negotiation.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

May Inquiry

Mr. John Morris: To ask the Attorney-General if he has any plans to make additional powers available to the May inquiry.

The Attorney-General: No. Sir John May has made no suggestion to me or to the Home Secretary that the effectiveness of his inquiry is being impaired by its non-statutory basis.

PRIME MINISTER

Rockall

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister which Minister is responsible for matters relating to the Isle of Rockall.

The Prime Minister: In terms of the Island of Rockall Act 1972 as read with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Rockall is part of the Western Isles Islands area. It forms part of the Crown Estates. The responsibilities of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State extend to Rockall as to the rest of Scotland.

Rivers, Estuaries and Bays

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list all studies being carried out with money from the United Kingdom Government or European Economic Community funds to provide new crossings, barrages or major environmental schemes in United Kingdom rivers, estuaries or bays, and indicate when each report is expected to be completed.

The Prime Minister: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ivory

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make it her policy not to extend the reservation enabling Hong Kong ivory traders to dispose of their stocks when it expires; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: As my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs stated in his reply of 11 May to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), the six-month reservation will be withdrawn on 18 July 1990. It will not be extended.

Local Enterprise Companies

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Prime Minister whether she has any proposals to extend the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to include the administration of local enterprise companies.

The Prime Minister: I have no plans to do so. Local enterprise companies will be private companies formed under the Companies Acts, and as such are outwith the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, which encompasses Government Departments, public corporations and public bodies whose functions are exercised on behalf of the Crown.

Leaks

Mr. Douglas: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the number of leaks from Departments of State since June 1983 and give details of the steps which have been taken to trace such happenings and the numbers of individuals who have been held accountable.

The Prime Minister: No.

Redistribution of Wealth

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister if it is the intention of the Government to commemorate in some form those who devoted their activities to trying to bring about in the United Kingdom a redistribution of wealth from richer to poorer citizens.

The Prime Minister: No.

Salman Rushdie

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister if it remains the Government's policy that Mr. Rushdie will receive the full protection of the authorities, regardless of any financial and manpower cost, so long as there remains a threat to his life.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Rushdie's protection is a matter for the police, who will take any action that they consider necessary in the circumstances.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his policy in respect of the trend towards increasing foreign control of United Kingdom manufacturing industry.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The Government's general policy is set out in the blue paper on mergers policy, published in 1988.

Our policy towards inward investment by foreigners in the United Kingdom is to welcome it and, broadly speaking, this applies to inward investment by way of acquisition of existing companies as much as to direct inward investment. United Kingdom companies engage in a considerable quantity of overseas investment, including acquisitions of foreign companies, and it is in the interests of the United Kingdom economy that there should be as little official interference as possible in this two-way flow.

For this reason, it is also our policy to try to reduce the barriers to takeover that exist in the European Community. The European Commission brought forward a set of proposals in May to reduce and eliminate barriers within the Community.

Nevertheless, there are instances in which foreign ownership of a United Kingdom company may raise particular concerns, and in such cases the power to make a reference to the MMC is available for use.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Global Warming

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, as a result of the Bergen conference, he has any plans to provide new funding to assist developing countries in their efforts to reduce emissions of global warming gases.

Mrs. Chalker: The issues covered by the Bergen ministerial declaration include assistance to developing countries in the context of global environmental problems. The Government expect that the international community will take this into account in developing a global response to possible climate change. The Government are planning to allocate additional resources to helping developing countries to deal with sources of greenhouse gas emissions such as deforestation and the inefficient use of energy.

Environmental Programmes

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans Her Majesty's Government have to help developing countries with their environmental programmes.

Mrs. Chalker: Our policies are set out in a new booklet, "The Environment and the British Aid Programme", a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

I have arranged for a copy to be sent to my hon. Friend.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Channel Tunnel (Policing)

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an application has been received from Kent county police to enable further police officers to be recruited to police the channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has received an application for 52 posts in 1991-92 for policing the channel tunnel. This will be considered in the coming months with advice from Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary. Seventy police posts have already been approved in connection with the tunnel.

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if any discussions have taken place between the developers of the channel tunnel and his Department over the level of police manpower required to police the tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: No. Under section 14 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 the policing of the tunnel system is a matter for the chief constable of the police force for the county of Kent.

West Midlands Serious Crime Squad

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of West Yorkshire as to whether DCI Matthews was interviewed in connection with the inquiry into the west midlands serious crime squad during his recent visit to this country.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No.

Swansea Prison (Dispute)

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the impact of the dispute at Swansea prison on detention conditions for persons detained by the police in south Wales.

Mr. Mellor: I very much regret that the dispute at Her Majesty's prison Swansea has led to a number of prisoners having to be held in police cells in the area.

The responsibility for the care and conditions of prisoners in police custody rests with the chief officer of police concerned. We recognise that police cells are not designed for long-term detention and that therefore their use for people who ought to be in prison leaves a lot to be desired. I am sure that the police are doing the best that they can in the difficult circumstances under which they are operating.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to try to resolve the current dispute at Swansea prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: A meeting between representatives of local and regional management, and local and national Prison Officers Association was held on Tuesday 5 June. Whilst the actual dispute was not resolved, sufficient good will now exists between the two parties which should enable police cells to be cleared of prisoners by Wednesday 13 June.

It was agreed that local management and POA should meet locally in an attempt to resolve the current difficulties.

Police Manpower

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the number of *(a)* police officers and *(b)* other staff employed by each police force in England and Wales in (i) 1974, (ii) 1979 and (iii) the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information requested for 1974 and 1979 can be found at appendix 1 of the annual report of Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary for 1974 and at Appendix 7 of the annual report for 1979, copies of which can be found in the Library.

The comparable position at the end of 1989 is set out in the table:

At 31 December 1989

Force	*Police*	*Civilians*[1]	*Traffic Wardens*	*Cadets*
Avon and Somerset	3,055	816	145	—
Bedfordshire	1,038	341	32	—
Cambridgeshire	1,190	453	43	—
Cheshire	1,874	503	40	—
Cleveland	1,468	457	31	—
Cumbria	1,152	361	32	—
Derbyshire	1,790	690	80	—
Devon and Cornwall	2,830	914	114	—
Dorset	1,258	487	66	15
Durham	1,357	532	22	—
Dyfed Powys	934	234	21	—
Essex	2,799	986	123	33
Gloucestershire	1,162	337	35	—
Greater Manchester	6,965	2,098	195	—
Gwent	1,000	250	21	9

Force	Police	Civilians[1]	Traffic Wardens	Cadets
Hampshire	3,118	939	85	—
Hertfordshire	1,647	526	79	—
Humberside	1,993	668	68	—
Kent	2,978	962	119	—
Lancashire	3,174	1,077	116	—
Leicestershire	1,748	612	92	—
Lincolnshire	1,185	427	21	—
Merseyside	4,680	1,391	139	—
Norfolk	1,353	386	40	20
Northamptonshire	1,119	366	37	—
Northumbria	3,526	1,157	155	—
North Wales	1,332	423	33	—
North Yorkshire	1,379	436	22	—
Nottinghamshire	2,320	612	74	—
South Wales	3,118	1,082	97	—
South Yorkshire	2,946	869	66	—
Staffordshire	2,172	651	39	68
Suffolk	1,184	419	33	—
Surrey	1,654	506	43	—
Sussex	2,924	875	138	—
Thames Valley	3,645	1,243	150	—
Warwickshire	977	319	23	—
West Mercia	1,974	822	47	—
West Midlands	6,846	2,230	244	32
West Yorkshire	5,217	1,710	193	33
Wiltshire	1,119	435	40	—
City of London	785	304	73	—
Metropolitan	28,176	13,083	1,338	178

[1] Full-time plus part-time on 2:1 basis.

Arms Theft, Kent

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will call for a report from the chief constable of Kent on the circumstances of the burglary of rifles and ammunition from a cadet force armory at Longfield upper school, Dartford, Kent.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. The burglary of rifles and ammunition at Longfield upper school is an operational matter for the Kent police and is already under investigation.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action is being taken to improve the clear-up rates of police forces in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Decisions about the priorities and methods for the investigation of crime are a matter for chief officers in the light of local circumstances. They already seek to target their resources on those crimes which are of most concern to the public. Clear-up rates for the most serious offences, including violence against the person and sexual offences, remain high at 75 per cent. or more. Most crime is against property, where there is a range of practical preventive measures which we can all take to help the police.

Salman Rushdie

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further steps are being taken to ensure that the police and security protection given to Mr. Rushdie is adequate, in view of the further threats to his life.

Mr. Waddington: It would not be sensible to give details of the protection afforded to Mr. Rushdie, but the police will take whatever steps they judge necessary in the light of the threat and any other relevant circumstances.

Police Budgets

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the percentage increase in the budget of each police force in England and Wales in each year since 1974 in *(a)* money and *(b)* real terms; and if he will make a statement on efforts being made by his Department to improve value for money in the police service.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information relating to police force budgets is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office is strongly committed to encouraging better value for money in the police service, in partnership with chief officers and police authorities. The main elements in Home Office activity are:

(1) inspection of forces by HM inspectorate of constabulary: developments include further extension of the matrix of indicators used by the inspectorate to assist the inspection process, the publication of inspection reports and the appointment of a business consultant:
(2) encouragement of a programme of efficiency scrutinies in forces, with 19 scrutinies completed or under way;
(3) through controls on police establishment, encouragement of civilianisation, which has released 4,700 officers for operational duties over the last 7 years, with a further 800 posts due to be civilianised this year;
(4) following a Home Office/Treasury study on police manpower, a programme of work is under way to improve and standardise measures of police workloads, activity and effectiveness;
(5) follow-up action on papers produced by the Audit Commission as part of their current programme of work in the police service, include monitoring by HM inspectorate of action taken by forces.

Electoral Registers

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he takes to ensure that no overseas elector has his name included on an electoral register in circumstances where his name was not previously included on the register for the same electoral division.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: In order to ascertain the eligibility of applicants, electoral registration officers will as a matter of course check old registers, to ensure that potential overseas electors (or, in appropriate cases, a parent or guardian) were included on the register for the constituency within the previous 20 years. Guidance recently issued to registration officers by the Home Office explains which registers should be checked in particular circumstances, and how old registers can be checked when copies are not available locally.

Birmingham Prison (Shortages)

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what shortages of kit at Birmingham prison were discovered as a result of the special stock-taking early in the curent year.

Mr. Mellor: A full check in March showed significant shortages of shirts, pants, socks, shoes and towels against the scales laid down to ensure adequate stocks in use, being laundered and in store. Stocks have since been replenished.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there are adequate stocks of underwear at Birmingham prison to enable each inmate to be given a weekly change of underwear.

Mr. Mellor: Yes.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when, further to the letter of 8 May from Mr. A. H. Chapman of C3 division to the Rev. J. Gilmore, the document publicised by Granada Television was made public and by whom.

Mr. John Patten: The letter to the Rev. Gilmore contained a typographical error. The document to which it referred was a police report and not, as wrongly stated, a public report. A letter correcting the inaccuracy has been sent to the Rev. Gilmore.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has anything further to add to his Department's statement on the Birmingham pub bombings, dated 29 March, that the document publicised by Granada Television was written before the original trial.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that the document in question was in fact written in 1975 after the trial of the six men for the Birmingham pub bombings.

Prisons, South-West

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison spaces in the south-western region need to be replaced or refurbished as a result of recent riots.

Mr. Mellor: A total of 407 cells at Bristol, Dartmoor and Pucklechurch were damaged to such a degree that major refurbishment work will need to be undertaken before they can be brought back into use.

Cells damaged at other establishments where disturbances took place have already been repaired.

Hilda Murrell

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the latest representations made to him by the chief constable of West Mercia in the case of Hilda Murrell.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has not received any recent representations from the chief constable of West Mercia police on this matter.

Young Offenders

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current average length of sentence for young offenders in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* England and *(c)* England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten: Information for 1988 is given in the table. Data for 1989 will not be available until autumn 1990.

Average length of sentences of immediate custody for offenders aged 14 to under 21 years

	Months
England	8
Wales	8
England and Wales	8

Chinese Citizens (Temporary Asylum)

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards Chinese citizens in the United Kingdom seeking temporary asylum.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: All applications for asylum in this country are considered in accordance with our obligations under the United Nations convention relating to the status of refugees.

While the situation in China remains uncertain we are continuing to allow Chinese nationals who were in the United Kingdom on 4 June 1989 to remain here on an exceptional basis. Applications from other Chinese nationals are considered on their individual merits.

Laboratories

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received on the plan to make his Department's laboratories self-financing from April 1991.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The plans to introduce direct charging for forensic science services from 1 April 1991 are being developed in consultation with representatives of police authorities and their chief officers and their views are being fully taken into account. No other representations on this matter have been received.

Police Civilian Staff

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions have taken place between his Department and the Association of Chief Police Officers about trade union membership of police civilian staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There have been discussions between the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the local authority associations on a range of issues affecting police civilian staff including training, gradings, career development and representation.

The ACPO has suggested that civilian staff should be represented by a single union. Any such development would be a matter for the staff themselves and their local authority employers. My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to require police civilians to belong to a single union or to restrict their trade union or bargaining rights.

Prisoners (Early Release)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has undertaken any study to ascertain whether early release from prison for prisoners serving short terms could be allowed under executive release powers with minimal consequence to the community in order to bring occupancy of prisons nearer to their design capacity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend has seen no need for such a study.

London Fire Brigade

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list each fire station in the London fire brigade that does not have any accommodation or facilities for female firefighters; and if he will call for a report from the London fire and civil defence authority explaining what proposals it has in the case of each fire station in this category.

Mr. John Patten: With the exception of Leyton fire station, all fire stations within the area of the London fire brigade have facilities for female firefighters. The existing fire station at Leyton cannot be adapted because of its size and design, but the London fire and civil defence authority is currently constructing a replacement fire station which, when completed, will provide separate facilities for female firefighters. On present plans the new station will open during 1991.

Prisons (Slopping Out)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prisons in England and Wales where slopping out still takes place.

Mr. Mellor: The majority of prison places have access to night sanitation and we are looking at ways of providing access for three quarters of all places within the next few years. A list of the prisons in England and Wales at which some or all of the places did not have access to night sanitation as at April 1990 has been placed in the Library.

Fire Prevention

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his Department's proposals for fire prevention campaign activity nationally for the next two years.

Mr. John Patten: We propose to build on the success of our smoke alarm television campaign with particular emphasis on increasing ownership amongst the elderly and lower socio-economic groups. The campaign will also seek to emphasise the need for maintenance of smoke alarms.

We intended to produce an educational and publicity package for five to eight-year-olds. We also hope to produce an integrated educational package to cover the range of school age groups.

We shall be promoting national fire safety week in October in conjunction with the insurance industry and the fire liaison panel network. We shall be continuing to work closely with fire brigades and we propose to hold a series of national and regional conferences for senior fire prevention officers in order to encourage and foster greater awareness on publicity and education and to establish a co-ordinated approach to local and national publicity.

It is our aim to help minimise the risk from fire breaking out and thereby reduce casualties and deaths. In addition to the above, there are a number of continuing educational and publicity initiatives concentrating on the main risk areas activated throughout the year with the valued assistance of local fire brigades.

Merseyside Police Authority

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to meet the chief constable of Merseyside to discuss capital budgets for the Merseyside police authority.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and noble Friend discussed these and other issues with the chief constable and members of the police authority during a recent visit to Merseyside.

Murder Statistics

Mr. Quentin Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many murders were committed in the United Kingdom in 1989; in connection with how many of these arrests have been made or convictions secured; and if he will give the comparable figures for 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980.

Mr. John Patten: The data for homicides in England and Wales is given below. Equivalent figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland are published by the Scottish Home and Health Department and by the Northern Ireland Office.

In the absence of a court decision it is not always possible to distinguish between offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide; they are known collectively as homicide.

Homicides recorded and cleared up in selected years

Year	*Homicides recorded*	*Cleared up*[1]	*Per cent.*
1950	346	328	95
1960	282	270	96
1970	393	369	94
1980	620	600	97
1988	624	601	96
[2]1989	641	589	92

[1] Mainly by suspect being arrested.
[2] Provisional

Sources:
Criminal statistics, England and Wales Statistical Bulletin 10/90.

Drug Arrests, Ynys Môn

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been arrested for possession of *(a)* heroin, *(b)* cannabis and *(c)* amphetamines in each year since 1986 on Ynys Môn.

Mr. John Patten: Separate statistics are not available centrally for Ynys Môn. In the North Wales police force area the number of persons dealt with by the courts for possession of the specified drugs, which may exclude a small number of persons arrested and dealt with in other ways, was as follows:

Drug	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
		Number of persons	
Heroin	10	13	19
Cannabis	148	176	238
Amphetamines	24	17	35

Note: Persons dealt with for possession of more than one of the specified drugs at a single court appearance appear against each drug in the table.

Prisoners (Life Sentences)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners serving life sentences have been granted parole or released on licence during the past 20 years in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales.

Mr. Mellor: Life sentence prisoners are not eligible for parole but are released on licence. Statistics are not

available centrally of the areas to which prisoners are released. Information on releases before 1972 is not readily available. The numbers released in each of the years 1978-88 were published in table 8.5 of Prison statistics England and Wales 1988 (Cm 825), a copy of which is in the Library. The table gives figures for those released in the years 1972 to 1977, and 1989.

Life sentence prisoners[1] first released on licence from prison service establishments in England and Wales, 1972-77, 1989

Year	Number
1972	27
1973	35
1974	46
1975	41
1976	85
1977	70
[2]1989	68

[1] Including persons detained under section 53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.
[2] Provisional.

Metropolitan Police (Complaints)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Metropolitan police officers are currently under investigation following complaints against them.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis that complaints are being investigated in relation to 4,708 police officers in the force. The number of compl ints in progress at any one time is a function of the time taken by each investigation, as well as of the number of complaints made. Complaints against officers of the Metropolitan police have been on the decline for some years. In the early 1980's they averaged over 8,500 a year: since 1985 they have generally been fewer than 5,500 a year. In 1989, 5,350 complaints were made against members of the force.

Child Care

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions the ministerial group on women's issues has had about mechanisms for providing child care; and what conclusions were reached.

Mr. John Patten: The ministerial group on women's issues has discussed child care at three meetings (April 1989, October 1989 and February 1990).

The group has concluded that choice and quality are paramount considerations. A range of measures has been agreed, therefore, designed to maintain and improve the standards of the wide range of those providing child care for parents who choose to use their services.

Summaries of the initiatives on child care agreed by the group are contained in the press release issued after the group's meetings in April 1989 and February 1990, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

Women's Issues

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the ministerial group on women's issues last met; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. John Patten: The ministerial group on women's issues last met on 26 February 1990 and discussed domestic violence and child care. The group also received a report of the United Kingdom's presentation in January to the United Nation's committee on the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

The group will next meet on 19 June.

Between meetings of the group there are regular meetings between officials in the Departments concerned to ensure that action agreed by the group is taken forward.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Taxation (Performers)

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes there have been in the tax treatment of actors.

Mr. Lilley: From 6 April 1990 theatrical employers were required by the Inland Revenue to operate PAYE on the emoluments of actors engaged under standard contracts based on terms agreed between Equity and theatre managements. The Inland Revenue's view that these are contracts of employment is based on decisions in the Courts, and has been the subject of discussions with the theatre industry for a number of years. There are, however, transitional arrangements which allow established actors, with a history of payment tax under schedule D, to continue to pay their tax under that schedule, and to receive their earnings without deduction of tax under PAYE.

Customs Procedures

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what account he has taken of the impact of the single market on customs-free travel in 1992 when considering the need for pre-boarding customs checks at the proposed international passenger terminal at Waterloo.

Mr. Ryder: The Government have repeatedly stressed the need to retain essential customs checks on EC traffic after 1992 to guard against drugs smuggling and similar threats to society. Against this background, customs checks on channel tunnel travellers are being design to be as selective and unobtrusive as possible. Checks on departing passengers are expected to be minimal and only a very small percentage of passengers arriving at Waterloo will experience any delay as they pass through familiar airport-style checks.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what evaluation his Department made of the feasibility of carrying out all customs procedures on board trains using the proposed international passenger terminal at Waterloo.

Mr. Ryder: A joint working party of officials and British Rail carefully consider the options. Channel tunnel traffic arriving at Waterloo is expected to be heavy, with up to four trains an hour at peak times. The working party concluded that, in preference to checks on board trains, traditional airport-style customs checks at Waterloo would be more cost-effective. Under this system, more than 95 per cent. of passengers can expect to pass through customs without being stopped.

European Investment Bank

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he was consulted in his capacity as director of the European investment bank over the recent decision to extend the loan to the channel tunnel company by a further £300,000,000; and which body or organisation provided a guarantee for this further loan.

Mr. Ryder: Community Finance Ministers and the Chancellor of the Exchequer form the board of governors of the European investment bank. The board of directors is composed of senior officials and private sector representatives from the member states. In accordance with European investment bank procedure, the loan to Eurotunnel was approved by the board of directors.

The loan is guaranteed on the same basis as the European investment bank's previous loan to Eurotunnel: that is, by means of letters of credit from a group of first-class commercial banks, and a pro rata share with the syndicate banks in the charge on the project revenues and assets.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the normal practice of the European investment bank in seeking guarantees for loans; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The statutes of the European investment bank state that:

"When granting a loan to an undertaking or to a body other than a Member State, the Bank shall make the loan conditional either on a guarantee from the Member State in whose territory the project will be carried out or on other adequate guarantees."

The guarantee for each project is determined on a case by case basis.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the impact on the Scotch whisky industry resulting from the elimination of intra-European Community duty free trade; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: There are no formal proposals in this area but the Commission have made it clear that as a consequence of the completion of the single market, duty-free shopping for intra-community travel should cease.

The Government understand the Commission's view that it makes no sense to grant a tax concession for crossing a frontier when fiscal frontiers have been abolished. Equally, the Government are aware of the economic significance of the United Kingdom duty-free trade.

The Scotch whisky industry and others have made representations about the effects of abolishing duty-free shopping within the Community. The Government will examine all the arguments carefully before any decisions are reached within the Community.

HMSO (Contracts)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Hunterprint company had, or has outstanding, contracts with Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Mr. Ryder: During 1990 HMSO has awarded eight printing contracts to Hunterprint plc. Six of these contracts have been completed, one remains due for completion by July and the other is on-going.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Nuclear Accident, Greenwich

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans or studies have been made by his Department to assess measures that would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich in relation to the impact on schoolchildren studying in the area.

Mrs. Rumbold: Action in the event of a nuclear accident involving one of Her Majesty's ships is primarily the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Disabled Students

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he collects from institutions of higher education on provision to facilitate access on the part of students with disabilities.

Mr. Jackson: This information is not routinely collected.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate current transitional expenditure on special facilities, residential accommodation and teaching aids for disabled students in higher education.

Mr. Jackson: The responsibility for such expenditure lies with the institutions, which determine their own priorities within the total resources at their disposal. The information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on current financial support available to disabled students; and what plans he has to uprate this support.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that my right hon. Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) on 19 March *(Official Report,* columns *417-18).* Social security benefits for disabled students are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Student Loans

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate when the loan element will reach 50 per cent. of student maintenance assuming current inflation figures.

Mr. Jackson: If inflation were to remain at 9·4 per cent. and the total student support from grant (including any parental contribution) and loan were to be increased in line with inflation while the cash value of the grant remained constant, the average maximum loan facility would equal the average maximum basic rate of grant in the academic year 1996-97. The Government's forecast of inflation for the last quarter of 1990 is 7·25 per cent.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will update his reply to the

hon. Member for Oxford, East, of 18 December 1989, *Official Report*, columns *36-40*, estimating the public sector borrowing requirement effect of the student loans scheme for each year for which figures are available assuming 80 per cent., 90 per cent. and 100 per cent. take-up.

Mr. Jackson: Present estimates of the public sector borrowing requirement effect of the student loans scheme are as announced on 18 December 1989 (*Official Report*, columns 36-40). The estimates are being revised to take account of new data, including the latest estimates of student numbers, and will be published in due course.

Armouries (School Premises)

Mr. Dunn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what advice he has issued regarding the holding of weaponry and live ammunition at schools maintained by local education authorities; if he will indicate his policy on this matter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what advice his Department gives schools as to the storage of live ammunition on their premises.

Mr. MacGregor: None. Local education authorities are guided in these matters by guidelines issued by the Police Department on regulations issued by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Haberdasher's Aske's CTC

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what consideration is being given to locating new buildings for the proposed Haberdasher's Aske's city technology college other than those connected with physical education on the site of the current schools' playing fields at Nunhead;

(2) when the feasibility study by his Department on the establishment of a Haberdasher's Aske's city technology college will be completed; and what arrangements will be made to consult the governors, head teachers and parents at the present schools on the building and curriculum plans resulting from this study.

Mrs. Rumbold: The provision of accommodation and facilities for the Haberdasher's Aske's Hatcham city technology college has been the subject of feasibility studies. This work is scheduled to be completed by the end of July. Further consultations on the details of the building programme and the curriculum of the CTC are a matter for the Haberdashers' Company, the governing body of the present schools and the Haberdasher's Aske's City Technology Trust, when established, to decide.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what additional provision will be made in the funding agreement for the Haberdasher's Aske's city technology college to ensure that future revenue funding will be distributed between the boys' and girls' sections in direct proportion to the number of pupils of each sex attending the CTC.

Mrs. Rumbold: The arrangements for recurrent funding of the city technology colleges (CTCs) and the city technology college for the technology of the arts (CCTA) are set out in the final funding agreement, a copy of which was placed in the House of Commons Library in July 1989. The Haberdasher's Aske's CTC will be funded as one CTC.

Meningitis

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what support is being made available through the Universities Funding Council in the form of block grants to universities for research into meningitis.

Mr. Jackson: Block grant is not earmarked for particular purposes. It is for universities to decide their own priorities for research.

School Closures, Gloucestershire

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools were closed in each of the past five years in the Gloucestershire education authority.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The number of schools which were closed in each of the past five years in the Gloucestershire education authority area is as follows:

	Number
1989	0
1988	9
1987	13
1986	16
1985	23

WALES

Eggs

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make representations, prior to the 1 July deadline, to the European Community concerning regulation 2772/75 relating to the marketing of eggs, in order to safeguard the interests of small farmers in this matter.

Mr. David Hunt: No. The proposed Council regulation is only framework legislation. The detail will be included in a Commission regulation which will be adopted under management committee procedure. We shall, of course, bear in mind the interests of all egg producers when the details are discussed and voted on in the management committee.

Menopause Clinics

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many menopause clinics are available in Welsh hospitals.

Mr. Grist: Consultants in a wide range of medical specialties in Wales may hold clinics for menopausal women. However, central records identify out-patient clinics by medical specialty only and menopause clinics are not separately identified.

Mental Handicap

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the role of Cartrefi Cymru in the all-Wales mental handicap strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Cartrefi Cymru offers to county joint planning teams a range of services concerned with identifying the housing needs of people with a mental handicap, establishing their requirements for support, seeking suitable accommodation from housing providers and appointing, training and managing staff.

It works on the basis of contracts with social service departments and health authorities, and has officers based in counties to develop and manage accommodation. There is a central administrative base in Cardiff to co-ordinate and administer the services provided.

M4 (Congestion)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he is taking to eliminate traffic jams on the M4.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My plans for major improvements to the M4 are set out in "Roads in Wales Progress and Plans for the 1990s". Traffic management measures are implemented as necessary at particular congestion points and during periods of new construction, improvement and maintenance.

Assembly of Welsh Counties

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to meet the Assembly of Welsh Counties.

Mr. David Hunt: I met the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance, which includes representatives of the Assembly of Welsh Counties, earlier today.

Ex-service Housing

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to encourage the award of grants for modernisation and improvement of housing in Wales which is provided to meet the specific needs of ex-service men and women.

Mr. Grist: Ex-service men and women, in line with any other owner-occupier, landlord or tenant, can benefit from the revised renovation grant system to be introduced on 1 July.

Physiotherapy

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the estimated deficit in physiotherapy services in Gwynedd for, respectively *(a)* pre-school children, *(b)* children in ordinary schools and *(c)* children in special schools, at the most recent available date; what were the corresponding figures in 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will review the provision of physiotherapy services for children in Gwynedd following the implementation of the Education Act 1981; and what assessment he has made of whether Gwynedd health authority have acted in line with their strategic plan of 1984.

Mr. Grist: It is for district health authorities and local education authorities to determine the level of provision of physiotherapy services within available resources. The relevant objectives set out in Gwynedd health authority's strategic plan of 1984 indicated an intent to improve facilities subject to the availability of resources and I am informed that the number of physiotherapist/remedial gymnast staff in post has been increased from 40·8 in 1984 to 48·6 in 1989. (Whole-time equivalent at September in each case.)

Mental Illness

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet the chair of Gwynedd health authority to discuss the proposal to move psychiatric services to Ysbyty Bryn-Y-Neuadd; and if he will take steps to ensure that proposals are consistant with the all-Wales strategy for mental illness.

Mr. Grist: I am not aware of any formal proposal to move psychiatric services to Ysbyty Bryn-Y-Neauadd nor have I been asked for a discussion by the chair of Gwynedd health authority.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has received from Gwynedd health authority any proposal for the relocation of psychiatric services out of Ysbyty Gwynedd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: No. Any proposal entailing a substantial variation in services would of course be subject to the usual requirements for consultation.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether the all-Wales strategy for mental illness recommends reversion to the asylum concept of care for mentally ill people, in place of general-hospital-based services.

Mr. Grist: No. It is recognised that the behaviour or condition of a small proportion of mental illness sufferers will continue to require the provision of a protected environment for them, and it is anticipated that any necessary in-patient treatment will be provided at district general hospital units. However, it is a fundamental principle of the mental illness strategy that the great majority of those who need assessment and treatment should receive it in their own locality and within their usual social environment.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which health authorities have agreed to the all-Wales strategy for mental illness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: All health authorities in Wales are participants in the relevant multi-agency county-based teams responsible for the planning and implementation of the mental illness strategy at local level. They are thus all party to the local plans which have formed the basis of funding allocated for the current year.

St. David's Hospital, Bangor

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether Gwynedd health authority will be empowered without reference to his Department to sell St. David's Hospital, Bangor, and to use the proceeds from such a sale at its own discretion.

Mr. Grist: Disposal of St. David's hospital, Bangor is a matter for Gwynedd health authority once it has

complied with the conditions set down in the Department's decision letter of 3 March 1989. In the event that the property is then formally declared surplus to health service requirements, the authority may dispose of it without further reference to the Department.

The health authority will be entitled to retain the proceeds from any sale of the hospital land and buildings for the provision of hospital and community health services for which they are responsible under the present procedures relating to disposal of surplus land and buildings.

Beef

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has given any guidelines to health authorities in Wales on serving beef.

Mr. Grist: The Department has issued to all health authorities the text of a statement made on 16 May by the chief medical officer of the Department of Health. This statement confirmed that British beef can be eaten safely by everyone, both adults and children, including patients in hospital.

Ophthalmic Services

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects figures to be available for new out-patient attendances at ophthalmic clinics in *(a)* South Glamorgan and *(b)* Wales for the quarter ending June in the current year.

Mr. Grist: The figures should become available during the autumn of 1990.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hip Replacements

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are on current waiting lists for hip replacement operations in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: A total of 755.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the present average waiting period for patients requiring hip replacement operations at Musgrave Park hospital, Belfast.

Mr. Needham: It is 9·5 months.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has any proposals to reduce the waiting period for patients requiring hip replacement operations.

Mr. Needham: My noble Friend Lord Skelmersdale recently announced substantial additional funding for the Northern Ireland orthopaedic service, in 1990-91. A sum of £270,000 has been allocated to the Eastern health and social services board to enable it to provide an extra 230 operations at Musgrave Park hospital, including an additional 70 hip operations. A further £100,000 has been made available to the Western board to increase the number of orthopaedic and opthalmology operations carried out at Altnagelvin hospital. The Department of Health and Social Services believes that better management of waiting lists will also help to reduce both the length of the lists and time patients are having to wait and consequently supports initiatives by the clinical resource efficiency support team (CREST) aimed at improving waiting list management.

Whiteabbey Hospital (Orthopaedic Clinic)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how often the orthopaedic clinic at Whiteabbey hospital, Newtownabbey, operates.

Mr. Needham: Once per week.

Life Sentences

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners serving life sentences have been granted parole or released on licence during the past 20 years in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Cope: A total of 122 life sentence prisoners have been released on licence since 1 January 1970. Forty-nine prisoners detained at the Secretary of State's pleasure were released on licence in the same period.

There is no system of parole for prisoners in Northern Ireland but there is provision for granting a few hours' compassionate home leave in the event of the death or critical illness of a member of the prisoner's immediate family. In addition, prisoners who have served a substantial period of their sentences may be eligible for short periods of summer and Christmas home leave.

Mortality Rates

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the amount of *(a)* perinatal and *(b)* neonatal mortality in each health and social services board in Northern Ireland in each of the years 1986 to 1989.

Mr. Needham: The information requested is in the table:

Health and Social Services Board

	Eastern		*Northern*		*Southern*		*Western*		*Northern Ireland*	
	Number	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*
Perinatal mortality										
1986	106	9·9	59	8·9	48	8·7	55	10·1	268	9·5
1987	113	10·8	46	6·9	65	11·6	52	9·8	276	9·8
1988	91	8·5	56	8·7	48	8·7	64	12·2	259	9·3
1989	84	8·5	55	8·8	30	5·8	45	9·2	214	8·2
Neonatal Mortality										
1986	57	5·4	46	7·0	33	6·0	33	6·1	169	6·0
1987	53	5·1	17	2·6	34	6·1	31	5·9	135	4·8

	Eastern		Northern		Southern		Western		Northern Ireland	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
1988	53	5·0	32	5·0	24	4·4	40	7·7	149	5·4
1989	35	3·6	32	5·2	15	2·9	22	4·5	104	4·0

Notes:
1. Perinatal mortality rate is the number of stillbirths and deaths during the first week of the life per 1,000 total births.
2. Neonatal mortality rate is the number of deaths during the first four weeks of life per 1,000 live births.
3. 1989 data is provisional.

Kincora Boys Home

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether, in the light of the transcript which has been sent to him of the BBC 2 film on Kincora, and the statements by James, he will set up another inquiry into Kincora.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* I have studied the transcript and am satisfied that it contains no material about Kincora not available at the time to Sir George Terry's inquiry. I understand that the individual identified as "James" was in fact interviewed in 1982 by the Royal Ulster Constabulary as part of the inquiry superintended by Sir George Terry.

As I pointed out in my reply of 19 April at column *987*, rumours about the homosexual tendencies of one member of the staff at Kincora were in circulation in the 1970's; these were known to the police but did not amount, as the programme made clear, to substantive evidence of homosexual abuse of boys at the hostel. In these circumstances I do not believe that a further inquiry into the events at Kincora could be justified. However, if anyone has substantive new evidence which is relevant he should give it to the police.

Energy Consumption

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his answer of 21 May, *Official Report*, column *30*, if he will give the figures for energy consumption in kWh for electricity, litres for oil, therms for gas and tonnes for coal.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 6 June 1990]:* The amount of energy consumed in 1988-89 in the buildings occupied by Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office is as follows:

	Energy consumed	
Electricity	94,055,748	kWh
Oil	20,149,234	Litres
Gas	1,485,202	Therms
Coal	196	Tonnes

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give the number of energy audits carried out in his Department in the past five years and for each audit a statement of its main conclusions.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* A total of 284 energy audits were carried out over the past five years in the Northern Ireland and Government Office estate.

A statement of main conclusions for each audit could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

CIVIL SERVICE

Pay and Conditions

98. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what consideration he has given to the report of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee on the civil service pay and conditions of service code.

Mr. Luce: The Committee's recommendations are being considered and the Government will be publishing its response in due course.

Agencies

101. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what proportion of the civil service is now covered either by established agencies or agency candidates.

Mr. Luce: There are at present 31 established agencies, employing some 69,000 staff, and a further 125,000 staff in the 25 announced agency candidates. Together these account for about a third of the civil service.

DEFENCE

Low Flying

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in which countries the United Kingdom has agreements to hold low-flying exercises.

Mr. Neubert: Under long-standing arrangements, the Royal Air Force carries out low flying training in the United States and Canada (including a significant proportion of training under 250 ft). RAF aircraft stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany also carry out a high proportion of their training in the FRG. Small amounts of low flying may also be carried out in other NATO countries and elsewhere by mutual agreement.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost to his Department for low flying facilities used by the Royal Air Force in Labrador and Quebec.

Mr. Neubert: Payments to Canada for Royal Air Force low flying facilities over Labrador and Quebec in the year 1988-89, the latest year for which final bills have been presented, were £5·5993 million.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many farmers have received compensation in respect of damage to livestock caused by the activities of low-flying helicopters from 1 April 1989 to 31 March 90 and from 1 April 1990 to 30 April 1990;

(2) how many farmers have claimed compensation in respect of damage to livestock caused by the activities of low-flying helicopters from 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990 and from 1 April 1990 to 30 April 1990.

Mr. Neubert: Information is not available in the precise form requested and could not be established without disproportionate cost. However, during the period 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990, 731 claims arising from the activities of low flying helicopters were settled. The figure for 1 April 1990 was 72.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to reduce the incidence of low-flying military aircraft over rural areas in South Down.

Mr. Neubert: There are currently no fixed wing military aircraft undertaking low flying in the South Down area for either operational or training purposes. Flights by military helicopters are carried out for operational reasons, in order to support the RUC in the fight against terrorism. Helicopters are an essential part of the security forces effort to counter the terrorists threat, which in South Down has resulted in the murder of seven soldiers in recent months. Helicopters may need to fly low for operational or weather reasons. I regret the inconvenience that this may cause some of the hon. Member's constituents but I can assure him that low flying is kept to a minimum.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the proposed intermediate-level radioactive waste dump at Rosyth is designed to accommodate waste requirements of nuclear refitting at places other than Rosyth.

Mr. Neubert: The intermediate-level radioactive waste store at Rosyth is being designed to accommodate only the anticipated arisings from processes undertaken by Rosyth royal dockyard.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the proposed new intermediate-level radioactive waste store at Rosyth has been designed to permit expansion of the storage facilities.

Mr. Neubert: The intermediate-level radio-active waste store at Rosyth is not being designed specifically to permit expansion of the storage facilities.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what facilities currently exist at *(a)* Rosyth and *(b)* Devonport for the storage of intermediate-level radio-active waste arising from the decommissioning of nuclear-powered submarines.

Mr. Neubert: No special facilities currently exist at Rosyth and Devonport for storage of intermediate level radio-active waste arising from the decommissioning of nuclear powered submarines.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy on the transport by *(a)* rail, *(b)* road and *(c)* sea of intermediate-level radioactive waste arising from nuclear-powered submarine operations.

Mr. Neubert: Ministry of Defence policy for transport of all radioactive waste by rail, road or sea is to apply standards no less stringent than those required by International Atomic Energy Agency regulations.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what monitoring has taken place of sites used for sea dumping of British chemical warfare stocks, and what have been the results of any such monitoring.

Mr. Neubert: There has been no systematic monitoring of sites where chemical warfare stocks were sea dumped. However, there are no indications of leakage or of any identified hazard to health were that to happen.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the locations and depths of all sites at sea where British chemical warfare stocks have been dumped.

Mr. Neubert: The United Kingdom abandoned its offensive capability in chemical warfare in the late 1950s. United Kingdom chemical weapons were disposed of over a lengthy period and it would require disproportionate effort to research old records for precise locations. However, I can confirm that all known stocks were disposed of, although from time to time there are discoveries of buried items dating back to the two world wars, which are taken to the chemical defence establishment at Porton Down for safe disposal.

Defence Establishments, Wales

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at which land-based defence establishments in Wales he proposes *(a)* cuts in establishment numbers, *(b)* closures and *(c)* privatisation of services by civilians; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Ministry of Defence continues to pursue economies and increased efficiency throughout the Department, including regular audits of establishments. There are currently no plans for significant reductions in establishment numbers, closures, or market testing in Wales.

Soldiers (Offences)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many serving soldiers have been convicted within the last 12 months of offences involving violence;

(2) how many soldiers have been convicted within the last 12 months of offences involving dishonesty; and how many have been discharged from the Army;

(3) how many soldiers have been discharged from the Army within the last 12 months following convictions for offences involving violence.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers are currently serving sentences at Colchester military correction and training centre; of what offences they were convicted; and what are their sentences.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are 142 soldiers currently serving sentences at the military corrective training centre for desertion/AWOL, dishonesty, violence, drug and sex offences. Their sentences range from 28 days to two years, with just over 100 sentences of six months or more.

Cadet Forces (Armouries)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many armouries of service cadet forces are based in *(a)* maintained and *(b)* independent schools; and what standing arrangements exist for their security and for the custody of live ammunition.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are approximately 265 detachments of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), Army Cadet Force (ACF) and Air Training Corps (ATC) based in maintained schools, and 200 CCF detachments in independent schools. Most of these have armouries, but it would not be possible to give exact figures without disproportionate cost.

Security of cadet force weapons is strictly governed by service regulations. These require arms to be kept securely in appropriate containers or armouries, while ammunition must be stored separately, again under appropriate, secure conditions. It would not be appropriate to give details of these regulations, which, in general, require a higher level of security than the equivalent civil standards for rifle clubs or licenced individual firearms holders. All weapon storage facilities are strictly controlled by the Ministry of Defence and are periodically inspected to ensure that proper standards are being maintained.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expected Mr. Calcutt to report on the case of Colin Wallace when he set up the inquiry; and when he now expects Mr. Calcutt to report.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Mr. Calcutt is conducting an independent inquiry and it is for him to determine how long the work will take. No firm date has yet been set for its completion.

Royal Ordnance Factory, Bishopton

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the action at royal ordnance factory, Bishopton, taken in relation to Graeme Stewart and Allan Milligan of *The Scotsman* newspaper.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have been asked to reply. On 1 June at the royal ordnance factory, Bishopton, Graeme Stewart and John Allan Milligan were charged by officers of Strathclyde police with contravening section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911. A report was subsequently submitted to the procurator fiscal at Paisley. The matter was referred to Crown Office and Crown counsel have instructed that there be no proceedings.

HEALTH

Hospital Beds (North Wiltshire)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total of hospital beds in each of the past five years within the constituency of Wiltshire, North.

Mr. Dorrell: Information about hospital beds is collected centrally by district health authority and is not available for individual parliamentary constituencies. Figures for Swindon and Bath district health authorities are given in the table.

Average daily available beds and in-patient cases treated Swindon and Bath district health authorities, 1984-1988-89

Year	*Available beds*	*In-patient cases treated*	*In-patient cases treated per available bed*
Swindon DHA			
1984	1,377	27,731	20·1
1985	1,311	28,458	21·7
1986	1,280	29,072	22·7
1987-88	1,142	33,396	29·2
1988-89	1,123	31,187	27·8
Bath DH			
1984	2,737	48,023	17·5
1985	2,681	49,135	18·3
1986	2,645	50,213	19·0

Year	Available beds	In-patient cases treated	In-patient cases treated per available bed
1987-88	2,360	54,521	23·1
1988-89	2,226	49,552	22·3

Source: SH3 return, 1984-1986
KHO3 & SH3a returns, 1987-88 onwards

Tampons

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 5 April, *Official Report*, column *745*, whether he has yet obtained the information regarding the numbers of deaths in the United Kingdom from toxic shock syndrome; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is not yet available. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as it is available.

Electorate, Hampshire

Sir David Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 26 March, *Official Report*, columns *40-41*, if he will now list the number of 1990 electors by which each Hampshire constituency exceeds the electoral quota for an average English seat and the number of additional seats, or part thereof, which would be required to bring the number of Hampshire constituencies up to the English average.

Mr. Dorrell: The information is as follows:

Amount by which constituency differs from the electoral quota based on the 1990 Register

Parliamentary Constituency	Total Parliamentary Electors 1990	Number of Electors	Percentage
Aldershot	83,356	13,799	19·8
Basingstoke	83,111	13,534	19·5
East Hampshire	91,512	21,935	31·5
Eastleigh	91,259	21,682	31·2
Fareham	81,399	11,822	17·0
Gosport	70,903	1,326	1·9
Havant	77,158	7,581	10·9
New Forest	76,278	6,701	9·6
North West Hampshire	72,637	3,060	4·4
Portsmouth North	81,523	11,946	17·2
Portsmouth South	77,127	7,550	10·9
Romsey and Waterside	83,302	13,725	19·7
Southampton and Itchen	73,223	3,646	5·2
Southampton Test	74,703	5,126	7·4
Winchester	79,226	9,649	13·9
English electoral quota	69,577	—	—
Total excess over quota	—	153,068	—

Note:
The total excess of 153,068 is equivalent to a theoretical entitlement of 2·2 seats of average size.

Transplants

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for the management of the United Kingdom transplant service.

Mr. Dorrell: The United Kingdom transplant service (UKTS) is at present a non-statutory body funded by the health departments via the South Western regional health authority. Its functions have grown in recent years and a more formal management arrangement is needed. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has decided in principle that a special health authority should be set up to manage the UKTS. The next step will be an independent implementation study by Dr. John Evans to advise on the structure and operation of the authority. Establishing a special health authority for the UKTS should provide a sound basis for the management of the UKTS for the next few years and pending decisions on any more permanent arrangements.

Alcoholism

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that, under the new community care system, adequate funding reaches post-detoxification residential care units for people recovering from severe alcohol problems.

Mr. Dorrell: We shall be directing local authorities to include provision for alcohol misusers in their community care plans. This will ensure that those agencies that provide residential care for alcohol misusers will have access to the funds that are available via local authorities.

Hip Replacements

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources will be made available to the South West health authority to expedite hip replacement operations for those patients aged over 75 years.

Mr. Dorrell: The provision of treatment services in the south west using these and other resources is a matter for the regional health authority.

The initial revenue allocation to the South Western regional health authority for 1990-91 is £919,011,000, 9 per cent. more than the initial allocation for 1989-90.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* the health authorities which have waiting lists of under 12 months for hip replacement operations;

(2) if he will list the average waiting time in the South West district health authorities for patients needing hip replacement surgery; and what steps are being taken to reduce this delay.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information on waiting lists is collected centrally by specialty but not for specific operations or procedures. The six-monthly publication of hospital waiting list statistics, which is placed in the Library, provides information about waiting time for admission for each specialty.

The latest information held centrally about the time waited, by operation, relates to patients admitted in 1985 and is published in "1985 Hospital In-patients Enquiry main tables for England series number 27", a copy of which is also available in the Library. Information on the time waited for specific types of operation in 1988-89 is expected to be available shortly.

We are committed to reducing excessive waiting and have invested a total of £119 million over four years from the waiting list fund for this purpose. In 1989-90 £8·7 million was allocated to the specialty of trauma and orthopaedics of which at least £441,000 was specifically used for hip operations.

Funding, Wirral

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reason funding for the Wirral family practitioner committee has been cut by £400,000 in the current year; and if he will detail his estimate of the number of reception and support staff local general practitioners will cease to employ as a result of the new budget arrangements.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The preliminary allocation of £1,979,000 to Wirral family practitioner committee for practice staff and premises improvements this year is an increase of over 13 per cent. on its expenditure of £1,745,000 in 1989-90. We shall make any necessary adjustment to this record allocation when we know from family practitioner committees the full year cost of their commitments at the end of March. This will enable family practitioner committees to honour our undertaking to continue full support for existing practice staff.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will establish a clearing house in his Department to facilitate a more efficient use of hospital resources so that general practitioners and consultants can be directed to those hospitals with the shortest waiting list for each particular category of operation.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Government believe that central direction is not the most effective way of managing the National Health Service. The reforms set out in the White Paper "Working for Patients", and embodied in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, will create both the incentives, and the means, for the more efficient use of resources and improved quality of service to patients.

Under the new arrangements there will be better information for general practitioners on the waiting times each hospital will be expected to achieve, and greater flexibility to choose the most appropriate package of care overall, taking account of such information.

Battered Women

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on the number of refuges for battered women; and how many places they provide in each local authority in England and Wales.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not held centrally. Data held by the National Voluntary Organisation Women's Aid Federation (England) Ltd. indicate that there are 200 such refuges in England. I will write to the hon. Member about numbers of places in each local authority. Refuges in Wales are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether enough supplies of tuberculosis vaccine are now available for routine school vaccinations.

Mr. Dorrell: Supplies of BCG vaccine for routine school vaccinations were restored in May 1990. We have been assured by the supplier that adequate stocks are now available to maintain a continuing supply for this purpose.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in the *Official Report*, the reported cases of tuberculosis for each health authority in England for each year between 1979 and 1990.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The information available is shown in the table.

Notifications of tuberculosis are collected by local authority area rather than by health authority area; aggregating of data is possible to regional health authority (RHA) level, but not to district health authority (DHA) level because of boundary differences. Information at RHA is shown in the table.

Notifications of all forms of tuberculosis by Regional Health Authorities in England for 1979 to 1989[1]

Area	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*[1]
England	8,752	7,803	7,083	6,501	5,833	5,583	5,743	4,853	4,960	5,241
RHA										
Northern	486	428	336	342	300	260	299	271	222	244
Yorkshire	722	603	627	539	468	415	437	355	403	418
Trent	709	660	593	547	519	536	572	514	529	496
East Anglian	146	114	96	106	95	101	91	90	80	74
North West Thames	1,350	1,271	1,082	995	896	775	867	672	727	761
North East Thames	1,078	946	803	753	659	697	620	603	579	690
South East Thames	598	472	452	452	452	440	343	293	323	370
South West Thames	411	384	319	326	262	254	301	244	231	198
Wessex	161	182	191	169	145	164	133	120	145	124
Oxford	308	254	248	180	215	171	148	199	188	191
South Western	294	319	225	183	180	139	146	136	147	139
West Midlands	1,164	1,022	1,045	900	848	813	855	663	671	849

Area	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*[1]
Mersey	267	244	248	222	150	163	197	140	132	158
North Western	1,058	904	818	787	644	655	734	553	583	529

[1] Provisional.

Erythropoetin

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Newbury, *Official Report*, 9 March, column *902*, whether any decision has yet been reached on licensing of the drug Erythropoetin.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[pursuant to her reply, Tuesday 8 May 1990]:* A licence has been granted for the drug Erythropoetin and I understand that the company has now put the drug on the market.

Meningitis

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list in the *Official Report* details of all research into meningitis currently being funded by his Department, indicating in each case the level of funds being made available.

Mr. Dorrell: The Department has made available £55,437 for a prospective case control study of meningococcal disease in eight west country health districts from 1 May 1988 until 30 April 1990. A final report is awaited.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ravenscraig

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if commercial sections in British embassies have been instructed to seek potential investors in an independent Scottish steel industry, following British Steel's recent decision to close capacity at Ravenscraig.

Mr. Maude: Instructions have not been sent to commercial sections. Commercial sections in our embassies are, however, always seeking to identify potential inward investment projects across the range of business sectors and would pass on to the Invest in Britain Bureau details of any interest which may be expressed in steel or any other sector.

St. Helena

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, in view of the improvement in telecommunications with St. Helena, steps can now be taken to establish commercial banking facilities.

Mr. Sainsbury: We are committed to strengthening the private sector on St. Helena. Since improvements in St. Helena's telecommunications and communications links were first planned, we have approached a number of commercial banks to see if they would be prepared to establish a branch on St. Helena. None has yet decided to do so. We are also considering other ways of introducing banking facilities, for example the establishment of a development finance institution which might include a banking function.

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans have been formulated to improve transportation by sea and air to St. Helena and its dependencies.

Mr. Sainsbury: A number of improvements are being made. St. Helena's only regular, though infrequent, link with the outside world is a passenger/cargo vessel built in 1963, which Her Majesty's Government subsidises. The vessel also serves St. Helena's dependencies of Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. Because of its age, the ship is shortly to be replaced by a larger, purpose-built vessel, built at a Scottish yard, which is expected to enter service in late summer. In addition, it has been decided to commence a weekly shipping shuttle, subsidised by Britain, between St. Helena and Ascension Island.

Israel

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will send a message of concern to the Israeli Government about Israel's continued refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: We take every suitable opportunity to express our concern about this matter, and to reiterate our view that the best way to achieve a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the middle east would be for all states in the region to accede to the NPT.

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will send a message of concern to the Israeli Government about the continued imprisonment of Mr. Mordechai Vanunu.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Antarctica

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consideration he has given to representations from individuals and organisations concerned about the threat that mining could pose to the environment of Antarctica; and if he will make it his policy to press British opposition to any such developments.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 14 May at column *312* to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley).

Wildlife Protection

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list his responsibilities in relation to the worldwide protection of wildlife.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs is responsible for the conclusion of all international agreements with other states or international organisations, including their extension, as appropriate, to the Dependent Territories.

In the case of wildlife, the four world-wide conservation conventions to which the United Kingdom is party are the Washington convention on international trade in endangered species of wild flora and fauna, the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance, the Bonn convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild flora and fauna and the convention for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage 1975.

Within the context of collective government, responsibility for fulfilling the United Kingdom's obligations under these conventions and formulating our contribution to their development world wide rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment; in respect of the Dependent Territories my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has those responsibilities.

Eastern Europe

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on negotiations he has had or is having with the relevant authorities in *(a)* East Germany, *(b)* Romania, *(c)* Hungary, *(d)* Poland, *(e)* Czechoslovakia, *(f)* Yugoslavia and *(g)* Bulgaria regarding the requirement for British passport holders to have a visa, exchange currency and pre-booked accommodation.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have held no such negotiations with the countries concerned. Although the situation varies from country to country, most of these requirements have now been abandoned. We welcome this.

Nuclear Arms

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which terrorities, for which the United Kingdom is internationally responsible, lie within the zone of application of the 1967 treaty of Tlatelolco; and what are the United Kingdom's rights and obligations under the treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: The territories of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and Montserrat lie within the zone of application of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Only Latin American states can be full parties to the treaty. The United Kingdom has, however, signed and ratified both the additional protocols to the treaty. Under protocol 1 the United Kingdom, in the territories above, must use exclusively for peaceful purposes the nuclear material and facilities which are under its jurisdiction and prohibit and prevent:

(a) the testing, use, manufacture, production and acquisition by any means whatsoever of any nuclear weapons directly or indirectly; and

(b) the receipt, storage, installation, deployment and any form of possession of any nuclear weapons, directly or indirectly.

Under protocol 2 the United Kingdom has undertaken not to contribute in any way to the performance of acts violating article 1 of the treaty itself in the states to which the treaty applies. Article 1 essentially prohibits and prevents those acts in (a) and (b) above.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) of 4 May, *Official Report*, column *694*, for which regions of the world Her Majesty's Government supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Mr. Waldegrave: We support the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones in those regions where their creation can contribute to regional security, to non-proliferation and to disarmament in general.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the reply on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty review conference, *Official Report*, 9 May 1990, column 181, what resources and support team of civil servants will be committed by his Department to the review conference; what issues, excepting organisational matters, were raised at the nuclear non-proliferation treaty third preparatory meeting to which he refers; if his Department will provide any resources to non-governmental organisations wanting to attend the nuclear non-proliferation treaty review conference; and whether Her Majesty's Government will support observer status for non-governmental organisations at the conference.

Mr. Waldegrave: Under the financing formula for the review conference, we are committed to paying 6·13 per cent. of the total costs. I expect to lead the United Kingdom delegation initially. Subsequently, the delegation will be led by Her Majesty's representative to the conference on disarmament. The delegation will comprise a number of officials.

The third preparatory committee dealt only with organisational matters, although other issues were discussed in the margins of the meeting.

We do not plan to make available any financial assistance for non-governmental organisations to attend the review conference. The draft rules of procedure for the conference do not make any provision for non-governmental organisations to be granted observer status, but they may attend meetings of the plenary and of the main committees, in which case they are entitled to receive the documents of the conference.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department has prepared a submission for the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty later in the current year.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 9 May at column *181* to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang).

Mr. Orme: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new initiatives Her Majesty's Government have planned in arms control and disarmament.

Mr. Waldegrave: We and our NATO allies agreed at the North Atlantic Council meeting, held at Turnberry on 7 and 8 June, that:

We would instruct our negotiators at the Vienna talks on conventional forces in Europe to pursue new approaches to mutually acceptable solutions, in particular on armour, aircraft and verification. As soon as a CFE agreement is reached, allies will be prepared to undertake follow-on negotiations to further enhance security and stability in Europe.

Negotiations on United States and Soviet short-range nuclear weapon systems in Europe should begin shortly after a CFE agreement is concluded.

The CSCE process should be strengthened and given effective institutional form.

A copy of the Communiqué from the meeting is being placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Orme: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweatlh Affairs whether any states have indicated an intention to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Romania

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweatlh Affairs what medical supplies, food, clothing and other non-financial aid the United Kingdom has supplied to Romania since 1 March.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development's answer of 19 April at column *1017*.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweatlh Affairs if, pursuant to his answer of 27 February, *Official Report*, column *110*, to the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing), he will list in the *Official Report* the financial aid supplied by the Government to Romania since that date; and what financial aid he intends to supply to Romania over the next six months.

Mr. Waldegrave: None.

Filipino Wives

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many cases of Filipino wives of British subjects seeking admission to the United Kingdom whose applications were submitted to the independent appellate authority up to the end of March are still outstanding; when the application of Mrs. Nancy Barrera Sanderson will be decided; what are the reasons for the delay in processing such applications; and whether he will take urgent steps to end the distress caused by the delays to lawfully married couples.

The Attorney-General: The information requested in the first part of the question is not available, as the immigration appellate authorities (IAA) do not record information separately about appeals from Filipino citizens.

The IAA have now sent the case papers of Mrs. Nancy Berrera Sanderson's appeal to her representatives in the United Kingdom. When the representatives indicate to the IAA that they are ready to proceed to the hearing before the independent adjudicator, a hearing will be set down within four to six weeks.

Delays in processing appeals at the IAA have been caused by the unexpectedly high rise in the volume of appeals in 1988 and 1989. There was a 60 per cent. rise in 1988; a 30 per cent. rise in 1989; and a further 40 per cent. rise is expected over the next 18 months.

Significant additional resources were provided to the IAA last year, which resulted in a 50 per cent. rise in disposal rates. However, the increased workload has been so great that the backlog of appeals still remains high, but the situation is being kept under review.

THE ARTS

Museums and Galleries (Admission Charges)

81. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Minister for the Arts when he last discussed with the national museums and galleries attendances and admission charges.

Mr. Luce: I discuss a wide range of matters with directors of the national museums and galleries on a regular basis.

The question of whether or not to levy admission charges is a matter for decision by the trustees and directors of individual institutions.

Departmental Budget

82. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what has been the increase in real terms in his Department's budget since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The increase in real terms in the Office of Arts and Libraries' Budget since 1979 is 48 per cent. This is a clear indication of the commitment that the Government have to the cultural life of Britain.

Arts Bodies (Administration)

83. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received concerning the cost of administration of arts bodies.

Mr. Luce: I have received a number of representations about the cost of arts administration in recent months.

Three-year Funding

86. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received concerning the concept of three-year funding; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I have received representations from all the bodies that I fund directly, and from many others. There has been a wide welcome for the concept of three-year funding, particularly as it provides a firm base for longer-term planning.

Arts Funding (Shire Counties)

87. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the contribution per head by each shire county in grants or loans to arts organisations.

Mr. Luce: The information is not held centrally. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) has published the following figures for 1989-90.

	Figures
Avon	0·35
Bedfordshire	0·44
Berkshire	0·12
Buckinghamshire	0·60
Cambridgeshire	0·21
Cheshire	0·70
Cleveland	1·51
Cornwall	0·41
Cumbria	0·26
Derbyshire	1·04

	Figures
Devon	0·64
Dorset	0·27
Durham	1·29
East Sussex	0·09
Essex	0·09
Gloucestershire	0·28
Hampshire	1·08
Hereford/Worcs	0·31
Hertfordshire	0·09
Humberside	0·56
Isle of Wight	2·13
Kent	0·29
Lancashire	[2]0·88
Leicestershire	3·44
Lincolnshire	2·09
Norfolk	2·16
Northamptonshire	0·22
Northumberland	[1]0·72
North Yorkshire	0·96
Nottinghamshire	1·19
Oxfordshire	2·06
Shropshire	1·05
Somerset	1·14
Staffordshire	0·88
Suffolk	0·71
Surrey	0·14
Warwickshire	1·11
West Sussex	0·05
Wiltshire	0·59

[1] 1988-89 figure
[2] figure supplied by Lancashire CC

Business Sponsorship

88. **Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what proportion of money received under the business sponsorship incentive scheme goes to small, regional or innovative arts bodies, respectively.

Mr. Luce: In 1989-90, 71 per cent. of the award money went to arts organisations outside London, of which 17·8 per cent. went to Scotland and 14·8 per cent. to Wales. Small and innovative arts bodies continue to be successful in attracting sponsorship under the Scheme. I regret that detailed information on the proportion of funds that they receive is not available.

Theatres (Nottingham)

89. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister for the Arts when he next plans to visit *(a)* Nottingham playhouse and *(b)* Nottingham Theatre Royal to discuss funding for east midlands arts.

Mr. Luce: I have no plans at present to do so.

Arts Bodies (Regions)

90. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what major arts bodies have relocated to the regions in the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: Detailed information about the relocation of arts organisations is not held centrally. I am aware, however, that a number of major arts organisations are moving all or part of their operations to the regions. They include the transfer of the Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet to Birmingham; the extension of the Tate gallery's range of activities to Liverpool and, in the future, to Cornwall; and the opening by the science museum of the national museum of film, photography and television in Bradford. I welcome these and other developments which ensure that the best of British arts is accessible to the widest possible public.

Arts Funding (NAO Report)

91. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received following the National Audit Office report into the funding of arts bodies.

Mr. Luce: I have received no such representations.

Royal Opera House

92. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what is the level of public support for the royal opera house for the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: In 1990-91 the Arts Council's grant to the royal opera house has been set at £15·2 million. This represents an increase of 11 per cent. on last year's figure, well above the rate of inflation.

"Arts in Education"

93. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what discussions he has held with "arts in education" teams.

Mr. Luce: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, and I have both acknowledged the role which the arts will play in the national curriculum. An important booklet, "Arts and Schools", jointly funded by the two departments has just been published and issued to all maintained schools in Great Britain. It includes a number of case studies of best practice in art in education by various arts organisations—including museums, art galleries and libraries—working with schools to widen the boundaries of classroom learning.

Eastern Europe

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Minister for the Arts what steps he proposes taking to increase cultural links with eastern European countries in the climate which now prevails.

Mr. Luce: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has provided an additional £2·25 million in 1990-91 to enable the British Council to increase cultural activity in eastern Europe including new British cultural centres there. I am exploring the scope for mounting cultural initiatives within the remit of the know-how-fund. I have also given an extra £50,000 to the Arts Council and £5,000 to Visiting Arts to help bring eastern European arts groups to Britain.

Wilding Report

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: To ask the Minister for the Arts what reports he has received on the overlapping between the Office of Arts and Libraries, the Arts Council and the regional arts associations in the light of the Wilding report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I am aware of the recent National Audit Office report to the Parliamentary Accounts Committee which examined the relationship between the Arts Council, the regional arts associations and the Office of Arts and Libraries. I believe that the changes in the structure of arts funding that I announced to the House on

13 March 1990 will clarify the responsibilities of the Arts Council and the Regional Arts Associations, and strengthen accountability for taxpayers' money.

Devolved Financial Responsibility

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he has received representations from the director of the National Campaign for the Arts on the cost implications of devolved financial responsibility; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I believe that my proposals will result in a structure for arts funding which will give even better value for money. It is however too early to say what savings will be released from these changes. More importantly, they will lead to clarification of funding responsibilities, elimination of the duplication and overlap between the Arts Council and the regions noted by both the Wilding and National Audit Office reports, and strengthening of regional accountability for the money that they spend on the arts.

SCOTLAND

Land Registration

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether any additional resources will be made available to accelerate the introduction of the provisions of the Land Registration (Scotland) Act 1979 relating to registration; and if he will state for each non-operational area (i) the date up to which the relative Sasine Register has presently been completed, and (ii) any representations as to the possible consequences in conveyancing transactions; and what response has been made.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Department of the Registers of Scotland is required by statute to recover its expenditure from fee income. Since 1989 the Department has had more freedom to finance expansion from extra fee income. I have recently made an order, to come into force on 4 July, to increase some of the fee levels previously set in 1981. The additional income will allow backlogs to be reduced and pave the way for extending the Land Register.

Information as at 6 June 1990 about the dates to which the Sasine register volumes are complete is set out in the table below.

Representations have been made from time to time by the Law Society of Scotland about the effect on conveyancing transactions of delays in registration but these have not been specific to individual areas.

In establishing the Department as an executive agency in April 1990 my right hon. and learned Friend set targets for turnround times to be reduced from 30 weeks in 1989-90 to 17 weeks in 1992-93 as respects the General Register of Sasines, and from 35 to 17 weeks for registration of dealings in the Land Register.

County	*1989*
Aberdeen	8 September
Angus	22 November
Argyll	5 September
Ayr	31 July
Banff	20 October
Berwick	12 December
Bute	31 August
Caithness	30 October
Clackmannan	16 October
Dumfries	2 August
East Lothian	10 October
Fife	2 October
Inverness	17 August
Kincardine	24 October
Kinross	11 December
Kirkcudbright	28 July
Midlothian	24 October
Moray	23 October
Nairn	23 October
Orkney and Shetland	16 October
Peebles	5 December
Perth	5 December
Ross and Cromarty	25 September
Roxburgh	13 December
Selkirk	4 December
Sterling	28 August
Sutherland	9 October
West Lothian	21 August
Wigtown	4 August

Lead Contamination

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money his Department has spent in each of the years between 1979-90, inclusive, on publicising the availability of lead replacement grants; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There is no separate publicity on grants for replacement of lead plumbing. The Scottish Development Department publishes a guide to all forms of assistance available under the improvement and repairs grant system. This is distributed, free of charge, to all Scottish local authorities, who are encouraged to make it widely available.

Fishing

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take action to prohibit the use of mobile fishing gear in sea lochs.

Mr. Lang: My noble Friend the Minister of State recently issued a consultation paper, "Additional Conservation Measures", in area VIA (West Coast of Scotland) in which views were sought on extending the current winter closure of the west coast sea lochs to a full year ban. The consultation period has now ended and responses are being considered.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what evidence he has of illegal fishing in the Minch.

Mr. Lang: The Minch is subject to regular surveillance by ships and aircraft of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, as are all of the main fishing grounds off the Scottish coast. In 1989 a total of five infringements of fisheries regulations were detected.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy on industrial fishing in relation to *(a)* ammodytes marinus, *(b)* ammodytes tubianus, *(c)* ammodytes semiguaranatus, *(d)* hyperoplus lancealatus and *(e)* hyperoplus immaculatus.

Mr. Lang: The Government's policy in relation to fishing for *(a)* Ammodytes marinus, *(b)* Ammodytes tobianus, *(c)* Gymnammodytes semisquamatus, *(d)*

Hyperoplus lanceolatus and *(e)* Hyperoplus immaculatus, commonly known as sand-eels, is the same as for other industrial species. Stocks are managed on the basis of scientific advice on the effect of fishing effort on stock size. The aim of such management is the sustainable long-term exploitation of the fishery resource.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will issue guidance to local authorities to make culverts under new roads cobble-bottomed to assist spawning fish to get upstream.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department is currently considering design improvements for culverts which may assist the upstream passage of fish and is co-operating with the freshwater fisheries laboratory of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland in the assessment of a particular design. If the results of the trial prove satisfactory from both an engineering and fisheries point of view appropriate design guidance will be issued to roads' authorities.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will designate the northern Minch as a marine nature reserve.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton It is for the Nature Conservancy Council, as the Government's statutory adviser, to propose any area for designation as a marine nature reserve (MNR). Two potential MNRs have been identified in Scotland by the Nature Conservancy Council using guidelines laid down in the joint NCC/NERC report entitled "Nature Conservation in the Marine Environment". The northern Minch is not one of those potential sites.

Recognised Bodies

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) when he intends to publish draft regulations on exempt recognised bodies and small recognised bodies;

(2) what consultations he intends to have concerning regulations on exempt recognised bodies and small recognised bodies.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Provided that the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill receives Royal Assent, I intend to consult widely in the first half of 1991 on the regulations to be made about charities.

Government Buildings (Security)

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the performance and cost of security services provided at various government buildings in Edinburgh by Burns Security; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I am satisfied with the security guarding services currently provided by Burns International Security Services (UK) to the Scottish Office. The contract provided substantial savings for the Scottish Office compared with the previous in-house service.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish his report on the operation of Burns (International Security Services (UK)) Ltd. in public buildings.

Mr. Rifkind: There is no report on this subject; in any event I do not regard material dealing with these matters as suitable for publication.

Disabled People

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he expects employers to contribute to the costs of providing training for people who have disabilities.

Mr. Lang: I see no reason why employers should not make contributions which appropriately reflect the direct benefit which they gain from trainees on placement with them, whether the trainees have disabilities or not, though the level of appropriate contribution will of course vary according to circumstances.

ROF Bishopton

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the Ministry of Defence action in relation to Graeme Stewart and Allan Milligan in Renfrewshire on Friday 1 June.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: On 1 June at the royal ordnance factory, Bishopton, Graeme Stewart and John Allan Milligan were charged by officers of Strathclyde police with contravening section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911. A report was subsequently submitted to the procurator fiscal at Paisley. The matter was referred to crown office and crown counsel have instructed that there be no proceedings.

Training (Orkney and Shetland)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the expenditure in each of the last two financial years on *(a)* YTS and *(b)* employment training in (i) Orkney and (ii) Shetland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

	Financial year	*Youth training* £	*Employment training* £
Orkney	1988-89	336,185	60,252
	1989-90	411,223	59,974
Shetland	1988-89	312,703	48,403
	1989-90	331,355	110,590

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the proposed Training Agency expenditure in 1990-91 in *(a)* youth training and *(b)* employment training in (i) Orkney and (ii) Shetland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

	Youth training £	*Employment training* £
Orkney	347,277	143,969
Shetland	255,890	137,939

Leukaemia

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what studies have been made of the incidence of leukaemia among children of people working at nuclear power stations in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* A case control study of all instances of childhood leukaemia diagnosed in Caithness between 1968 and 1986 is in the process of being completed. The findings of this study are expected to become available later this year.

The committee on medical aspects of radiation in the environment (COMARE) is currently planning co-ordinated retrospective studies of all cases of childhood leukaemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in the vicinity of all nuclear sites in Scotland.

Bankruptcy

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will show for each year since inception of the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985 the number of cases where bankruptcy arose principally through *(a)* personal debt, *(b)* business debt, *(c)* cautionary obligation and *(d)* other.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is not separately recorded.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Local Government Finance

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much, in cash and as a percentage of domestic rates, was met from housing benefit or income support in 1989-90.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Estimated 1989-90 expenditure for housing benefit rate rebates in England and Wales is £1·2 billion, which represents 11 per cent. of domestic rate income. The maximum housing benefit rate rebate payable was 80 per cent. of a claimant's domestic rates liability. Help towards the remaining 20 per cent. contribution for claimants in receipt of income support was included in the income support rates. Detailed expenditure information about this specific aspect of income support is not available. Domestic rates in Scotland were replaced by the community charge from 1 April 1989.

Residential Care Homes

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what assessment he has made of the financial implications of the transfer of local authority residential care homes to housing associations, voluntary and private organisations necessitating increased income support payments to some of the residents concerned.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information about expected numbers of income support claimants and expenditure for future years including the cost of such transfers is published in the Public Expenditure White Paper (Cm 1014). It has never been the practice to publish separate forecasts about expenditure specifically on people in residential care and nursing homes.

Porthmadog Local Office

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what payments were made by his Department to beneficiaries in the Porthmadog Department of Social Security office area, during 1989-90 or the most recent available year, to help maintain people in *(a)* private nursing homes and *(b)* private residential homes.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I regret that information in the form requested is not available.

Telephone Relay Service

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, pursuant to his reply of 18 April, *Official Report*, columns *890-91*, relating to the Californian relay system, he envisages a similar national unlimited access telephone relay service for deaf people in Great Britain.

Mr. Scott: I am delighted that British Telecom announced on 7 June that it is to provide £4 million over three years to launch the funding of a nationwide telephone relay system in Great Britain. The money will be given to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) to meet the costs of building, equipping and running a telephone exchange which will eventually operate on a nationwide basis and provide a 24-hour service.

The new exchange will replace the experimental scheme which the RNID have been operating in London for some time. Although necessarily limited in scope, the RNID service has demonstrated the benefits of enabling a deaf person to use the telephone to call friends, to contact local services and to make business arrangements. The Government and OFTEL as well as the RNID have been keen to see the service expanded so that deaf people wherever they live and at any time of the day, can have the freedom of the telephone system.

The national exchange will be sited outside London, but customers will be charged only on the basis of the final destination of the call.

Social Fund

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in how many cases since April 1988 social fund loans have been refused for reasons which included an assumption that the applicant lacked the resources which would allow repayment to be secured.

Mr. Scott: Since April 1988, 39,000 applications, representing 1·3 per cent. of loan decisions, have been refused because of an applicant's inability to repay.

Benefits

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the current level of social security benefits received by *(a)* a single householder aged under 25 years, *(b)* a single householder with disabilities aged under 25 years, *(c)* a pensioner couple, *(d)* a pensioner couple with disabilities and *(e)* an unemployed man with a dependent wife and two children; and in each case what they would have received at the present time if the pre-April 1988 system of benefits were still operating.

Mr. Gillian Shephard: The question is not sufficiently specific concerning the circumstances of each beneficiary to enable an assessment to be made of what benefit they might have been entitled to under the old scheme, or would be entitled to under the present scheme.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people he estimates are currently eligible for family credit and/or income support *(a)* in Wales, *(b)* in each county in Wales and *(c)* in each district council area in Wales; and what is the percentage take-up in each case.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: This information is not available.

Information about the total number of families eligible for family credit or income support can be obtained only for Great Britain, and only retrospectively, from family expenditure survey data.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether claimants for housing benefit can be disqualified from receipt of that benefit if their name does not appear on the community charge register for the appropriate local authority area; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Entitlement to housing benefit is not conditional on registration for the community charge. However, one of the conditions of entitlement to housing benefit is that the claimant must normally occupy the dwelling in respect of which benefit is claimed as home. It is for local authorities themselves to decide what evidence is reasonably required to determine whether this condition is met.

Debt Recovery

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he intends to privatise any part of his Department's debt recovery function;

(2) what work has been done within his Department concerning the possibility of privatising parts of his Department's debt recovery function.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We have no such plans. Following a recent efficiency scrutiny on the recovery of money owed to the Department, officials undertaking preparatory work for the ensuing action plan gave some consideration to this possibility. Ministers however have no intention of using private debt collectors to collect money from social security beneficiaries.

National Insurance

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the yearly cost of providing *(a)* spouse additions and *(b)* survivors benefits to the dependants of national insurance contributors when the benefit paid is dependent on *(a)* male contribution records and *(b)* female contribution records.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 24 May 1990]:* The estimated cost in 1988-89 on male contribution records of providing *(a)* spouse additions is £800 million; and *(b)* survivors benefits is £5·1 billion. On female contribution records the respective figures are £4 million and £5 million.

Note: The figures for survivors benefits do not include graduated pension inherited from a late spouse or basic retirement pension paid to certain widows. These could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Source: Government Actuary's Department.

EMPLOYMENT

Beaches

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to counter the effects of the recent publicity about dirty beaches on the tourist trade from home and abroad.

Mr. Nicholls: Department of the Environment Ministers have only recently emphasised the fact that over three quarters of designated bathing waters in England and Wales now meet EC standards; and have highlighted the very substantial programme of remedial works which is currently in hand to bring the remaining bathing waters up to standard.

Job Interview Guarantee Scheme

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest figures on the job interview guarantee scheme giving the number of participants and employers involved for each of the pilot areas; and whether he has any plans to make participation compulsory for the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service, which is responsible for the job interview guarantee, became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the employment service agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Lady on the first part of her question.

There are no plans to make the job interview guarantee compulsory for the long-term unemployed.

Mentally Ill People

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make more funds available to the Training Agency for people with mental health problems.

Mr. Nicholls: The overall budgets for training incorporate funds for trainees with special training needs, including people with mental health problems.

Tourism, South Devon

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assessment he has made of the consequences for tourism in south Devon of the holing of the supertanker Rosebay and subsequent oil pollution; and if he will make a statement as to the current condition of the tourist beaches.

Mr. Nicholls: Due to prompt action by local authorities, the Department of Transport and the local tourism industry, the tourist areas affected by oil pollution were completely cleared within a week. I understand, however, that there has been a slight decline in new holiday bookings in the area. Some of this decline may be attributable to inaccurate media comment about the extent of pollution. Nevertheless, I am confident that the area's excellent reputation for clean beaches will soon be restored.

Women with Children

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest estimated figures for the number of women with children aged under five years who do no paid work in Britain.

Mr. Nicholls: Preliminary estimates from the labour force survey for spring 1989 show that there were in Great Britain 1,792,000 women of working age, 16 to 59 years old, whose youngest dependent child was aged under five and who did no paid work in the survey week.

Tourism Projects

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his answer of 14 May, *Official Report*, column *333*, if he will list those United Kingdom projects relating to tourism which have been accepted for co-funding by the European Commission.

Mr. Nicholls: The 39 projects accepted for co-funding are:

Calderdale Educational Youth Tourism Campaign.
Bournemouth Music Festival.
Yorkshire and Humberside Tourist Board Youth Travel Consortium.
Fermanagh District Council Road Show and Patnerschaftfest.
Youth Hostels Association Gateway Project.
ICOMOS UK European Conference.
Priory High School Tourism Video.
Best Western Hotels Staff Exchange.
Cornwall County Council Green Tourism.
"KM 150" International Cycling Festival, Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board.
Mystery on the English Riviera, Torbay Tourist Board.
Carlisle and Hadrian's Wall, Carlisle TDAP.
Fiddlers Green Folk Festival, Newry and Mourne District Council.
International Scout and Guide Group, Northumberland.
European Soccer Tournament, East Anglia Tourist Board.
Ironbridge Gorge Museum and The Wrekin District Council.
Adventure Centre for Disabled People. The Calvert Trust.
Childrens Drawing Competition, High Wycombe Town Twinning Association.
Euro Job Swap Staff Exchange, South East England Tourist Board.
Southport Flower Show.
Salcombe Tourist Information Centre.
Warmest Welcome Awards, South East England Tourist Board.
Festival '90, Thanet Male Voice Choir.
Work and Culture Exchange, Youth Training Services YMCA.
Wine Tasting Competition, Bristol Wine Fair and Festival.
International Festival of Music and Dance, Inverness.
European Tourism Week, Brighton District Council.
St. Bernard Cistercian Trail, Catholic Heritage Tours.
Welcoming West London, Boroughs Promotion.
Paisley International Organ Festival, Renfrew.
Bolton European Awareness Campaign.
The Grand Tour, Great Britain Cities Marketing Group.
St. Albans Festival, St. Albans District Council.
The Jacqueline du Pre International Cello Competition Launch Concert, Torquay.
Durham County Council Town Twinning Project.
Quarry Bank Mill.
The Boat Museum Exchange Project.
Lancashire County Council, European Green Exchange.
Manchester Olympic Festival.

Labour and Social Affairs Council

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was discussed, and what decisions were reached, at the most recent meeting of the European Community's Labour and Social Affairs Council.

Mr. Howard: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) on 6 June 1990, *Official Report*, column *668*.

Home Workers

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of home workers covered by wages councils whose pay was checked by a visit in 1989, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) on 1 February, *Official Report*, column *255*.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give estimates of the number of home workers covered by wages councils and the statistics on compliance with wages council rates in 1989 for home workers in a similar format to the answer of 11 May 1989, to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist), *Official Report*, columns *515-16*.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information on home workers in wages council trades is given in the table. No count is made of the numbers of home workers covered by the councils, but estimates suggest that the total lies between 20,000 and 30,000.

Results of wages inspectorate checks of homeworkers pay by trade—1989

Wages council	*Homeworkers whose pay was checked*	*Homeworkers found underpaid*	*Percentage of homeworkers checked found underpaid*
Clothing manufacture	328	8	2·4
Button manufacture	15	—	—
Hat, cap and millinery	15	—	—
Linen and cotton handkerchief	30	—	—
Made-up textiles	—	—	—
Ostrich and fancy feather	16	—	—
Retail bespoke tailoring	8	—	—
Retail non-food	—	—	—
Rope, twine and net	403	—	—
Toy manufacture	59	—	—
Total	874	8	0·9

Results of wages inspectorate checks of homeworkers pay by division—1989

Division	*Homeworkers whose pay was checked*	*Homeworkers found underpaid*	*Percentage of homeworkers checked found underpaid*
London	36	8	22·2
South East	60	—	—
Eastern	47	—	—
South West	443	—	—
Midlands	80	—	—
North West	61	—	—
Yorkshire and Humberside	20	—	—
Northern	24	—	—
Scotland	103	—	—
Total	874	8	0·9

Action for Jobs

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much of the total expenditure on the action for jobs campaign in 1986-87 was spent on *(a)* press advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* outdoor advertising, *(d)* exhibition material, *(e)* research and *(f)* presentations.

Mr. Eggar: In 1986-87 £750,000 was spent on press advertising on the action for jobs campaign; £500,000 was spent of radio advertising; £400,000 was spent on outdoor advertising; £600,000 was spent on exhibition material; £50,000 was spent on research; and £950,000 was spent on presentation.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much of the total expenditure on the action for jobs campaign in 1988-89 was spent on *(a)* press advertising and *(b)* radio advertising.

Mr. Eggar: In 1988-89, £77,000 was spent on press advertising for the action for jobs campaign and £35,000 on radio advertising.

Wages Councils

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place in the Library a copy of the questionnaire sent to wages council establishments to check compliance with the Wages Act 1986.

Mr. Nicholls: There are two questionnaires sent to wages council establishments to check compliance with the Wages Act 1986—one for catering establishments and the other for non-catering establishments. I have arranged for both to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the reasons for not pursuing arrears of wages councils' payments in all cases except those which are not pursued at the worker's request; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Specific information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. In the small minority of cases where the wages inspectorate decides not to pursue arrears the decision is taken only after careful consideration of all the circumstances, including the likelihood of success bearing in mind such factors as the employers' ability to pay and the adequacy of evidence.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average fine imposed on employers found to be committing wages council offences in 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The average fine imposed per employer was £305·50.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his estimate of the numbers of workers covered by wages councils in each wages inspectorate division for 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he will take to reduce the underpayment of wages and other offences committed under wages council legislation which are attributed to ignorance or inadvertence.

Mr. Nicholls: Measures designed to inform employers about statutory obligations on minimum pay include the provision of information in employer and business guides, talks and advice given by the wages inspectorate to individuals and groups, and the maintenance of a register of employers in scope of wages councils and to whom wages orders are sent. Given the very high level of compliance with wages orders these measures are considered adequate.

Wages Inspectorate

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide information on all employees of the wages inspectorate division of the Department of Employment broken down by grade, sex and race.

Mr. Nicholls: Following is the information:

Grade	*Male*	*Female*	*Ethnic minority origin*
7	1	—	—
Senior executive officer	7	1	—
Higher executive officer	13	1	—
Executive officer	37	25	—
Administrative officer	14	23	3
Administrative assistant	—	5	—
Typist	—	1	—

Disabled People (Employment Quotas)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Stretford of 21 February, *Official Report*, column *825*, if he will list the criteria used to grant quota exemption permits under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944.

Mr. Eggar: Instructions to disablement resettlement officers require that they consider: (i) the availability of suitable registered disabled people; and (ii) the degree of commitment shown by employers towards meeting their obligations under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944.

TRANSPORT

Road and Rail Investment

14. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much will be invested in road and rail schemes over the next three years.

Mr. Parkinson: We expect that over the next three years some £6·2 billion will be invested in rail and underground schemes. In the same period £5·7 billion will be invested in the national road network and a further £2 billion on local roads.

Airline Competition

15. **Mr. Lester:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to create a level playing field of competition on United Kingdom domestic aviation trunk routes out of Heathrow.

23. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to create a level playing field of competition on United Kingdom domestic aviation trunk routes out of Heathrow.

Mr. Parkinson: It is very important that competition on our domestic routes—as on international ones—should be fair and in the interests of users. If there is any suggestion that competition is being distorted by unfair practices, there now exist expedited procedures for dealing with any complaint an airline puts forward, within a matter of weeks.

51. **Sir Marcus Fox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to meet the European Commissioner responsible for competition to discuss airline policy.

75. **Mr. Speed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to meet the European Commissioner responsible for competition to discuss airline competition policy.

Mr. McLoughlin: My right hon. Friend saw the Commissioner at the last EC Transport Council meeting in March when they discussed aviation competition issues. My right hon. Friend expects to see the Commissioner again at the next meeting later this month.

36. **Sir George Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next hopes to meet the chairman of British Airways to discuss airline competition policy.

52. **Sir Peter Emery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next hopes to meet the chairman of British Airways to discuss airline competition policy.

Mr. McLoughlin: I meet the Chairman from time to time, and our discussions cover a range of issues.

31. **Mr. Thornton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to create a level playing field of competition on United Kingdom domestic aviation trunk routes out of Heathrow.

Mr. McLoughlin: It is very important that competition on our domestic routes—as on international ones—should be fair and in the interests of users. If there is any suggestion that competition is being distorted by unfair practices, there now exist procedures for dealing with any complaint an airline puts forward, within a matter of weeks.

27. **Sir Charles Morrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chairman of British Midland Airways to discuss airline competition in the United Kingdom.

33. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chairman of British Midland Airways to discuss airline competition policy.

44. **Sir Giles Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chairman of British Midland Airways to discuss airline competition policy.

39. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chairman of British Midland Airways to discuss airline competition policy in Great Britain.

Mr. McLoughlin: I meet the chairman from time to time, and our discussions cover a range of issues.

Freight

16. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of freight is carried by rail in *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* the United States of America and *(c)* the European Community countries.

Mr. Freeman: In 1987, the latest year for which international comparisons are available, the proportion of freight tonnes lifted by rail in Great Britain was 8 per cent. The average for the European Community was 8 per cent. We do not have a comparable figure for the United States of America.

Dangerous Dogs

17. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to ban dangerous dogs from public transport.

Mr. Freeman: No. Public transport operators already have powers to refuse dangerous dogs.

Airshows (Regulations)

18. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review regulations in force at air shows to which the public are admitted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: The current regulations concerning safety at air shows at which more than 500 spectators are expected, article 56 of the air navigation order 1989, first came into force on 31 January 1989. The regulations are kept under constant review.

SOLAS '90 Regulations

19. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a statement regarding the progress of negotiations on the retrospective implementation of the SOLAS '90 regulations.

Mr. McLoughlin: A proposal to implement the SOLAS '90 regulations to existing ro-ro passenger ships was put to the maritime safety committee at IMO on 21 May. The committee referred the proposal for evaluation to a specialist sub-committee on stability matters. It is our intention to invite European maritime administrations to an early meeting to discuss the application of the SOLAS '90 residual stability standards to all existing ro-ro passenger ships.

Potholes

20. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received in respect of the recommendations in the Horne report.

Mr. Atkins: We have received over 100 representations this year from Hon. Members and others seeking implementation of the Horne report, recommendations. We intend to introduce legislation to reform the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 at an early opportunity.

Traffic Flow (Basingstoke)

21. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on measures being taken to improve safety and the flow of traffic on roads in the Basingstoke area.

Mr. Atkins: Most roads in the Basingstoke area are the responsibility of Hampshire county council as local highway authority. Trunk roads, for which my Department is responsible, are confined to the A339 and the M3 motorway.

Preparations for the A339 Basingstoke northern bypass stage 3 dualling scheme, to improve the 2·5 mile length between the Reading road and Roman road junctions, are now well advanced. We hope to start main works next spring for completion by late summer 1992.

The national programme also includes major schemes on the A339 for providing a grade separated junction at the present Black Dam roundabout at Basingstoke, and for improving the length of about 7 miles between Basingstoke and the planned Headley bypass. For both these schemes, the roads report "Trunk Roads, England: Into the 1990s" gives a target date of 1993 for the next key preparation stage, announcement of preferred route.

We have no current plans for improving the M3 in the Basingstoke area.

London Transport

22. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chair of London Transport to discuss improvements in London transport.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. Friend and I regularly discuss such matters with the chairman of London Regional Transport.

25. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much London Regional Transport has proposed to him to be invested to modernise the network.

Mr. Freeman: In last year's Autumn Statement, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a 115 per cent. increase in Government grant to London Regional Transport for the three years to 1992-93, which is sufficient to allow them to invest £2·2 billion. I am of course unable to anticipate the contents of this year's Autumn Statement.

Channel Tunnel

24. **Mr. Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration is being given to the effects of the channel tunnel on future rail and road investment.

Mr. Freeman: The effect of the channel tunnel on road investment is fully taken into account in the national roads programme. Planning and operation of rail services are matters for British Rail.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what security checks will passengers and baggage using the channel tunnel go through and at what point in the journey.

Mr. Freeman: The Government take very seriously the need to protect the Tunnel and those who will use it. A security check regime will be required. It would not be appropriate for me to disclose the details of the proposed security arrangements.

26. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussion he has had with British Rail on the route of the channel tunnel rail link.

35. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will make a statement on the current position in relation to plans for a high-speed rail link through Kent.

54. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail; and whether they discussed the channel tunnel rail link.

Mr. Freeman: Since November last year British Rail has been discussing the proposed channel tunnel high speed rail link with Eurorail Ltd. with a view to forming a joint venture. The parties have kept the Department in touch with progress and we are now considering their proposals.

Bus Deregulation

28. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on bus deregulation in West Yorkshire.

Mr. Freeman: Following deregulation, bus mileage in West Yorkshire increased by 7 per cent., with improvements in frequencies, the introduction of minibuses, more operators and a reduction in tender prices.

48. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the effects of bus deregulation on reliability and quality of service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The competition introduced by deregulation encourages operators to provide more reliable and better quality services. As a safeguard, traffic commissioners have powers to place restrictions on an operator's licence for various reasons including failure to operate services as registered and inadequate maintenance arrangements. These powers were exercised for these and other reasons on 150 occasions up to March 1989.

East Coast Electrification

29. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated rate of return on British Rail's investment in electrifying the east coast route to Edinburgh.

42. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated rate of return on British Rail's investment in electrifying the east coast route to Edinburgh.

46. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated rate of return on British Rail's investment in electrifying the east coast route to Edinburgh.

59. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the estimated rate of return on British Rail's investment in electrifying the east coast route to Edinburgh.

Mr. Freeman: The electrification of the east coast main line for InterCity services was approved by Ministers on 27

July 1984, on the basis that the scheme met the then normal criteria of a 7 per cent. financial return for investment in BR's commercial sectors.

45. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met British Rail to discuss its proposals for the completion of electrification of the east coast main line between Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

Mr. Freeman: British Rail at present has no proposals for the electrification of the line between Edinburgh and Aberdeen. I understand that ScotRail has appointed a project manager to review the possibilities for extending electrification in Scotland.

Airport Security

30. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will commission an inquiry into British airport security, in the light of the United States report on PanAm Flight 103.

Mr. McLoughlin: I do not consider any further inquiry to be necessary. The disaster is the subject of a major police investigation, which covers the aviation security aspects at Heathrow. The air accident investigation branch is investigating the immediate cause of the crash. The Lord Advocate has announced that it is his view that a fatal accident inquiry should be held. The Department has carried out a thorough review of its aviation security requirements and a number of far-reaching improvements have been introduced or are in train. And the Transport Select Committee has examined airport security in the light of the disaster. It has published its report and the Government's response.

Diesel Emissions

32. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals his Department has to tighten the limits on diesel emissions.

Mr. Atkins: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) on 21 May 1990 at column 5.

"How to Meet the Demand"

34. **Mr. Ground:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the issues raised in the document "How to Meet the Demand" at Heathrow, a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr. McLoughlin: My right hon. Friend is reflecting on the proposals made by British Midland Airways, which raise environmental issues requiring careful consideration.

Network SouthEast

37. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of Network SouthEast's investment is for schemes situated inside Greater London.

Mr. Freeman: Network SouthEast's investment cannot readily be disaggregated geographically. Network SouthEast operates a network of routes which radiate from London to various parts of the South East and the majority of their investment is by line of route. Because Network SouthEast's primary function is to move commuters into and out of central London each day, virtually all line of route investment, eg resignalling and new rolling stock, will benefit Greater London either directly (insofar as part of the route is inside Greater London) or indirectly (by providing a more reliable and efficient service generally to London). Some expenditure, for example on station modernisation and smaller infrastructure works, is specific to a particular location outside Greater London, but this forms only a small part of Network SouthEast's £1·2 billion three-year investment programme. However, over the next five years, investment of some £700 million in new Networker trains and associated infrastructure work is planned for south east inner suburban services the benefits of this will fall almost wholly within Greater London.

71. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of Network SouthEast's investment is funded from the public purse.

Mr. Freeman: Over the next three years, Network SouthEast plans to invest some £1·2 billion, out of a total BR investment programme of over £3·7 billion. BR's overall investment programme will be funded from both internal and external sources. Internal sources (including receipts from the sale of assets owned by the taxpayer through BR and funding through the revenue account and also linking capital improvements) will account for some 45 per cent. of the total programme of £3·7 billion. External sources of funding are classified as public expenditure and comprise revenue subsidy paid by the Government and borrowing, principally from the National Loans Fund. These external funding sources will account for the remaining 57 per cent. of the programme. British Rail's sectors, such as Network SouthEast, do not have audited accounts and the public expenditure figures are not broken down between them.

Eastbourne

38. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make an official visit to Eastbourne by train.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. Friend or I will be happy to do so when a suitable opportunity arises.

Traffic Growth (London)

40. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what forecast he is now using for projecting traffic growth in London.

Mr. Atkins: We do not forecast traffic growth in London as a whole. Specific forecasts are made for individual trunk road schemes. These tend to be lower than the 1989 national road traffic forecast, which covers the whole of Great Britain.

Travelling Safety

41. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he proposes to improve public awareness of safety while travelling.

Mr. Atkins: We launched the "Safety on the Move" campaign on 1 May with the express purpose of improving public awareness of safety while travelling on all forms of transport. I want to concentrate the attention of every

individual on what he or she can do for their own safety and the safety of others. The campaign has the support of a wide range of transport organisations and operators.

London Docklands

43. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made in developing the transport infrastructure in London docklands.

Mr. Freeman: The docklands light railway is to be completly resignalled so as to improve reliability and to cope with the greatly increased service levels planned for the 1990s. Additional trains now entering service will double capacity to Tower Gateway from this summer, and a further fleet will be available in time for the inception of single-track running to Bank early next year. The second tunnel to Bank is on course for completion late in 1991, and following the normal commissioning period a full service should commence early in 1992. Construction of the Beckton extension is underway for completion by the end of 1992, and LRT are continuing their evaluation of the case for a possible further extension to Lewisham.

A Bill is now before this House for the first major Underground line in a quarter of a century, for the Jubilee line to run from Green Park via Westminster, Waterloo and London Bridge to the Surrey Docks, Canary Wharf, the Greenwich Peninsula, Canning Town, West Ham and Stratford. Provided Royal Assent is received by mid-1991, I would expect the new line to be in service by the beginning of 1996.

Network South East is now reconsidering its proposed renovation of Stratford Station so as to take full account of the Jubilee line extension. The main line platforms are to be refurbished so as to allow calls by most outer surburban and InterCity services, and there will also be new through services from May 1991 to Stansted airport and Cambridge. Network South East is discussing with the London Docklands Development Corporation implementation early next year of a scheme for waterproofing and renovation of the Connaught tunnel so as to improve reliability of the North London line.

LRT is considering its evaluation of the case for possible extensions of the East London line northwards to Dalston and southwards to Peckham Rye and East Dulwich. Subject to confirmation of a satisfactory investment case and appropriate funding arrangements, including contributions from developers who will benefit from the scheme, LRT hope to be able to deposit a Bill in November.

LRT is now out to tender for a new express bus service from Waterloo and London Bridge to the Isle of Dogs and Leamouth for which LDDC and a consortium of Docklands employers are contributing towards the first year's operational costs. London Buses and Docklands Minibus are continuing to tailor their services to improve reliability and links from Docklands, especially to the City.

Riverbus continues to operate a frequent, fast service on the Thames between central London and the Docklands and Greenwich with separate services to Chelsea harbour and London City airport. Season tickets and a tourist rover ticket have recently been introduced.

All of the LDDC's Docklands Highways in the Royal Docks are now in at least partial use, bringing high quality road access from the M25 to within sight of London City airport. The first direct road link between the Isle of Dogs and the Royal Docks—the Lower Lea crossing is under construction for completion in the spring of 1992, bringing London City airport within a 15 minute drive from Canary Wharf as the Canary Wharf eastern access road will be completed this autumn. LDDC hope to let the main contracts by late summer for the East India dock link and the Poplar link, and construction of the Limehouse link is on course for completion to Westferry Circus in the summer of 1993.

Consultations continue on the inclusion of the A13 west of Butcher Row in the pilot red route. The first of my Department's improvements to the key junctions on the A13 trunk road should start on site at Leamouth road next month, and diversion of services is already in hand for an interim scheme due to start this autumn at the junction with West India dock road concurrent with its widening by LDDC as part of the Poplar link scheme. We hope to go to public consultation before the end of this year on improvement of the A13/A112 junction and to publish draft orders early next year for a new dual two-way flyover at the A13/A117 junction. Schemes to widen the A13 Ironbridge and make final improvements to the A13 junctions with the Blackwall tunnel/Cotton street, West India dock road and Butcher Row are programmed for completion by the mid-1990s. We have published draft orders for widening of the A13 from Dagenham to the M25. The City of London's Bill for construction of the A12 Hackney to M11 link through Epping Forest is now in another place, and subject also to confirmation of a compulsory purchase order I would expect to see construction begin from the Redbridge end in the Spring of 1991. A new traffic control system for east London should be completed late next year.

A two-year scheme has now started for renovation of the old Blackwall tunnel. We are conducting a study of the riverbed regime so as to help decide whether the proposed third tunnel at Blackwall should be a bore or a submerged tube. Consultations will be carried out later this year on terms of reference for the proposed study into the need for possible additional cross river capacity between Blackwall and Tower Bridge.

Public inquiries begin on 3 July into the proposed changes to the east London river crossing and the planning applications to allow use of London City airport by more types of aircraft.

My Department and LDDC are now collaborating on the publication in September of a joint update to their respective publications on Docklands transport.

British Rail

47. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has had any recent discussions with the chairman of British Rail concerning environmental matters.

Mr. Freeman: No.

Central London Rail Study

49. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce his decision on the central London rail study.

Mr. Freeman: The further work required before a decision can be made is being given a high priority. An announcement will be made as soon as possible.

Local Authority Airports

50. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any recent representations on the way local authority plc airports are run.

Mr. McLoughlin: My right hon. Friend has received no formal representations on this subject recently.

Railway Gauges

53. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to upgrade mainline rail routes throughout Great Britain to continental gauge standard in order to obtain the maximum benefit from the opening of the channel tunnel and the completion of the single European market; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: It is for British Rail rather than the Government to plan rail infrastructure and rail services for the United Kingdom. All freight trains in use by British Rail at present are compatible with the continental (Berne) gauge. The cost of converting United Kingdom lines to the continental (Berne) gauge would be considerable. Passenger trains for services through the channel tunnel will be specially designed to suit different platform heights in different countries. For freight it would involve setting back station platforms so that these wider trains could pass through, and the replacement of all passenger rolling stock using the stations affected. British Rail plan to use new wagon technology—such as small wheel bogie wagons —that will enable larger loads, equivalent to those generally carried in mainland Europe, to be carried on the existing United Kingdom loading gauge, and will be more commercially viable than expensive infrastructure modifications.

Heathrow-Central London Rail Service

55. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will hold discussions with British Rail management on the finalisation of a target opening date for the Heathrow-central London British Rail service.

Mr. Freeman: Neither British Rail nor the British Airports Authority, who are joint sponsors of this project, can finalise the opening date until the Heathrow Express Railway Bill completes its remaining parliamentary stages.

Shipping

56. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for Government support to British shipping.

Mr. McLoughlin: The most valuable assistance that we can give the British shipping industry is generally to encourage a free market in shipping and, where necessary, to persuade our competitor nations to reduce their restrictions on free and open competitive shipping markets. We have, however, taken some specific measures to give financial assistance to our shipping industry for training and crew relief costs. My right hon. Friend has also announced a joint working party to establish the present circumstances in which the British shipping industry operates.

Rail Links (South Yorkshire)

57. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the improvement of rail links in South Yorkshire.

Mr. Freeman: None.

Flags of Convenience

58. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to review the practice of registering ships under flags of convenience.

Mr. McLoughlin: Under the Merchant Shipping Acts qualified owners are entitled but not obliged to place their ships on the British flag. The identification of the main obstacles to the use of the British flag is included in the terms of reference of the joint working party announced by my right hon. Friend in his answer of 24 May to my hon. Friend the Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed) at column *288*.

Trunk Roads

60. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trunk road schemes are currently under construction; and at what total cost.

Mr. Atkins: There are 59 trunk road schemes currently under construction in England, with a total works cost, at current prices, of £1·4 billion.

Commuter Services (London)

61. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has received from London Underground Ltd. and British Rail to increase commuter services in the Greater London area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. Friend has set London Underground Limited the objectives of increasing peak capacity by 5 per cent. over the next two years. Network SouthEast plan to operate 2 per cent. more train miles overall in the coming year than they did in 1989. The operators require our approval for proposals to increase the capacity of their services only if these involve major new capital expenditure.

LRT Project (Greater Manchester)

62. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has estimated the effects upon commerce and trade in the Greater Manchester area of the light rapid transit project linking Bury and Altrincham; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: An assessment by the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive of the possible effects of the project on economic activity in the Greater Manchester area indicates that the improvement in accessability may provide some stimulation to commerce and trade in the Greater Manchester area. The precise effects are however difficult to forecast. In consultation with the Department, the Executive has made arrangements to monitor the actual effects of the project.

M4 (Widening)

63. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress on schemes for widening the M4.

Mr. Atkins: We are planning four separate improvements to widen the 58 miles of M4 between M25 and Swindon, and the 10 mile stretch east of M5. For all these schemes the next key preparation stage is the announcement of a preferred scheme; that for the two sections between M25 and Theale (Junction 12) is expected next summer, between Theale and Swindon (Junction 15) in 1993, and for the Avon section (Junction 18 to 20) in 1992.

Air Traffic Control

64. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in the proposals to integrate Europe's air traffic control offices.

Mr. McLoughlin: My right hon. Friend has recently agreed with 22 other European Transport Ministers an action programme to increase capacity in Europe buy integrating air traffic control systems and optimising the air traffic route network. The integration programme commits European states to intensify work on measures to handle safely the forecast growth in traffic to the end of the century. The integration programme, which follows much hard work between ourselves and our European partners, is a major step forward. It builds on the substantial investment in air traffic control systems in Europe, not least by UK's Civil Aviation Authority.

69. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been invested by the Civil Aviation Authority to improve air traffic control.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Civil Aviation Authority has invested more than £140 million over the five years to 31 March 1989 to improve air traffic control facilities.

Urban Roads

65. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures his Department is taking to make urban roads more environmentally acceptable.

Mr. Atkins: Local authorities are responsible for the vast majority of urban roads. My Department publishes advice on a wide range of urban traffic issues, including a variety of traffic calming measures which can be introduced in suitable circumstances and make the environment safer and more pleasant.

On trunk roads, 37 bypasses completed in the last 3 years have removed through traffic from towns and villages. 150 bypasses and relief roads are in preparation. Already this year we have announced that we shall make more use of our discretionary powers to provide noise insulation, that we will appoint consultants to produce guidance on environmental treatment of urban roads, and that we will improve the environment of existing roads.

Air Transport Agreements (USA)

66. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent progress has been made concerning bilateral air transport agreements between Britain and the United States of America.

73. **Mr. Haselhurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what benefits for British carriers he is seeking in his discussions with the United States' authorities regarding the air services agreement.

Mr. McLoughlin: Negotiations are continuing.

London Regional Transport

67. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what contributions he expects London Regional Transport to receive in the year 1990-91 from London borough councils, in lieu of the rate-related contributions of previous years.

Mr. Freeman: The London Regional Transport ratepayer levy was abolished with effect from 1 April this year. The grant paid to LRT now comes entirely from central Government.

Road Priorities (Northampton)

68. **Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on road priorities in the vicinity of Northampton.

Mr. Atkins: The trunk roads programme contains three schemes in the vicinity of Northampton. Construction of the A43 Blisworth and Milton Malsor bypass started in April this year and is expected to take two years to complete. A Public Consultation exercise into the A43 Moulton bypass and A43 Moulton to Broughton dualling schemes has recently been carried out. Subject to the satisfactory completion of statutory procedures work could start in mid 1995 with completion in 1997. There are other trunk road proposals within Northamptonshire as a whole which are listed in the current Roads Report "Trunk Roads, England" which was published in February this year.

Priority Routes (London)

70. **Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made on the priority routes pilot project for London; and when it is now expected to be implemented.

Mr. Atkins: The Department has commissioned Ove Arup and Partners to plan the introduction of the pilot scheme. We have started a comprehensive consultation exercise with the local authorities and interest groups concerned. The scheme is expected to be implemented later this year.

Level Crossings

72. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to review safety procedures pertaining to automatic unguarded rail level crossings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Professor P. F. Stott was appointed in 1987 to review the safety of automatic open level crossings, following the accident at Lockington. His report made a number of recommendations, which are being implemented.

Learner Drivers

74. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a further statement on the measures he proposes to tighten up on the rules for the supervision of learner drivers.

Mr. Atkins: The consultation on the draft regulations ended on 18 May. I am now considering the responses, with a view to bringing forward regulations very soon.

London-Newcastle Air Service

76. **Mr Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to increase competition on the London-Newcastle air service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: The pattern of services on individual routes is a matter for the commercial judgment of airlines who may apply to the Civil Aviation Authority at any time for a licence in accordance with published procedures.

Vehicle Excise Duty

77. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has as to the amount of revenue lost in 1989-90 as a result of evasion of vehicle excise duty.

Mr. Atkins: The amount of revenue lost through vehicle excise duty evasion in Great Britain during the financial year 1989-90, is estimated at £103 million.

Drink-driving

78. **Mr. Higgins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will exclude from consideration in further road safety measures any proposal to link the level of alcohol in the blood at which it is deemed dangerous to drive and the age or experience of the driver.

Mr. Atkins: It would be wrong to exclude anything from consideration or public debate that might help reduce deaths and injuries among young and inexperienced drivers.

Child Fare Permits, London

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he was consulted concerning the decision of London Regional Transport to discontinue the child fare permit scheme with local authorities; and what are the savings to boroughs and London Regional Transport.

Mr. Freeman: I understand that the scheme has been withdrawn because boroughs no longer make any significant use of it, preferring to subsidise travel for scholars aged 16 or over by reimbursing parents directly. Across the whole of London, London Regional Transport received requests to issue only 341 permits this year. There is no question of their having to consult Ministers about minor changes of this sort. I understand that the change will result in a small saving in administrative costs.

Wheelchair-adapted Vehicles

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department is planning research into the design of the fittings used to adapt vehicles to carry wheelchair passengers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: My Department has a continuing programme of research, in close co-operation with industry, looking at the design and operational effectiveness of wheelchair restraints and occupant harnesses and the means by which they are fitted to vehicles.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents involving vehicles specially adapted to carry wheelchair passengers have occurred for each of the past 10 years, by region; and how many wheelchair passengers were (i) injured and (ii) killed in these accidens.

Mr. Atkins: The information requested is not available, as it is not recorded on STATS 19 accident report form.

Railway Subsidies

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 14 May, *Official Report*, column *328*, whether any subsidies paid to the railways in other European Economic Community countries have fallen foul of Community legislation relating to Community directives and regulations concerning competition policy.

Mr. Freeman: This is a matter for the Commission and individual EC member states.

Rail Services (Customs Arrangements)

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much of the £98·5 million recently authorised for the international passenger terminal at Waterloo is accounted for by the decision of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise service to construct green and red channels for the use of passengers prior to the boarding of trains.

Mr. Freeman: Her Majesty's Customs and Excise checks at the Waterloo international terminals will be comparable to those at airports and seaports. The only facility being provided for departing passengers is a VAT office at an estimated cost of £70,000. The cost of constructing green and red channels and the necessary ancillary accommodation to handle arriving passengers is estimated at £3·44 million.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on decisions taken by the French, West German, Belgian and Luxembourg authorities in regard to their own rail services and customs requirements.

Mr. Freeman: I have no information on these countries' current domestic arrangements. I understand that these countries are proposing to sign a treaty which abolishes internal border checks but which strengthens external checks and internal measures.

Oil Spillages

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what proposals he has for increasing the number of vessels capable of mechanically recovering oil;

(2) how many vessels capable of the mechanical recovery of oil are available for hire in the United Kingdom; and where they are normally located.

Mr. McLoughlin: The speed of ships—10 to 12 knots—makes them slow to deploy to the scene of an oil

pollution incident which could occur anywhere around the 3,000 miles or so of United Kingdom coastline. And mechanical oil recovery systems are unable to operate in the weather conditions that exist around United Kingdom coasts for much of the year. Because of those limitations the Marine Pollution Control Unit's contingency arrangements are for government owned and commercial sets of portable equipment held in shore stockpiles to be fitted into suitable vessels as and when the occasion demands. There are many such vessels which can be used for this purpose and the nearest suitable ship would be chartered together with a coastal tanker to receive recovered oil.

There is one commercially owned purpose-built sea-going oil recovery vessel for hire in the United Kingdom; this is normally based in the Forth. I have no plans for increasing the number of such vessels. The Department's first-line response strategy is aerial dispersant spraying. MPCU has under contract seven dedicated Dakota DC3 spraying aircraft and two Cessna remote-sensing aircraft to direct and control operations.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any proposals to recommend the strengthening of oil tanker hulls.

Mr. McLoughlin: The standards governing the strength of tanker hulls are reviewed periodically. The International Maritime Organisation is however investigating ways to reduce the quantity of oil released from a tanker in the aftermath of a collision or grounding and this may lead to changes in tanker design.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken to ensure that there would be no delay in compensation payments following an oil spill from a vessel not registered in a state signatory to the civil liability convention for oil pollution damage.

Mr. McLoughlin: In such circumstances compensation would come from the international oil pollution compensation fund based in London. It is the fund's policy to pay claims with the minimum of delay; in certain circumstances provisional payments may be made before final settlement of a claim if that is necessary in order to mitigate undue financial hardship to a claimant.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what incentives exist for oil-carrying vessels to register in a state which is a signatory to the international convention on civil liability for oil pollution damage.

Mr. McLoughlin: The 1969 international convention on civil liability for oil pollution damage allows a shipowner to limit his liability in respect of claims in member states following an oil spill. The shipowner has to have compulsory insurance cover to meet his maximum liability which is calculated on his ship's tonnage and this insurance can be obtained at reasonable cost. These advantages to the shipowner have to be balanced against advantages to claimants. Claimants do not have to prove fault, the shipowner is strictly liable. Further the requirement for compulsory insurance guarantees that funds will be available to meet claims. In the event that the total claims exceed the shipowner's limit of liability a 1971 convention provides that any excess can be claimed from an international fund financed by a levy on oil importers. The majority of European states are members of both the 1969 and 1971 conventions. Improvements to both conventions were agreed in 1984 and we are actively encouraging their international entry into force.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any proposals to regulate the strength of oil tanker hulls and their impact resistance strengths through the fitting of removable bumpers.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Merchant Shipping (Cargo Ship Construction and Survey) Regulations require the structural strength of an oil tanker registered in the United Kingdom to be adequate for its intended services. Removable bumpers on tankers have severe practical limitations. In general, bumpers are suitable only for low-energy contact of the sort encountered in harbours and terminals.

M40 Extension

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if ducting will be laid alongside the M40 extension through Oxfordshire to allow the installation of comprehensive lighting at a later date.

Mr. Atkins: No. When the design of the motorway was underway the Department did not consider the expenditure ncessary to make provision for lighting at a future date was justified.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice he has received from the Thames Valley police authority on the lighting proposed for the M40 extension through Oxfordshire.

Mr. Atkins: We have no record of this issue being raised by the Thames Valley police.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evaluation has been made of the need for *(a)* lighting and *(b)* fog hazard warning lights on the M40 through Oxfordshire.

Mr. Atkins: The need for lighting was assessed in accordance with my Department's policy and was not justified except at the more major grade separated interchanges. As with all unlit motorways, my Department will review regularly the need for lighting. Matrix warning signs are being installed and should be operational to coincide with the motorway opening. No specific fog warning system is proposed at present. We will review the situation following detailed evaluation of the fog warning system currently being installed on the M25.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give details of the arrangements for lighting the M40 extension through Oxfordshire.

Mr. Atkins: Lighting will be confined to the major interchanges at the A418 (Waterstock) (J8), Windlebury (J9), Ardley (J10) and Banbury (J11).

Collision and Avoidance Systems

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many tenders for collision and avoidance systems research have been received by his Department in the past five years;

(2) how many research projects into collision and avoidance systems are currently funded by his Department.

Mr. McLoughlin: During the last five years, the Department has received and accepted tenders for three research projects into collision and avoidance systems. These were marine collision risk—mathematical models; a behavioural study of the collision avoidance task in bridge watchkeeping; and collision avoidance behaviour: a simulator study. The simulator study has recently been completed; its recommendations are being considered and further research may be proposed.

Bidston-Wrexham Railway

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any application from British Rail for investment in the Bidston-Wrexham line.

Mr. Freeman: No.

Motor Cyclists

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to introduce compulsory training for motor cyclists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: As part of our measures to improve the safety of young motor cyclists on the road compulsory basic training for all new riders of motor cycles and mopeds will be introduced on 1 December 1990. This will apply throughout Great Britain, except for residents of the smaller off-shore islands. I am grateful for the hard work of all those concerned from the motor cycle industry, user groups and safety organisations who have made it possible for me to set this firm date.

The part I motor cycle test will continue for six months after the introduction of compulsory training. This is to allow those learner riders who already have their licences the choice of taking either the part I test, or a compulsory training course, before applying for the accompanied motor cycle L test.

I have also decided that the proposal to reduce the validity of provisional motor cycle licences from two years to one year will not be proceeded with at this stage. It will be reconsidered in the light of progress with compulsory training.

I am very grateful to all those organisations and individuals who submitted comments on the Department's consultation paper on compulsory training. I will be issuing the Department's response shortly.

I also welcome the initiative of the Motorcycle Industry Association to set up a joint action group, with full participation from the Motorcycle Retailers Association, training organisations, road safety officers, and the Driving Standards Agency. Its aim will be to see that adequate facilities exist and ensure that the introduction of compulsory training takes place throughout Great Britain as smoothly as possible.

Speed Limits

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the reasons for the difference in traffic speeds and the level of enforcement of speed limits on the M4 and the M1.

Mr. Atkins: Traffic speed depends on the volume of traffic which can vary with time of day and day of week. Such variation is different for different motorways. The responsibility for the enforcement of road traffic laws on all roads, including motorways, is a matter for individual chief officers of police. Chief officers are committed to effective motorway enforcement.

Traffic Information

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he proposes to give more traffic information to drivers.

Mr. Atkins: I attach great importance to drivers and transport managers having available to them more comprehensive and up to date information on traffic and road conditions to help them plan their journeys. I shall shortly be meeting the main organisations which collect and disseminate such information to discuss the way forward.

Ro-ro Ferries

Mr. Terry Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what decision was taken at the maritime safety committee of the International Maritime Organisation in May on the proposal that the committee should consider the adoption of a standard of residual stability for existing roll-on roll-off ferries higher than that now required by the convention.

Mr. McLoughlin: The proposal to implement a higher standard of residual stability to existing roll-on roll-off ferries was referred by the Maritime Safety Committee to a specialist sub-committee on stability matters.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 12 June 1990

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Quarantine

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for which diseases quarantine restrictions on animals can operate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Quarantine restrictions on imported animals are currently applied in relation to foot and mouth disease, Newcastle disease and rabies. Considerable importance is attached to quarantine and the Government believe that such measures should be maintained as long as they are necessary to prevent the introduction of disease.

Caseous Lymphadenitis

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the countries where caseous lymphadenitis is found.

Mr. Gummer: Caseous lymphadenitis is known to occur in many parts of Africa, south America, Asia, Europe, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the number of *(a)* sheep and *(b)* goats affected by restrictions for caseous lymphadenitis by county.

Mr. Gummer: Restrictions are at present imposed on *(a)* one flock in Buckinghamshire and one consignment undergoing post import on-farm isolation in Nottinghamshire *(b)* two herds in Buckinghamshire, two herds in Oxfordshire, and one herd each in Berkshire, Surrey and Lancashire. The flock of sheep in Buckinghamshire and one of the two goat herds in Buckinghamshire are on the same premises and subject to the same restriction notice.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food from which country the current outbreak of caseous lymphadenitis originated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The current outbreak of caseous lymphadenitis appears to be associated with the import of goats from West Germany.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to prevent further cases of caseous lymphadenitis from being imported into the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: We continue to rely on certification by exporting countries that sheep and goats sent to the United Kingdom come from premises which are free from caseous lymphadenitis and the herd of origin has shown no clinical serological or pathological signs of the disease in the previous three years. Animals should also be examined immediately prior to export. Ministry veterinary officers, local veterinary surgeons and producers have been asked to be vigilant for any signs of the disease and have found infection in April in a group of sheep which were undergoing post import on-farm isolation.

Contaminated Pigfeed

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 9 May, *Official Report*, column *132*, if he will list the contaminants now found in pigfeed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: No present problems with contaminants have been reported and feedingstuffs associated with recent contaminants have been withdrawn.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) how many pigs have now been slaughtered as a result of the contaminated pigfeed; from which counties they came; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list the up-to-date information concerning the number of farms and pigs affected by contaminated pigfeed on a county-by-county basis.

Mr. Gummer: The total number of pigs that to date have been slaughtered for welfare reasons and the number of farms where pigs were affected by contaminated pigfeed, county by county, is as follows:

	Pigs	*Farms*
Devon	3	1
Hampshire	15	1
Humberside	85	7
Durham	126	5
Nottinghamshire	5	1
Yorkshire	1,100	62
	1,334	77

Scrapie

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether there is any evidence of the scrapie agent being present in sheep milk.

Mr. Maclean: No transmissible spongiform encephalopathy, including sheep scrapie, has been shown to transmit through milk. Scientific studies on scrapie have shown that the agent is not found in milk.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has on the frequency of infections by *(a)* the scrapie agent in the muscle (meat) of scrapie-affected sheep and *(b)* the BSE agent in the muscle (meat) of BSE-affected cows.

Mr. Maclean: Scientific studies have shown that the scrapie agent is not found in the muscle (meat) of sheep naturally affected by scrapie. By analogy with scrapie, a very similar disease to BSE, the BSE agent is not expected to be found in the muscle of affected animals. Studies are nevertheless under way to confirm this.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will provide a

summary of the results of any research work on whether the scrapie agent can be vertically transmitted by an infected ram.

Mr. Maclean: There has been much work carried out in this area, all of which has shown that the scrapie agent is not found in the reproductive organs or semen of scrapie-infected rams.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if there is any restriction on the use for human consumption of sheep meat and offals including those from scrapie-infected sheep.

Mr. Maclean: No specific controls apply since scrapie is not a risk to human health.

British Cattle Exports

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the countries that have now banned the import of all live British cattle.

Mr. Maclean: Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, Israel, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, USA and the USSR.

Mr. Cash: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will take action against France and Germany under article 170 of the treaty of Rome for their banning of beef imports from the United Kingdom in contravention of article 30 of the treaty of Rome;

(2) if he will formally join with the European Commission in proceedings against France and Germany for their banning of beef imports from the United Kingdom in contravention of article 30 of the treaty of Rome.

Mr. Maclean: The action taken by France and Germany to ban imports of beef from the United Kingdom offended Community rules and I supported the Conmmission's intention to institute legal proceedings should these bans remain in place. However, as I announced in the House on 7 June, those bans were lifted following discussion in the special Agricultural Council.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will list the names and number of cases of BSE detected at each abattoir;

(2) how many cases of BSE were *(a)* volunteered by farmers, *(b)* detected at cattle markets, *(c)* detected at abattoirs by veterinary inspectors and *(d)* detected at abattoirs by other personnel.

Mr. Maclean: Over 98 per cent. of suspect cases of BSE have been reported on farm. Up to 31 March 1990, 133 suspect cases had been reported in markets (of which 92 were confirmed) and 203 suspect cases reported at abattoirs (of which 149 were confirmed). A breakdown of abattoirs involved is not available.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether the Government will initiate a programme to look for the possible occurrence of spongiform encephalopathy in dogs;

(2) if he will investigate the incidence of canine spongiform encephalopathy among breeding bitches in licensed and unlicensed puppy farms;

(3) if he will investigate the incidence on puppy farms of proprietors feeding their dogs on *(a)* dead sheep which have may have died of scrapie, *(b)* condemned meat and *(c)* beef infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy; and if he will make it his practice to advise all puppy farmers to avoid feeding any meat which contained offal.

Mr. Maclean: There have been no reports of naturally occurring or laboratory-induced spongiform encephalopathy in dogs. Nevertheless, as recommended by the Tyrrell committee, the health of dogs is being monitored by veterinary surgeons and a study is being planned on hounds, which are traditionally fed fallen livestock.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food who is responsible for the disposal of the carcases of BSE-affected cattle; and what proportion are *(a)* incinerated, *(b)* disposed of in toxic waste tips and *(c)* disposed of in domestic refuse tips.

Mr. Maclean: The disposal of carcases of BSE-affected cattle is the responsibility of the Ministry. Nationally about two thirds are incinerated and one third are disposed of by burial on licensed waste disposal sites approved by local authorities for this purpose. Information on the classification of individual sites is not held centrally.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress is being made in developing a test for identifying BSE in live cattle; and how soon he expects such a test to be available.

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 21 May at column *86*.

Drift Nets

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what regulations are currently in force to prevent the use of drift nets of over 5 km in length on United Kingdom boats; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: I understand that no United Kingdom vessel uses drift nets as long as 5 km and indeed the substantial proportion are between 200 and 400 m in length. There is no general length restriction in force but there are several regulations which limit drift nets in specific fisheries or areas to well within 5 km in length.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the annual accidental catch of birds and marine mammals by United Kingdom drift net boats is reported to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: It is known that fishermen in the United Kingdom may accidentally catch mammals and birds in their nets, but there is no evidence that this occurs on a significant scale. The drift net fisheries around our coast are quite modest and do not give rise to the sort of environmental problems associated with the very large-scale drift netting operations in the Pacific, about which there has been justified concern.

Veterinary Products

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to ensure that the use of veterinary products that are likely to affect the wider environment, whether licensed or not, are recorded, regulated and monitored; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: All veterinary medicinal products must be licensed under the Medicines Act. They are assessed for safety, quality and efficacy before any licence is issued. The likely impact on the environment is taken into account by independent scientific experts on the Veterinary Products Committee as part of that assessment process. My Department is currently carrying out a review to ensure that all licensed veterinary medicinal products meet up-to-date standards. Any person who causes or knowingly permits veterinary products to pollute any controlled waters is liable to prosecution by the National Rivers Authority under the Water Act 1989. Under the Animals and Fresh Meat (Examination for Residues) Regulations 1988 farmers must keep records of medicines administered to animals and these are subject to checks by members of the state veterinary service.

Fish Farms

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what advice he has received from the Veterinary Products Committee regarding the review of the licence for Aquaguard for use on salmon farms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I hope to make a statement shortly.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has measured the quantity of antibiotics released into the marine environment as treatment for diseases of farmed fish; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: All veterinary medicines including antibiotics used for treating fish diseases are assessed for safety, quality and efficacy under the Medicines Act before a licence is issued. Any likely impact on the marine environment is taken into account by independent scientific experts on the Veterinary Products Committee as part of that assessment process. When a licence for such a product is due to expire, evidence of environmental impact is carefully assessed before any decision is made to renew the licence. Antibiotics used for treating fish disease are available only on prescription from a veterinary surgeon.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research has been conducted by him into antibiotic residues in farmed salmon; and when and where the results will be published.

Mr. Gummer: Surveillance for antibiotic residues in farmed salmon is in progress and the results will be published in the food surveillance paper series once the work has been completed. It would be premature at this stage to make a statement.

British Beef Exports

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the countries that have now banned all imports of British beef.

Mr. Maclean: The following countries have notified a ban on imports of British beef: Austria, Bahrain and Turkey.

Hound Ataxia

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will instruct veterinary surgeons to conduct post mortem investigations in cases of hound ataxia to ensure that it is not unrecognised canine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: I am not aware that any cases of hound ataxia have occurred in Britain in recent years. No cases of spongiform encephalopathy have been identified in canines but the state veterinary service investigates suspect cases in various species referred to it.

Live Horses (Export)

Mr. Michael: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make it his policy not to allow the export of live horses to Europe for slaughter to start again.

Mr. Maclean: The Government's policy is to maintain controls to prevent the export of horses for slaughter.

Casualty Animals (Slaughter)

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he will consider the introduction of a certificate of receipt system for the slaughter of casualty animals;

(2) whether he will consider a review of the Slaughterhouses (Hygiene) Regulations 1977, to prevent the slaughter of casualty animals without a veterinary officer's certificate.

Mr. Maclean: The Slaughterhouses (Hygiene) Regulations 1977 already require a veterinary health certificate for animals known or suspected to be injured or diseased, and for carcases of such animals, intended to be presented at the slaughterhouse, subject to certain exceptions. These relate to injuries of recent origin, such as during transit when a veterinarian will not be available, and for welfare reasons to sheep and lamb carcases, where a declaration by the owner is acceptable.

It is an offence to allow casualty animals or their carcases to enter a slaughterhouse uncertified under any other circumstances.

I am already considering whether any changes to the regulations may be desirable.

Bovine Head Meat

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he will introduce regulations to ban the removal of meat from a bovine head until the skull and brain of the head have been removed from the head by an authorised boning plant;

(2) whether he will introduce regulations to ensure that the trimming of meat from bovine heads is allowed only after the removal of the skull and brain.

Mr. Maclean: Cattle which show signs of BSE, or are suspected of having the disease, are slaughtered and do not go for human consumption. The ban on brains and other specified offal is an ultra-precautionary measure applying to clinically healthy animals.

Nevertheless, we are aware of concerns about particular methods of brain removal. Wherever possible, head meat

should be removed before the skull is opened so that brain tissue does not come into contact with the meat. We have conducted studies into the methods employed for removing brains where this is not feasible. The Tyrrell committee has been asked to review our findings and I shall consider whether any further action is desirable having regard to the committee's advice. In the meantime, the state veterinary service is ready to give advice if needed.

Beef Cattle (Slaughter)

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will ban the slaughter of beef cattle presented for slaughter at a slaughterhouse, where those cattle have been transported more than 20 miles.

Mr. Maclean: I have no plans to do so.

WALES

Project 2000

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will reconsider the contents of his circular of 27 April, reference DGM/90/32, concerning the phasing in of Project 2000 in Wales; and if he will take urgent steps for full implementation of Project 2000 throughout Wales at the earliest possible date, if possible by autumn 1991 in line with the original proposals.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the replies I gave to the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) on 24 May.

Herbal Remedies

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will seek to ensure that dispensation is achieved from European Community harmonisation regulations in order to safeguard the right of people in Wales to continue to use herbal remedies.

Mr. Grist: European Community legislation applies equally in all member states. Herbal remedies currently available are controlled by the Medicines Act 1968 and subject to the provisions of the EC directive 75/319/EEC for the regulation of proprietary medicinal products. We are not aware of any proposals for further harmonisation directives concerning herbal remedies.

Steel Industry

Mr. John P. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to maintain employment in the steel industry.

Mr. David Hunt: I am naturally anxious to maximise employment throughout the Welsh economy, including the steel industry. However, employment in any individual sector must take account of demand for products.

Mortality Rates

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the amount of *(a)* perinatal and *(b)* neonatal mortality in each district health authority and management division in Wales in each of the years 1986 to 1989.

Mr. Grist: The information is given in the tables. Care should be taken in interpreting mortality rates derived from fewer than 20 events, and these are marked in the tables with [2].

a. Perinatal mortality[1]	*1986 Number*	*1986 Rate*	*1987 Number*	*1987 Rate*	*1988 Number*	*1988 Rate*	*1989 Number*	*1989 Rate*
Wales	384	10·3	351	9·2	334	8·6	318·0	8·3
DHA/Management Units								
Clwyd DHA	52	10·2	46	8·8	40	7·6	45	8·5
North Clwyd	26	12·4	21	9·8	13	[2]5·8	15	[2]7·1
South Clwyd	26	8·7	25	8·1	27	[2]8·9	20	9·4
East Dyfed DHA	32	12·5	28	10·1	25	9·1	25	9·5
Ceredigion	5	[2]7·5	11	[2]15·1	6	[2]8·2	9	[2]12·3
Carmarthen-Dinefwr	10	[2]13·2	11	[2]13·1	6	[2]7·2	6	[2]7·3
Llanelli-Dinefwr	17	[2]15·0	6	[2]5·0	13	[2]11·0	10	[2]9·2
Pembrokeshire DHA	11	[2]8·0	12	[2]8·2	19	[2]13·4	13	[2]8·9
Gwent DHA	58	9·6	65	10·7	56	8·7	52	8·3
North Gwent Hospitals	15	[2]10·1	17	[2]11·4	11	[2]7·1	12	[2]7·6
Pontypool and West Gwent Hospitals	21	10·4	23	11·[illegible]	26	11·6	17	[2]8·1
Newport and Chepstow Hospitals	22	8·8	25	9·9	19	[2]7·1	23	8·9
Gwynedd DHA	37	13·1	29	10·2	23	7·6	19	[2]6·4
Anglesey	12	[2]13·6	11	[2]12·0	6	[2]6·4	4	[2]4·2
Meirionnydd	3	[2]8·5	5	[2]12·6	2	[2]5·4	4	[2]10·2
Aberconwy	5	[2]9·3	3	[2]5·6	4	[2]6·4	3	[2]4·8
Arfon	13	[2]17·1	7	[2]9·9	6	[2]7·5	5	[2]6·5
Dwyfor	4	[2]13·6	3	[2]10·6	5	[2]16·4	3	[2]11·5
Mid Glamorgan DHA	75	10·0	56	7·2	71	9·0	77	10·1
Ogwr	15	[2]8·4	19	[2]10·7	15	[2]7·8	18	[2]9·8
Taff Ely	11	[2]8·1	4	[2]2·9	15	[2]10·8	14	[2]10·4
Rhondda	10	[2]9·3	8	[2]7·1	7	[2]6·4	12	[2]11·0
Merthyr-Cynon	21	12·1	12	[2]6·7	18	[2]10·0	21	11·3
Rhymney Valley	18	[2]11·6	13	[2]7·9	16	[2]9·6	12	[2]7·9
Powys DHA	12	[2]9·5	20	14·9	17	[2]12·2	8	[2]5·7
Montgomery	6	[2]10·8	12	[2]19·1	8	[2]11·6	4	[2]6·0
Brecknock and Radnor	6	[2]8·5	8	[2]11·3	9	[2]12·9	4	[2]5·4
South Glamorgan DHA	59	10·1	50	8·6	43	7·1	44	7·5
West Glamorgan DHA	48	10·1	45	9·5	40	8·4	35	7·6

a. Perinatal mortality[1]	*1986 Number*	*1986 Rate*	*1987 Number*	*1987 Rate*	*1988 Number*	*1988 Rate*	*1989 Number*	*1989 Rate*
East District Hospitals	17	[2]11·3	18	[2]12·2	14	[2]9·5	12	[2]8·7
North and West District Hospitals	31	9·5	27	8·2	26	7·9	23	7·2

Source: O.P.C.S.

[1] Perinatal deaths are stillbirths and deaths in the week after birth; rates are the number of perinatal deaths per 1,000 total (live and still) births.

[2] Denotes a Rate calculated from fewer than 20 events.

b. Neonatal Mortality[1]	*1986 Number*	*1986 Rate*	*1987 Number*	*1987 Rate*	*1988 Number*	*1988 Rate*	*1989 Number*	*1989 Rate*
Wales	207	5·6	190	5·0	183	4·7	180	4·7
DHA/Management Units								
Clwyd DHA	26	5·1	23	4·4	20	3·8	32	6·1
North Clwyd	9	[2]4·3	9	[2]4·2	7	[2]3·1	6	[2]2·8
South Clwyd	17	[2]5·7	14	[2]4·6	13	[2]4·3	26	8·2
East Dyfed DHA	15	[2]5·9	17	[2]6·2	13	[2]4·8	7	[2]2·7
Ceredigion	3	[2]4·5	5	[2]6·9	5	[2]6·9	2	[2]2·8
Carmarthen-Dinefwr	4	[2]5·3	6	[2]7·2	2	[2]2·4	2	[2]2·5
Llanelli-Dinefwr	8	[2]7·1	6	[2]5·0	6	[2]5·1	3	[2]2·8
Pembrokeshire DHA	7	[2]5·1	8	[2]5·5	14	[2]9·9	7	[2]4·8
Gwent DHA	39	6·5	36	6·0	31	4·8	27	4·3
North Gwent Hospitals	9	[2]6·1	8	[2]5·4	8	[2]5·2	6	[2]3·8
Pontypool and West Gwent Hospitals	15	[2]7·4	13	[2]6·3	18	[2]8·1	8	[2]3·8
Newport and Chepstow Hospitals	15	[2]6·0	15	[2]6·0	5	[2]1·9	13	[2]5·0
Gwynedd DHA	20	7·1	17	[2]6·0	17	[2]5·6	12	[2]4·0
Anglesey	8	[2]9·1	8	[2]8·8	5	[2]5·3	4	[2]4·2
Meirionnydd	1	[2]2·9	4	[2]10·1	4	[2]10·8	3	[2]7·7
Aberconwy	2	[2]3·7	1	[2]1·9	2	[2]3·2	4	[2]6·5
Arfon	6	[2]8·0	4	[2]5·7	3	[2]3·8	1	[2]1·3
Dwyfor	3	[2]10·2	0	[2]0·0	3	[2]9·9	0	[2]0·0
Mid Glamorgan DHA	35	4·7	27	3·5	28	3·6	42	5·5
Ogwr	6	[2]3·4	8	[2]4·5	8	[2]4·2	10	[2]5·5
Taff Ely	5	[2]3·7	2	[2]1·4	4	[2]2·9	9	[2]6·7
Rhondda	5	[2]4·7	5	[2]4·4	1	[2]0·9	5	[2]4·6
Merthyr-Cynon	10	[2]5·8	8	[2]4·5	10	[2]5·6	11	[2]6·0
Rhymney Valley	9	[2]5·9	4	[2]2·5	5	[2]3·0	7	[2]4·6
Powys DHA	2	[2]1·6	7	[2]5·3	8	[2]5·8	4	[2]2·9
Montgomery	2	[2]3·6	3	[2]4·9	5	[2]7·3	3	[2]4·6
Brecknock and Radnor	0	[2]0·0	4	[2]5·7	3	[2]4·3	1	[2]1·4
South Glamorgan DHA	39	6·7	29	5·0	27	4·5	30	5·1
West Glamorgan DHA	24	5·1	26	5·5	25	5·3	19	[2]4·1
East District Hospitals	11	[2]7·3	10	[2]6·8	8	[2]5·5	10	[2]7·2
North and West District Hospitals	13	[2]4·0	16	[2]4·9	17	[2]5·2	9	[2]2·8

Source: O.P.C.S.

[1] Neonatal deaths are deaths within the first 4 weeks of birth; rates are the number of neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births.

[2] Denotes a rate calculated from fewer than 20 events.

Acid Rain

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will review the co-ordination between the National Rivers Authority in Wales and the Forestry Commission with a view to overcoming the acid rain problem affecting rivers and lakes in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The Forestry Commission is in close touch with the National Rivers Authority about the problem of acid rain affecting rivers and lakes in Wales, and I see no need to review the arrangements.

Farm Woodland Schemes

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications have been approved for farm woodland schemes in 1988-89 and 1989-90 for *(a)* Carmarthen district, *(b)* Dyfed, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Britain.

Mr. David Hunt: The number of applications approved under the farm woodland scheme since its inception on 1 October 1988 is as follows:

	1 October 1988— 30 September 1989	*1 October 1989— 31 May 1990*	*Total*
(a) Carmarthen District	1	—	1
(b) Dyfed	5	5	10
(c) Wales	17	14	31

A further 12 applications are under consideration; four of these are in Dyfed but none falls within Carmarthen district.

NHS Nursing Staff

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total number of nursing staff employed *(a)* at 31 March 1989 and *(b)* at 31 March 1983 in national

health service hospitals, homes and clinics in Wales; what were the corresponding whole-time equivalents; and how many of them had nursing qualifications.

Mr. Grist: The available information which relates to total nursing and midwifery staff, employed by the NHS, and in post as at 30 September is given in the table:

	1983	*1989*
Numbers	30,328	33,236
Whole-time equivalents	25,981	28,037
Numbers with qualifications[1]	18,056	19,533

[1] State enrolled and state registered.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will issue guidelines to health authorities in Wales to ensure that when regulations regarding the ambulance service are being drawn up, or amended, prior consultation takes place with the local medical committee representing general practitioners in the area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: No. The management of the service at a local level is the responsibility of the relevant district health authority. It is for the health authority concerned to determine whether consultation is appropriate when changes in operational policy are being considered.

Beef Producers

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what special measures he is taking to assist beef producers in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) on Thursday 7 June.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the number of people who have not so far paid the poll tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I have made no such estimate. I have every confidence that the vast majority of Welsh charge payers are law-abiding and will pay their community charge.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average cost in Wales per person of collecting the poll tax.

Mr. David Hunt: The average cost in Wales per person of collecting the community charge will be about £7 in 1990-91 based on local authority budget returns.

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received seeking changes in the poll tax legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I have received representations on a variety of matters. The Government are reviewing the operation of the community charge system. It is too early to say what changes might be made or whether legislation will be needed.

Water Pollution

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on the presence of toxic algae from the dumping of sludge and chemicals in Liverpool bay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I am advised by the National Rivers Authority that it has not detected the presence of any potentially toxic algae in the Liverpool bay area.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has of illnesses and viral infections in Wales following swimming in the Irish sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: This information is not collected centrally.

Education

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was capital spending on Wales local education authority schools for each of the years from 1980 and county by county.

Mr. Roberts: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Gross capital expenditure on schools[1]

£000

	1980-81	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Clwyd	4,236	4,179	4,002	3,659	4,071	4,830	5,603	6,664	5,959
Dyfed	2,461	2,672	3,635	4,093	3,268	2,569	3,557	5,365	5,315
Gwent	4,682	3,029	4,155	4,932	4,735	4,937	5,020	5,888	6,896
Gwynedd	2,060	1,648	1,220	1,179	1,301	1,801	1,709	2,238	2,299
Mid Glamorgan	4,465	5,831	5,567	5,737	5,370	3,096	4,395	6,255	6,260
Powys	1,164	1,388	1,693	2,241	1,619	1,090	2,720	2,452	1,699
South Glamorgan	2,142	1,469	2,557	1,849	1,967	1,384	2,138	1,920	3,980
West Glamorgan	4,589	3,759	4,241	3,292	2,331	3,230	3,907	5,059	5,160
Total counties	22,254	23,976	27,068	26,982	24,662	22,937	29,049	35,841	37,568

[1] Includes nursery, primary, secondary and special schools.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was current spending on *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Wales local education authorities for each of the years from 1980, inclusive and county by county.

Mr. Roberts: The information requested is given in the table:

Current Expenditure on Primary and Secondary Schools in Wales (£000)

	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
Nursery and Primary									
Clwyd	22,129	24,803	25,844	26,943	27,320	29,337	31,664	34,562	38,208
Dyfed	20,276	22,057	22,650	23,205	23,962	25,282	28,228	32,512	36,264
Gwent	25,342	27,700	29,382	30,614	30,373	32,136	35,893	39,531	45,729
Gwynedd	12,763	14,520	15,545	14,750	15,892	16,362	18,066	20,034	22,010
Mid Glamorgan	34,815	36,907	39,836	42,707	43,684	46,888	50,355	56,677	63,068
Powys	7,711	8,454	8,920	9,450	9,760	10,044	10,845	12,026	14,356
South Glamorgan	19,234	20,941	21,868	22,986	23,421	24,948	29,263	32,274	35,960
West Glamorgan	22,601	24,810	25,769	26,964	26,453	28,786	32,455	35,590	39,802
Total Wales	164,961	180,192	189,816	197,617	200,867	213,782	236,769	263,205	295,397
Secondary									
Clwyd	25,969	29,785	32,099	34,284	35,435	37,216	40,265	43,711	47,445
Dyfed	22,610	25,548	27,109	28,380	29,333	30,898	33,668	37,339	39,276
Gwent	32,438	36,440	38,879	40,987	41,904	42,731	46,506	49,767	53,221
Gwynedd	15,211	17,270	18,527	19,947	20,979	21,839	23,982	25,796	27,168
Mid Glamorgan	38,527	41,701	44,773	48,514	49,960	52,193	56,422	59,642	63,307
Powys	8,164	8,987	9,477	10,235	10,676	11,209	11,945	13,057	15,057
South Glamorgan	25,372	27,526	29,703	30,790	31,260	32,155	36,377	37,686	40,469
West Glamorgan	26,933	30,804	32,505	34,331	33,650	35,183	39,238	42,734	46,216
Total Wales	195,224	218,061	233,072	247,457	253,207	263,424	288,404	309,733	332,159

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what were pupil numbers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary local education authority schools in Wales and in each county including the percentage change, year on year, for each of the years since 1980 inclusive.

Mr. Roberts: The information as at January of each year is given in the tables:

Primary

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	Wales
1980									
Pupil numbers	42,415	32,881	46,398	24,316	61,371	11,198	37,659	38,989	295,227
1981									
Pupil numbers	40,857	31,771	44,280	23,398	58,655	10,822	36,247	37,505	283,435
Percentage change	−3·7	−3·4	−4·6	−4·2	−4·4	−3·4	−3·7	−3·8	−4·0
1982									
Pupil numbers	39,012	30,816	42,438	22,482	56,291	10,534	35,075	36,554	273,202
Percentage change	−4·5	−3·0	−4·2	−3·5	−4·0	−2·7	−3·2	−2·5	−3·6
1983									
Pupil numbers	37,793	29,909	40,268	21,545	53,757	10,262	33,649	35,386	262,569
Percentage change	−3·1	−2·9	−5·1	−4·2	−4·5	−2·6	−4·1	−3·2	−3·9
1984									
Pupil numbers	37,141	29,469	39,642	20,989	52,669	10,154	33,496	35,082	258,642
Percentage change	−1·7	−1·5	−1·6	−2·6	−2·0	−1·1	−0·5	−0·9	−1·5
1985									
Pupil numbers	37,265	29,313	39,642	20,377	52,242	10,073	33,522	34,861	257,295
Percentage change	+0·3	−0·5	0	−2·9	−0·8	−0·8	+0·1	−0·6	−0·5
1986									
Pupil numbers	37,174	29,435	39,623	19,972	52,139	9,807	33,886	34,762	256,798
Percentage change	—0·2	+0·4	0	−2·0	−0·2	−2·6	+1·1	−0·3	−0·2
1987									
Pupil numbers	37,225	29,989	39,818	19,718	52,113	9,786	34,375	34,975	257,999
Percentage change	+0·1	+1·9	+0·5	−1·3	−0·1	−0·2	+1·4	+0·6	+0·5
1988									
Pupil numbers	37,581	30,671	40,400	19,710	52,859	9,932	35,141	35,407	261,701
Percentage change	+1·0	+2·3	+1·5	0	+1·4	+1·5	+2·2	+1·2	+1·4
1989									
Pupil numbers	38,680	31,895	41,428	19,991	54,118	10,198	35,980	36,198	268,488
Percentage change	+2·9	+4·0	+2·5	+1·4	+2·4	+2·7	+2·4	+2·2	+2·6

Secondary

	Clwyd	Dyfed	Gwent	Gwynedd	Mid Glamorgan	Powys	South Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	Wales
1980									
Pupil numbers	32,987	27,414	39,586	19,038	47,857	9,173	33,437	31,279	240,771
1981									
Pupil numbers	33,310	27,360	39,321	19,182	47,650	9,162	33,007	30,649	239,641
Percentage change	+1·0	−0·2	−0·7	+0·8	−0·4	−0·1	−1·3	−2·0	−0·5
1982									
Pupil numbers	33,178	27,258	38,557	19,428	47,210	9,009	32,517	29,999	237,156
Percentage change	−0·4	−0·4	−1·9	+1·3	−0·9	−1·7	−1·5	−2·1	−1·0
1983									
Pupil numbers	33,261	27,215	37,722	19,896	46,962	9,036	32,375	29,158	235,625
Percentage change	+0·3	−0·2	−2·2	+2·4	−0·5	+0·3	−0·4	−2·8	−0·6
1984									
Pupil numbers	32,874	26,779	36,823	19,725	46,316	9,003	31,634	28,358	231,512
Percentage change	−1·2	−1·6	−2·4	−0·9	−1·4	−0·4	−2·3	−2·7	−1·7
1985									
Pupil numbers	32,400	26,386	35,445	19,642	45,407	8,976	30,618	27,572	226,446
Percentage change	−1·4	−1·5	−3·7	−0·4	−2·0	−0·3	−3·2	−2·8	−2·2
1986									
Pupil numbers	31,330	25,654	33,864	19,045	43,889	8,738	29,646	26,212	218,378
Percentage change	−3·3	−2·8	−4·5	−3·0	−3·3	−2·7	−3·2	−4·9	−3·6
1987									
Pupil numbers	30·121	24,787	32,406	18,335	42,129	8,537	28,457	25,137	209,909
Percentage change	−3·9	−3·4	−4·3	−3·7	−4·0	−2·3	−4·0	−4·1	−3·9
1988									
Pupil numbers	28,647	23,924	30,509	17,268	39,419	8,217	27,279	24,016	199,279
Percentage change	−4·9	−3·5	−5·9	−5·8	−6·4	−3·7	−4·1	−4·5	−5·1
1989									
Pupil numbers	27,367	23,682	29,227	16,357	37,539	7,986	26,627	23,214	191,999
Percentage change	−4·5	−1·0	−4·2	−5·3	−4·8	−2·8	−2·4	−3·3	−3·7

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been expenditure per pupil in real terms for each year from 1980 inclusive, in Wales and by county, in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools.

Mr. Roberts: The information requested is shown in the table:

Total expenditure per pupil in primary and secondary schools: 1988-89 prices[1] (£ per pupil)

	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89
				Primary					
Clwyd	963	1,021	1,021	1,033	1,007	1,030	1,093	1,142	1,143
Dyfed	1,084	1,127	1,106	1,090	1,052	1,051	1,150	1,244	1,229
Gwent	965	985	1,058	1,083	1,028	1,031	1,129	1,195	1,284
Gwynedd	943	972	1,023	971	1,010	1,002	1,075	1,139	1,169
Mid Glamorgan	982	995	1,047	1,111	1,102	1,106	1,144	1,228	1,230
Powys	1,204	1,180	1,272	1,363	1,317	1,288	1,342	1,404	1,505
South Glamorgan	919	911	940	935	915	919	1,043	1,068	1,106
West Glamorgan	1,073	1,083	1,064	1,093	1,033	1,035	1,123	1,202	1,243
Wales	997	1,018	1,047	1,067	1,039	1,042	1,121	1,188	1,217
				Secondary					
Clwyd	1,340	1,392	1,390	1,421	1,425	1,487	1,620	1,753	1,819
Dyfed	1,391	1,415	1,450	1,499	1,485	1,480	1,609	1,796	1,787
Gwent	1,451	1,452	1,483	1,528	1,550	1,571	1,676	1,777	1,848
Gwynedd	1,364	1,391	1,317	1,344	1,365	1,421	1,556	1,701	1,734
Mid Glamorgan	1,388	1,403	1,395	1,436	1,430	1,422	1,558	1,707	1,780
Powys	1,538	1,645	1,560	1,608	1,545	1,540	1,822	1,892	1,976
South Glamorgan	1,255	1,254	1,298	1,294	1,296	1,278	1,465	1,491	1,566
West Glamorgan	1,562	1,611	1,681	1,678	1,564	1,632	1,852	2,062	2,117
Wales	1,400	1,425	1,437	1,465	1,452	1,472	1,624	1,755	1,812

[1] Adjusted to a constant price basis using the GDP deflator.

Employment Training

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the amount of cash in real terms for employment training in Wales for each of the years from 1980 including the current year and the proposed amounts for 1991; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: Employment training commenced on 5 September 1988. The budgets for 1988-89 and 1989-90 were £13·671 million and £32·741 million respectively. For 1990-91 the budget is £30·279 million. This is a reflection of the overall decline in unemployment.

Deeside High School

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will visit Deeside high school, Queensferry, and meet members of staff;

(2) if he will visit Deeside high school and meet the parent-teachers association and school governors to discuss with them school closure plans.

Mr. Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on Thursday 8 February 1990.

Cancer Patients

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to make a decision on his report concerning treatment for cancer sufferers in north Wales.

Mr. Grist: Responses to recent consultation on the comprehensive review of cancer treatment services to north Wales patients are presently being studied. I will make an announcement when these have been considered.

Health Boards

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are his criteria for appointments to health boards in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Members will be appointed on the strength of the skills and experience they can bring to an authority's work.

Beaches

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the beaches in Wales that meet the blue flag award standards, and those which do not.

Mr. Grist: One beach in Wales, Cefn Sidan, has been awarded a 1990 blue flag.

Ophthalmic Clinics

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the figures for new out-patient attendances at ophthalmic clinics in *(a)* South Glamorgan and *(b)* Wales for the quarter ended December 1989 and the quarter ended March 1990.

Mr. Grist: The number of new ophthalmology out-patients recorded in NHS hospitals during the quarter ending December 1989 is given in the table. Information for the quarter ending March 1990 is not yet available.

	South Glamorgan	*Wales*
New out-patient attendances	1,952	11,415

Welsh Water

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the individuals in respect of whom Welsh Water, in the 12 months prior to the sale of shares, paid for overseas travel together with the capacity in which they were engaged, the purposes of each visit and the cost involved.

Mr. Grist: This was a matter for the Welsh water authority prior to 1 September 1989 and subsequently for Welsh Water plc.

Diabetes and Glaucoma

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were suffering from diabetes and glaucoma in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* each county in Wales during 1988-89 and 1989-90, respectively.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is not available centrally.

Insulation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of loft insulation jobs completed so far in the current year and completed in the equivalent periods of 1987, 1988 and 1989; and what were the full-year figures for 1987, 1988 and 1989 for Wales.

Mr. Grist: Information on the number of dwellings for which home insulation grants were given in the periods requested is shown in the table:

Home insulation grants—Wales[1]

	Number of dwellings
1987 1st quarter	7,087
1988 1st quarter	5,667
1989 1st quarter	3,184
1990 1st quarter	1,326
1987	19,990
1988	14,016
1989	7,180

[1] Includes grants given for loft insulation. Data on specific insulation works are not collected separately.

Railway Service, Maesteg

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will ensure that British Rail implements fully the scheme approved by the Welsh Office in November 1989 to reopen a passenger service to Maesteg.

Mr. Roberts: I met the chairman of British Rail recently and he is aware of the importance of the Maesteg project to the economic regeneration of south Wales. The provision of rolling stock for the line is for resolution between British Rail and Mid Glamorgan county council.

History Committee for Wales

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has received the final report of the history committee for Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I am publishing the report of the national curriculum history committee for Wales today. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

I am very grateful to the members of the committee, and to its chairman Professor Rees Davies, for the hard work they have undertaken in completing their task, and for the comprehensive report they have produced.

The report sets out their recommendations for the history course for pupils from age five to 16 in the schools of Wales, and has been prepared in the light of the final report of the history working group which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science published on 3 April.

The report is being distributed to local education authorities and maintained schools in Wales, and to other interested bodies. I shall publish later my proposals for attainment targets and programmes of study for history within the national curriculum in the schools of Wales. These will be subject to statutory consultation as required by the Education Reform Act 1988.

HIV

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each health authority in Wales, the number of persons infected with HIV; and if he will separately distinguish these numbers by age.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* To safeguard confidentiality and in line with reporting procedure under the AIDS (Control) Act, actual numbers between one and nine—inclusive—diagnosed in individual health authorities are not published. Distribution by age is therefore shown for all Wales.

Table 1: Number of Reported HIV Infections by Health Authority Cumulative to 31 March 1990

	Number
Clwyd	14
East Dyfed	[1]
Gwent	15
Gwynedd	16
Mid Glamorgan	[1]
Pembrokeshire	[1]
Powys	Nil
South Glamorgan	69
West Glamorgan	27
Wales	157

[1] Less than 10.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Reported HIV Infections Cumulative to 31 March 1990

	Number
0-14[1]	[2]
15-24	38
25-34	57
35-44	34
45+	18
Not known	[2]
Total	157

[1] Age group as at when first tested positive.
[2] Less than 10.

Opencast Mine, Buckley

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet Alyn and Deeside council and Buckley town council to hear their views concerning the opencast executive's proposals for mining coal in the Buckley area.

Mr. David Hunt: In view of my statutory planning role it would not be appropriate for me to do so.

PRIME MINISTER

Environmental Co-operation

Q35. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she will raise with President Gorbachev technical co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom on environmental problems, including cellulose-related pollution of Lake Baikal.

The Prime Minister: I was not able to raise environmental questions in any great detail with President Gorbachev in the time available. We are of course aware that the environmental problems of the Soviet Union are serious and we are at present considering what role we might best play in the ecological research centre that it is proposing to establish at Lake Baikal.

Housing (London)

38. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Prime Minister what further representations she has had calling for the alleviation of the housing crises in London.

The Prime Minister: The Government receive many representations about the housing situation in London.

Nuclear Material

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the policy of Her Majesty's Government concerning the transfer of nuclear materials, and in particular enriched uranium, to countries which have not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

The Prime Minister: The transfer of nuclear materials, including enriched uranium, is authorised in accordance with the policy set out in 1976 by the then Foreign Secretary, the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth, Mr. Callaghan; that is to say:

"When considering the export of nuclear equipment, material, or technology, we shall study each case on its merits. Our first consideration will always be the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Euratom Treaty, and whether or not the prospective customer has concluded a Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Our detailed requirements will include the application of IAEA safeguards or comparable safeguards which are verified by the IAEA to exported nuclear equipment and material; an assurance that whatever we export will not be used to manufacture nuclear explosives for any purpose; an assurance that our exports will be adequately protected against the possibility of theft or sabotage; and assurances that if the equipment or material that we export is re-exported, then the new purchaser will be required to give the same assurances of safeguards, non-explosive use and physical protection as were given by the original customer."

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the studies conducted inside the Cabinet Office and Prime Minister's offices by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

The Prime Minister: There has been no expenditure on management consultants by my office over the last 10 years. Until 1988-89 financial information about management consultancies engaged by the Cabinet Office was not identified separately from other types of consultancy. Expenditure on management consultants in that year and in 1989-90 was as follows:

	£
1988-89	70,608
1989-90	51,500

Information on individual consultancies is available only from 1985 onwards. The management consultants employed by the Cabinet Office and the nature of their assignments are as follows:

Firm and Assignment

Chinal Management Services Ltd.
Specialised training.

Communication Audit
Review of written guidance to promotion boards.

Coopers and Lybrand Associates[1]
(i) Management/Staff communications
(ii) Policy work and the financial management initiative.

Diane Bailey Associates
(i) Training material on staff appraisal: training workshops
(ii) Trainers' resource pack on equal opportunities
(iii) Specialised training.

Hay-MSL Management Consultants[1]
(i) Evaluation of performance bonus experiment
(ii) Means of assessing the potential and management development needs of staff at junior levels.

Business Research Unit
Evaluation of staff attitudes to the new staff appraisal system.

Keith Robertson
Consultancy for the 'Managing Absence' project.

Diane Bailey Associates
Survey on presentation of Occupation Welfare Service to management and staff in the Civil Service.

Institute of Manpower Studies
Advice on manpower planning and computers in personnel.

John Rowley
Production of guidelines for managers and trade unionists on job satisfaction projects and a summary of the guidelines for staff.

W. O'Keefe
Study of purchasing and stores activities.

Hay Management Consultants
A study of the feasibility of short service assignments in the Science Group.

Purchasing Index (UK) Ltd[1]
Development of the Central Unit of Purchasing Database.

Frank Griffiths Associates [1]
Advice in connection with the Institute of Civil Engineers' review of conditions of contract.

R. W. White[1]
Review of arrangements for Purchasing and Supply Function in Government.

E. R. Farnbridge and C. Evans[1]
Review of Supply and Service Agreements between departments and the Central Purchasing Agencies.

D. F. Collins[1]
Advice on Written Guidance.

Training Development Approaches Ltd
Design of manual in support of the Young People Programme.

Industrial Training Service Ltd
Production of a guide on conducting training needs analyses.

WRM Ltd
Training information and communications study.

PA Personnel Services
Analysis of Executive Officer and fast stream recruitments.

Imitax Ltd.
Workshops on job satisfaction employee involvement.

Imitax Ltd.
Local Office network conference.

Inbucon Management Consultants Ltd.
Case study on personnel and financial management.

Industrial Training Services Ltd.
(i) Measuring training activity
(ii) Specialised training.

Intra Systems Ltd. (1)
Pilot study on the use of interactive video.

KMG Thomson McLintock
Review of office automation pilot programme in a government department.

OD (Management Consultancy) Ltd.
Review of a productivity scheme.

PA Personnel Services Ltd.
Study of the provision of information advice and guidance on matters of employment law within the Civil Service.

Peter Saunders Associates
Self instruction package on Government Accounting.

Transform
Specialised training.

BGM Consultants Ltd.
Identification of core skills for the young people project.

Business Research Unit
Evaluation of staff appraisal scheme.

Centre for Training and Evaluation Studies
Evaluation of staff appraisal material.

Coopers and Lybrand Associates (1)
Development of policy evaluation.

Diane Bailey Associates
(i) Training material on staff appraisal and training workshops
(ii) Preparation of information pack on stress management.

DWJ Consulting Services Ltd. (1)
Functions review of the Crown Suppliers.

Ernst and Whinney
Specialised training.

Frank Griffiths Associates Ltd.
Review of the purchasing and supply organisation in a government department.

IMS
(i) Study of mobility[1]
(ii) Specialised training
(iii) Advice on working patterns.

Inbucon Management Consultants Ltd.
Preparation of a training package.

Pergamon Infotech
Specialised training.

Peat, Marwick Mitchell[1]
Development of policy evaluation.

Psychometric Research and Development Ltd.
Analysis contributing to the Civil Service Commission review of executive officer recruitment.

Systems Concepts Ltd.
Identification of information management needs.

BGM Consultants
Identification of core skills in clerical grades.

Diane Bailey Associates
Preparation of a Stress Management Training Pack.

ITS Ltd.
Guide to conducting Training Reviews.

Systems Concepts Ltd.
Training Information Communications Study—feasibility study.

John Childs
Training Information Communications Study—customer needs survey.

Anne Hughes Hallet
Research on undergraduate attitudes to a career in Her Majesty's Tax Inspectorate.
B. O'Connor
Selection procedure design (engineer recruitment).
National Foundation for Educational Research
Aptitude test analysis.
Centre for Training and Evaluation Studies
Evaluation of self instruction training package for the new staff appraisal system.
Richard Williams
Equal Opportunities monitoring project.
Questel Qualitive Studies Ltd.[1]
Audit of recruitment publicity.
Anne Hughes Hallett[1]
Research into careers attitudes.
Human Assets Ltd.
Study of Information Officers recruitment procedures.
Equalities Associates
Guidelines for trainers on equal opportunities issues.
Ashbridge Management College
Study of Women's National Commission.
Coopers and Lybrand Associates
Pilot study on evaluation.
National Children's Bureau
Advice on the London Childcare Project.
Peter Williams Associates
Advice on the London Childcare Project.
Price Waterhouse
Advice on performance indicators and management information systems.
Shaista Faruqi
Design of recruitment monitoring system.

[1] Costs for these studies were shared with other Government Departments.

Child Sex Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what progress the interdepartmental group on child sexual abuse has made since her answer of 4 May 1989, *Official Report*, column *211*.

The Prime Minister: Since May 1989 the interdepartmental group on child abuse has met four times and has made good progress in addressing a wide range of issues in relation to child care matters, including research.

International Whaling Commission

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Prime Minister who will represent the United Kingdom at the International Whaling Commission meeting in the Netherlands in July.

The Prime Minister: As is usual the United Kingdom will be represented by the United Kingdom's commissioner for whaling, a senior official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

ACOST (Chairmanship)

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the chairmanship of the Advisory Council on Science and Technology.

The Prime Minister: I have appointed Sir Robin Nicholson to succeed Lord Tombs of Brailes as chairman of the Advisory Council on Science and Technology (ACOST) after the council meeting on 11 July.

Lord Tombs of Brailes has chaired the Advisory Council on Science and Technology since it was formed in 1987 and also chaired its predecessor the Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development from 1985 to 1987. The Government are very grateful to him for the very valuable service he has given in these posts.

Engagements

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 12 June.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Open University

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding the consequences of forthcoming radio wavelength changes on the work of the Open university.

Mr. Mellor: Our attention has recently been drawn to deficiencies in AM radio reception in parts of Scotland. This would have affected reception of the BBC's Open university and other educational programmes following their transfer to the new Radio 5 service in August of this year. In the areas concerned the BBC will continue transmitting these programmes on FM until the AM problem is resolved.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the latest crime figures for Basildon.

Mr. John Patten: Crime figures are published annually in the report of the chief constable of Essex. The latest figures are given in his annual report for 1989 when 14,559 notifiable offences were recorded in the Basildon division.

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the crime figures in the west Lancashire district in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. John Patten: Information for the southern "C" division (which includes the west Lancashire district) is published in the annual report of the chief constable of Lancashire. Statistics of notifiable offences recorded in the Lancashire police force area are published in table 2.4 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales 1988" and in table 7 of "Home Office Statistical Bulletin 10/90"; copies of these publications are available in the Library.

Badgers

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been under the Badgers Act 1973 and the Wildlife and Countryside Acts 1981 and 1985 for taking or destroying a badger; and what was the percentage of convictions.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No figures are available for specific types of offences under these Acts. However in 1988 there

were a total of 74 prosecutions for offences under the Badgers Act 1973 and 41 convictions. That is a conviction rate of 55·4 per cent.

Fire Service

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on nationally recommended minimum standards to maintain fire service cover.

Mr. John Patten: The conclusions and recommendations in the report of the joint committee on standards of fire cover, which was published in 1985, were recommended to fire authorities by fire service circular No. 4/1985 on 22 May 1985, copies of which are in the Library.

Correspondence

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the letter dated 2 May from the hon. Member for Worsley with regard to information about possible terrorist activity.

Mr. Waddington: I wrote to the hon. Member, after consulting the police, on 5 June.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth will be sent a reply to his letter dated 12 March referring to Mrs. Frances Bennett of Rugby.

Mr. Mellor: I replied to my hon. Friend on 26 March. I have today sent him a further copy of that letter.

Mr. John Harker

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will now make a statement about the case of John Harker, prisoner R69121, HM prison Kirkham, Preston, Lancashire;

(2) if he will make a statement as to the outcome of the inquiry into the case of John Harker, prisoner R69121, HM prison Kirkham, Preston, Lancashire.

Mr. John Patten: I will be writing to my hon. Friend shortly about this case.

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why John Harker, prisoner R69121, Her Majesty's prison Kirkham, Preston, Lancashire, has not yet heard from the parole review board held in January 1990.

Mr. John Patten: Mr. Harker's case is still under consideration. We expect the outcome to be known around the end of June.

Teacher Vetting

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he will take to speed up teacher vetting.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that four additional civilian staff have been deployed on this work since April. I am not aware of general delays outside London.

Arson

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to increase the maximum penalty available to the courts for arson involving damage to property, where no personal injury has occurred.

Mr. John Patten: All offences of arson, whether or not they involve personal injury, already carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Parole

Mr. Orme: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of cases in England and Wales in which a prisoner has not been given the opportunity to be interviewed by a member of the local review committee as part of the process of parole review for the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Mellor: Figures are not recorded centrally. On those rare occasions when an interview is inadvertently denied, our policy is to offer a fresh review.

Police Complaints Authority

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out for each police force in England and Wales the total number of inquiries in which a Police Complaints Authority member supervised the investigation during the most convenient recent 12-months period, the total number of hours spent on such investigations, and assuming the necessity of the Police Complaints Authority to employ its own investigators at executive officer, senior executive officer and higher executive officer grade, and working a normal home civil service week, what would be the cost implications for the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Strangeways Prison

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest estimate of the cost of repairing the damage recently caused by disturbances at Strangeways prison.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is now able to give the total cost of the destruction and the policing following the prison riot at Strangeways prison.

Mr. Mellor: I announced on 17 May at columns *489-90* plans for the refurbishment of Strangeways prison to provide a range of new and improved facilities, including integral sanitation at a cost of £60 million. This work will also include repair of the damage done during the recent disturbances, which amounts to about £30 million.

The Greater Manchester police authority advises that the additional cost of policing as a result of the disturbances was £580,000.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress he has made in considering Sunday trading.

Mr. Mellor: Since the defeat of the Shops Bill, the Government have made it clear that they are prepared to

consider reform short of total deregulation if a solution can be found which is widely accepted, enforceable, practicable and likely to command a parliamentary majority. No such solution has yet emerged and I see no prospect of sufficient support to enable us to put forward legislation in the near future.

Dangerous Dogs

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he now expects to bring forward proposals to strengthen the law on dangerous dogs.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend is considering whether to do so.

Dog Fighting

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on the priority given to prosecuting those involved in dog-fighting activities.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to do so.

Open Banking

Mr. Haselhurst: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received representations regarding the security aspects of open banking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: No. A working group appointed by the standing conference on crime prevention to look into commercial robbery mentioned in its 1986 report the increasing popularity of open-plan offices in bank branches. The working group found no evidence that the move towards open plan increased the risk of attack, but the matter is being kept under review by the Home Office, the Metropolitan police and the banks themselves.

Trevi Group

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what subjects of discussions by the Trevi group the Minister expects to be resolved during the Italian Presidency of the European Economic Community;

(2) what areas of United Kingdom law are being looked at with a view to changes to meet the needs for common European Economic Community action as identified by the Trevi group;

(3) if he will list all the meetings of the Trevi group, and the subject discussed at each meeting and decisions arrived at; and if he will indicate the future areas of work the Trevi group will be addressing.

Mr. Waddington: During each presidency of Trevi a number of working groups meet to further co-operation against terrorism, drug trafficking and other serious crimes, reporting their conclusions to senior officials and Ministers. I and my colleagues will be reviewing the work done under the Irish presidency in Dublin next week, and I shall report the outcome to the House. The declaration made at our last meeting in Paris on 15 December 1989, a copy of which is in the Library, sets out a programme of work which is likely to be further progressed during the Italian presidency. No changes in United Kingdom law are currently being considered as a result of work in Trevi, which is concerned with practical police co-operation.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what discussions the Trevi group has had about passing information from the United Kingdom, held on the central police computer, relating *(a)* to criminal records and *(b)* suspected crime and suspects; and what protection the group intends to provide to protect the civil rights of any individual so identified;

(2) what discussions the Trevi group of Ministers has had about setting up a European Economic Community-wide database; and what consideration has been given in such discussions to the laws relating to privacy in such countries.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Trevi Ministers agreed at their meeting in Paris on 15 December 1989 to initiate a study of a possible common information system among member states, designed to combat the most serious forms of crime. The protection of data and of personal privacy is among the considerations to be addressed in this study, which is at an early stage. No decisions have yet been taken on whether to set up such a system and, if so, on what information it should contain or how it should work.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Trevi group of Ministers has agreed with regard to political asylum refused by one European Economic Community state; how applications will be considered in other European Community states; and what steps are being taken to harmonise the grounds for granting political asylum.

Mr. Waddington: At their last meeting in Paris on 15 December 1989, EC Immigration Ministers adopted a declaration relating, among other subjects, to measures on asylum. A copy of the declaration is in the Library. The next meeting is to be held in Dublin on 14 and 15 June and the outcome will be reported to the House in the usual way.

Overseas Voters

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost of the leaflets printed and distributed encouraging overseas electors to enrol in the United Kingdom; how many were distributed; and through what channels in *(a)* South Africa, *(b)* Zimbabwe, *(c)* Australia, *(d)* Canada, *(e)* New Zealand and the EC.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Two million copies of the leaflet "Keeping your vote when living abroad" have been printed at a cost of £30,000. Of these, 1,023,000 have been sent to diplomatic posts and missions abroad; the remainder have been sent to electoral registration officers, or to United Kingdom organisations with overseas connections, or have been retained for future use.

Distribution of the leaflets by British diplomatic posts abroad began in May and is continuing by various means, including mailshots to expatriates, inclusion with renewed passports, and in response to direct requests from individuals, firms and organisations. Details of the precise means of distribution in specific countries could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Prisoners (Disability)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what facilities are provided for disabled prisoners who are *(a)* physically disabled, *(b)* blind, *(c)* mentally ill or *(d)* deaf.

Mr. Mellor: As indicated in the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) on 16 May 1990 at column *411*, prison establishments seek to meet the needs of those with disabilities on an individual basis. Their requirements are assessed by medical and other staff as part of the reception procedure.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned into the needs of disabled people in prison.

Mr. Mellor: A survey was undertaken last year into the accessibility of prison establishments for people with disabilities, including inmates, staff and visitors. The survey focused on the problems of those with physical disabilities.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is any extra support for disabled prisoners' rehabilitation needs on discharge.

Mr. John Patten: The probation service should be informed by the prison authorities of any medical matters relating to the discharge of inmates, with particular attention given to the individual needs of blind or otherwise handicapped prisoners. This procedure will become a requirement with the issue of prison department standing order 11 later this year.

With regard to the provision of after care, the home probation officer can arrange contacts with relevant social services departments and other bodies that are able to offer support and guidance.

Prison Service (Disabled Employees)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many disabled employees there are in the prison service.

Mr. Mellor: On 1 March 1990, the prison service employed 45 people who had declared that they were registered disabled.

Child Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to obtain a transcript of the speech of Commander Richard Monk of the Metropolitan police on 7 June, on child abusers, for study by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend asked for a transcript of the speech which Commander Monk made on 7 June.

Polling Stations

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to ensure that all electors arriving at their polling station during the last 30 minutes before the doors of the polling station are closed are not denied their right to vote.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Polling hours at parliamentary, European parliamentary and local government elections are laid down in the relevant legislation. We have no reason to believe that the statutory requirements are not being complied with, but if the hon. Member knows of a particular difficulty, perhaps he would write to me about it.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what plans or studies have been made or commissioned by the Metropolitan police to assess the measures that would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces to questions from the hon. Members for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 8 June at column *724*.

Life Imprisonment

Mr. David Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list in the *Official Report*, the recommendations from the House of Lords Select Committee on Murder and Life Imprisonment which have been accepted wholly or in part by Her Majesty's Government; indicating which, if any, have already been implemented.

Mr. John Patten: The White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" (Cm 965) announced our decision that the mandatory sentence of life imprisonment for the crime of murder should remain to mark the heinous nature of this crime. We are carefully considering the Select Committee recommendations on the release of prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment made by the House of Lords Select Committee on Murder and Life Imprisonment. I welcome the recommendations to improve the arrangements for victims' families, and the recent victims' charter endorses this approach.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Telephone Facilities

Sir David Steel: To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he will make it his policy to ensure before 1992 that hon. Members enjoy the same international line telephone facilities to Strasbourg and Brussels which are available to Members of the European Parliament.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The provision of such facilities is under active consideration at present and I hope proposals will be brought before the Services Committee in the near future.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many hon. Members are provided with telephones in accommodation in London not owned by the state outside the House where the cost of calls arising from the use of that equipment is paid for by public funds.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: No hon. Members are provided with such telephones by the authorities of the House.

Committees (Televising)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list the number of times and the dates when each Select Committee of the House has been televised since the introduction of television.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The information requested, which covers the period up to the Whitsun adjournment, is as follows:

Committee and dates on which televised	*Total*[1]
Agriculture	
29 November 1989	
17 January 1990	
24 January 1990	
21 March 1990	
2 April 1990	
23 May 1990	6
Defence	
8 November 1989	
20 December 1989	
11 January 1990[2]	
7 February 1990	
21 February 1990	
28 March 1990	
1 May 1990	
16 May 1990	8
Education, Science and Arts	
28 November 1989	
9 May 1990	2
Employment	
7 March 1990	
14 March 1990	
18 April 1990	
25 April 1990	
2 May 1990	5
Energy	
22 November 1989	
7 February 1990	
28 February 1990	
7 March 1990	
14 March 1990[2]	
25 April 1990	6
Environment	
22 November 1989	
17 January 1990	
31 January 1990	
14 February 1990	
28 February 1990	
14 March 1990	
20 March 1990	
21 March 1990	
28 March 1990	9
Foreign Affairs	
6 December 1989	
13 December 1989	
7 February 1990	
4 April 1990	
25 April 1990	5
Home Affairs	
31 January 1990	
7 February 1990	
21 February 1990	
21 March 1990	
9 May 1990	5
Social Services	
10 January 1990	
17 January 1990	
24 January 1990	
31 January 1990	
7 March 1990	
21 March 1990	
4 April 1990	
25 April 1990	8
Trade and Industry	
6 December 1989	
13 December 1989	
17 January 1990 am	
17 January 1990 pm	
28 February 1990	
7 March 1990	
28 March 1990	7
Transport	
29 November 1989	
6 December 1989	
28 March 1990	
25 April 1990	
16 May 1990	
23 May 1990	6
Treasury and Civil Service	
22 November 1989	
27 November 1989	
4 December 1989	
28 February 1990	
12 March 1990	
28 March 1990	
3 April 1990	7
Welsh Affairs	
29 November 1989	
13 December 1989	
24 January 1990	
21 February 1990	
2 May 1990	
9 May 1990	
15 May 1990[2]	7
Select Committee on European Legislation	
1 February 1990	
1 March 1990	2
Select Committee on Procedure	
13 December 1989	
7 February 1990	2
Public Accounts Committee	
4 December 1989	
18 December 1989	
24 January 1990	
12 February 1990	
14 February 1990	
21 February 1990	
30 April 1990	7
Select Committee on Televising of Proceedings of the House	
23 April 1990	1

[1] Total number of meetings.
[2] Denotes meeting away from Westminster.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list the number of times and the dates when each Standing Committee of the House has been televised since the introduction of television.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The information requested, which covers the period up to the Whitsun adjournment, is as follows:

Standing Committees on Bills
(by reference to title of Bill committed)

	Dates on which televised	*Total number of sittings televised*
National Health Service and Community Care Bill	19 December 1989 11 January 1990 23 January 1990 am 23 January 1990 pm 20 February 1990 am 20 February 1990 pm	6
Broadcasting Bill	9 January 1990 16 January 1990 am 16 January 1990 pm 18 January 1990 am 18 January 1990 pm 23 January 1990 am 23 January 1990 pm 25 January 1990 am 25 January 1990 pm 6 February 1990 am 6 February 1990 pm 8 February 1990 am 8 Feburary 1990 pm 6 March 1990 am 6 March 1990 pm 8 March 1990	16
Education (Student Loans) Bill	30 January 1990	1
War Crimes Bill	20 March 1990 3 April 1990 am 3 April 1990 pm	3
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill	1 May 1990	1
Protection of Badger Setts Bill	9 May 1990 23 May 1990	2
Courts and Legal Services Bill *[Lords]*	8 May 1990	1
Scottish Grand Committee	19 March 1990[1] 22 May 1990	2
Welsh Grand Committee	10 January 1990 am 10 January 1990 pm 14 March 1990 am 14 March 1990 pm	4

[1]Denotes meeting away from Westminster.

Oral Questions

Mr. Allen: To ask the Lord President of the Council what estimate he has made of the saving in cash and paper if the proposals of the Procedure Committee on oral questions, in its first report of the current Session, HC 379, are accepted.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: If the proposals are accepted it is estimated that savings to the public purse of around £1 million annually will arise. Over 10 million sheets of A4 paper will be saved.

Vote Bundle

Mr. Allen: To ask the Lord President of the Council, pursuant to his answer of 24 May, *Official Report*, column *297*, what is the total cost to public funds for the supply of the Vote bundle as a whole since the 1987 general election and the volume of paper consumed in production of the Vote bundle for the same period.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The total cost to public funds for supply of the Vote bundle as a whole since the 1987 general election is estimated at £17·5 million, to the end of April 1990. The volume of paper consumed in production of the Vote bundle for the same period is estimated at 800 tonnes.

Recycled Paper

Ms. Walley: To ask the Lord President of the Council, pursuant to his answer of 23 May, *Official Report*, column *297*, whether the items mentioned will be made from 100 per cent. recycled paper from low-grade paper waste; whether orders for the non-recycled versions have ceased; and when he expects present stocks to be exhausted.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I understand that the items mentioned will contain more than 50 per cent. pre-consumer recycled waste but will not be produced from recycled low-grade waste. Orders for the non-recycled versions have ceased and present stocks are likely to be exhausted by autumn this year.

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: No study of this nature has been undertaken by the Privy Council Office in the last 10 years.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Services (Administration)

Mr. Allen: To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, answering for the House of Commons Commission, when he expects Sir Robin Ibbs to complete his report on the administration of House of Commons services.

Mr. Beith: A timetable for the completion of the review which I announced on 23 May, *Official Report*, column *179* has yet to be agreed with Sir Robin Ibbs. It is hoped, however, that the Commission will be able to consider any advice from Sir Robin before the end of the year.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Vehicle Test Certificates (Northern Ireland)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Attorney-General, in 1987, 1988 and 1989, how many persons were convicted in Northern Ireland of not having a vehicle test certificate.

The Attorney-General: I regret that this information could not be made available except at disproportionate cost.

Television Licences (Northern Ireland)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Attorney-General, in 1987, 1988 and 1989, how many persons were convicted in Northern Ireland of not having a television licence.

The Attorney-General: I regret that this information could not be made available except at disproportionate cost.

Anton Piller Orders

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Attorney-General, pursuant to his written answer of 5 June to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East, which problems the intended changes in the regulations on Anton Piller orders are designed to overcome.

The Attorney-General: The civil justice review recommended that as a general rule the same remedies should be available in both the High Court and the county courts, but that the power to grant Anton Piller orders should normally be reserved to the High Court judiciary in view of the draconian nature of these orders. The Government have accepted this recommendation, which will be taken forward in clause 3 of the Courts and Legal Services Bill and in regulations under clause 3.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Recycled Paper

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department is doing to encourage a market for recycled paper and to expand industrial capacity to process waste paper; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: There is already a strong market for paper products which contain recycled fibre. Government Departments generally are important and reliable customers in this market buying general notepaper, index books, graph paper and brown stationery manufactured from recycled fibre. The letterhead paper used in my Department, including that used by Ministers and senior officials, contains recycled fibre and we are increasing the use of recycled paper in our publications.

Following a successful pilot scheme, my Department will by the end of this month be collecting separately, from eight of our London buildings, high-grade office waste paper which is currently used in the production of higher-grade recycled paper.

Post Office

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has received a copy of the Mail Users Association recent report on the performance of the Post Office; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: I received with interest the MUA's report, "Deliver us from the Post Office", published in May last year and its follow-up "Improving Postal Services", published in March this year. Quality of service is an operational matter for the Post Office. However, I know that the chairman regards this as a key priority and is constantly searching for ways to improve performance. In this he has my full support.

Peace Dividend

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what studies he is undertaking on the effects of the peace dividend on the structure of industry and employment in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None.

Chlorofluorocarbons

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what he estimates the current usage in the United Kingdom of chlorofluorocarbons in the cleaning of printed circuit boards to be; and what percentage of total United Kingdom usage this comprises.

Mr. Forth: In March this year DTI issued a report on "Chlorinated Solvent Cleaning: The Impact of Environmental and Regulatory Controls." Among other chlorinated solvents, the report estimated United Kingdom consumption of the chlorofluorocarbon CFC-113 to be 7,500 tonnes with 45 per cent. of that total applied in the electronics sector. The report does not contain figures for printed circuit board application in particular.

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to stimulate and promote research into the replacement of the use of chlorofluorocarbons in the manufacture of printed circuit boards.

Mr. Forth: Both the producers of chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) solvents and the users within the electronics industry are actively engaged in research to develop and implement alternative cleaning products and processes to reduce the use of CFC solvents in the manufacture of printed circuit boards. The range of alternatives available are described in a report produced for the Department of Trade and Industry and published by HMSO in March 1990, entitled "Chlorinated Solvent Cleaning: The Impact of Environmental and Regulatory Controls." The DTI, in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence, is to support a collaborative assessment by the electronics industry of the technical performance of the alternatives to CFCs. The results of this study will be disseminated to small and medium-sized enterprises within the electronics industry. Support for collaborative research is also available through general DTI research and development programmes and, for collaboration within Europe, through the Eurek Euroenviron programme. In addition, CFCs and their alternatives are one of the selected priority areas eligible for grant aid for research up to "proof of concept" stage under the Department of the Environment's environmental protection technology scheme.

Furnishings (Flammability)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assurance he has sought from the European Commission that legislation concerning the flammability of furniture and furnishings will meet the highest safety standards for British consumers.

Mr. Forth: My Department has had discussions with the Commission and the second draft of the directive already contains elements of the requirements of the United Kingdom furniture regulations, including resistance to ignition by cigarettes and matches.

We will continue to press strongly for our requirement for ignition resistance of foam and other fillings, at forthcoming meetings with the Commission and parallel meetings to determine European test standards.

We shall shortly be circulating consultation papers including copies of the second draft of the directive.

Because the directive is to cover contract furniture as well as the domestic variety, this will be a combined exercise with the Home Office, which has the wider responsibility for fire prevention.

Vehicle Mileometers

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he intends to bring forward proposals to further control the clocking of vehicle mileometers.

Mr. Forth: I have no plans to do so. This practice is a criminal offence under the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 and local trading standards officers have the appropriate powers to investigate and to prosecute offenders.

Postal Services

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received about the quality of the postal services in London.

Mr. Forth: Since the beginning of this year my Department has received 37 written representations about the quality of the postal services in London. In addition, two questions on this subject have been tabled in the House by hon. Members.

Regulatory Bodies

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to establish any new bodies to oversee particular sectors of industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department has no plans to establish any new bodies to oversee particular sectors of industry.

Steel Industry

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the amount of Government cash given to *(a)* United Engineering Steels Ltd., *(b)* British Steel Corporation and *(c)* British Steel under Phoenix I and Phoenix II plans.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* When United Engineering Steels Ltd. was established under the Phoenix II plans the Government provided £55 million of funds through BSC. Government money was not given to BSC under the Phoenix I plans, the corporation's interests being funded internally.

Brymbo Steelworks

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the amount of Government cash given to *(a)* United Engineering Steels Ltd., *(b)* British Steel Corporation and *(c)* British Steel which was (i) earmarked or (ii) spent on Brymbo steelworks, Clwyd.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* When United Engineering Steels Ltd. (the owners of Brymbo steelworks) was established the Government provided £55 million of funds to UES through the British Steel Corporation. The disposition of these funds within UES was entirely a matter for the company.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will visit Brymbo steelworks to meet steelworkers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* My right hon. Friend has no plans to visit Brymbo steelworks.

Refrigerators

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department is considering the introduction of deposit systems on the price of new refrigerators to encourage recycling of CFCs and other ozone-depleting substances.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* A recent report for the Department of Trade and Industry, entitled "CFCs and Halons: Alternatives and the Scope for Recovery for Recycling and Destruction", found that there is scope for further development of CFC recycling activity in respect of refrigeration. The DTI and the Department of the Environment will be examining what more needs to be done to encourage such development. Strengthening of the controls on CFCs, where the Government are committed to complete phase-out of CFCs as soon as practically possible, and certainly by the year 2000, will itself contribute a strong incentive to increase the level of recycling undertaken.

Chlorinated Solvents

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what further action his Department proposes to take following the publication of its report on chlorinated solvent cleaning;

(2) what action his Department has taken, following the publication of its report on chlorinated solvent cleaning, to increase the levels of awareness of the Montreal protocol in small and medium-sized enterprises and in the general engineering industry.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Copies of the chlorinated solvent cleaning report, and briefing sheets relevant to each of the sectors considered by the report, have been widely distributed to the trade associations for the general engineering, electronics, precision engineering, and dry cleaning industries.

The parties to the Montreal protocol are to meet in London at the end of June 1990, when they are expected to strengthen the controls within the protocol on chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). They are also likely to place controls on some other ozone-depleting substances, including 1.1.1 trichloroethane (methyl chloroform), which is widely used by the general and precision engineering industries. In July 1990, the DTI and the Department of the Environment are to brief trade associations on the results of this international meeting and the potential implications for their sectors.

In March 1990, the Department of Trade and Industry co-sponsored a conference on electronics manufacturing and the environment. This was designed specifically to provide information to small and medium-sized enterprises in the electronics industry on the current and likely future controls on ozone-depleting substances within the Montreal protocol, and the range of environmentally acceptable alternatives available.

This autumn DTI is planning to hold a series of regional seminars designed to inform SMEs, particularly those within the engineering industry, of the Montreal protocol and its likely impact. This activity complements the information provided by a number of suppliers of

ozone-depleting solvents to their customers about the controls on such substances and the options available for reducing usage and switching to alternatives.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department will propose any new codes of practice to discourage companies from disposing of solvents and to encourage their collection and return to manufacturers.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Solvent recovery and disposal is already one of the subjects covered by a European Community code of practice for the design, construction and operation of CFC-113 solvent-cleaning equipment. This code, which has been drawn up by industry and updated to take account of the development of new technology in this area, sets out guidelines to maximise the level of recovery and recycling and ensure that contaminated solvent is disposed of safely.

EMPLOYMENT

Restart

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest figures on the take-up of each restart option in the Bristol area, the south-west, and Great Britain.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service, which is responsible for the restart programme became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the chief executive of the employment service will be replying in writing to the hon. Lady.

Labour Statistics

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many women are in *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time employment; what were the similar figures in 1960, 1970 and 1980; what the figure is estimated to be in 1995, 2000 and 2010; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Information for full-time and part-time employment was collected only from June 1971. The Department does not make forecasts of employment. The available figures are as follows:

Female Employees in Employment
(Thousands, United Kingdom, Seasonally adjusted)

	Part-time	*Full-time*
June 1971	2,793	5,603
June 1980	3,913	5,739
December 1989[1]	4,479	6,516

[1] Latest available.

Employment Service Offices

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list by region *(a)* the number of employment service offices that have been established since December 1989 and *(b)* the number of surplus properties which are now to be disposed of following the reorganisation of the service.

Mr. Nicholls: The employment service, which is responsible for jobcentres and unemployment benefit offices, became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive will be replying in writing to the hon. Lady.

Benefit Claimants

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when claimant advisers have worked out an estimate of the in-work benefits to which a claimant may be entitled if they took a low-paying job, what instructions are they given and what action should they take against a claimant who refuses to follow up the vacancy when in-work benefit calculation shows the claimant would *(a)* clearly be better off in work, *(b)* be only marginally better off or *(c)* be financially worse off; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service, which is responsible for the claimant adviser service became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the chief executive of the employment service, will be replying in writing to the hon. Lady.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the number of claimants who have refused actively seeking work review interviews; and if he will estimate the percentage of those receiving actively seeking work warning letters who are not given the opportunity of a review interview prior to the submission of their case to an adjudication officer.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service, which is responsible for the claimant adviser service became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many disablement resettlement officers and blind persons resettlement officers there are in the employment service; and how many referrals have been made by them to adjudication officers following doubts on (i) actively seeking work, (ii) restricted availability and (iii) refusal of employment, since 9 October 1989.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service, which is responsible for the provision of employment services to people with disabilities, became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many UB671Ws have been issued by new claimant advisers at initial claim interviews.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service, which is responsible for the new client adviser programme, became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Gentleman.

Insulation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the spending on the community insulation programme in (i) each region, (ii) England as a whole, (iii) Wales and (iv) Great Britain in each year from 1983-84 and estimated for 1989-90.

Mr. Nicholls: Information on expenditure on community insulation projects operated under the community programme from 1983-84 to 1987-88 is not readily available. Expenditure for Great Britain in 1988-89 was £6·34 million, but is not readily available by region. Expenditure in 1989 is shown in the table.

	£ million
Northern	0·57
Yorkshire and Humberside	1·10
North West	0·94
West Midlands	0·54
East Midlands and Eastern	0·33
Wales	0·52
South West	0·38
London	0·07
South East	0·29
Great Britain	[1]10·08

[1] The figure for Great Britain includes expenditure in Scotland and on nationally contracted provision.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what was the number of draught-proofing jobs completed so far in the current year and completed in the equivalent periods of 1987, 1988 and 1989 for *(a)* the London borough of Camden and *(b)* the London borough of Islington; and what were the full-year figures for 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet the United States Secretary of State to discuss whether short-range nuclear weapons should be included in the current CFE talks.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met Mr. Baker and other NATO colleagues at the North Atlantic Council meeting held at Turnberry on 7 and 8 June. NATO agreed at that meeting that negotiations on United States and Soviet short-range nuclear weapons systems in Europe should begin shortly after a CFE agreement is concluded.

We shall continue to be in very close touch with the United States on this subject in preparation for the NATO summit in London from 4 to 6 July.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received from Governments in the Indian subcontinent and the middle east respectively, regarding nuclear proliferation in their global region.

Mr. Waldegrave: No such representations have been received, although Egypt has put forward in the United Nations an initiative calling for a middle east zone free from weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what directions are to be given to the United Kingdom delegates to the non-proliferation treaty review conference to be held later in the currrent year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: As one of the three depositary powers for the treaty, the United Kingdom will be working for a positive and successful review conference.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications for the membership of the 1963 partial nuclear test ban treaty of the political union of North and South Yemen.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Yemen Arab Republic signed the partial test ban treaty in Moscow and Washington on 6 September 1963; the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen acceded to the treaty in Moscow on 1 June 1979. The new Republic of Yemen announced on 22 May has stated that it will respect all the international obligations of its predecessors.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out the occasions, and level of political communications when Ministers or civil servants of his Department have raised the membership of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty with *(a)* member state representatives and *(b)* non-parties to the treaty (i) during preparatory committee meetings for the nuclear non-proliferation treaty's fourth quinquennial review conference and (ii) other occasions, since 1 January.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have discussed this subject on numerous occasions and at various levels.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications for the membership of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty of the political union of North and South Yemen.

Mr. Waldegrave: In a letter of 19 May to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Foreign Ministers of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen stated that, following the formation of the Republic of Yemen, all treaties and agreements concluded by either state, in accordance with international law, would remain in force.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the number and types of nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices cancelled or disamantled since 1970 as a result of multilateral or bilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations involving Britain with the United States of America or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Waldegrave: No British nuclear weapons have been the subject of such arms control agreements. But we are fully committed to the aim of enhancing security through agreements achieving a balance at lower levels of forces: NATO has unilaterally reduced its stockpile of nuclear weapons in Europe by 35 per cent. since 1979.

South Africa

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government will seek to extend the COCOM export controls to include South Africa.

Mr. Waldegrave: The proscribed destinations to which the COCOM controls apply are determined by strategic security reasons. South Africa does not fall into this category.

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government will adopt the proposals made by the Commonwealth committee of Foreign Ministers on southern Africa to strengthen the arms embargo on South Africa.

Mr. Waldegrave: We already offer the assistance to the United Nations arms embargo committee which was called for by the recent meeting of the Commonwealth committee of Foreign Ministers on southern Africa at Abuja.

Council of Ministers

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will be attending the next meeting of the European Community Council of Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: My right hon. Friend will attend the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 and 19 June.

Palestine

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has received the latest United Nations Relief and Works Agency estimate of the number of Palestinians killed and injured in the occupied territories since December 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes. We are deeply concerned about the continuing violence in the occupied territories and the number of Palestinians killed and wounded.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with the Falkland Islands council the possibility of permitting a limited number of British passport holders from Hong Kong to settle there.

Mr. Sainsbury: No such discussions are proposed as it is a matter for the Falkland Islands Government.

Antarctica

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will review the British response to the proposed Antarctic minerals convention in view of the concern expressed by individuals and organisations in Britain about the threat which mining developments would pose to the Antarctic environment.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him of 11 June.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey, *Official Report*, 3 May, column *626*, what response his Department will make or has made to the joint paper on the French and Australian proposals received on 3 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to my replies on 9 May to the hon. Members for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) and for Torfaen (Mr. Murphy) and to my reply on 15 May to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn).

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which conference Dr. John Heap has attended as a representative of his Department, since February; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: None. In his personal capacity, however, Dr. Heap has attended conferences or meetings organised by the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies and the Royal Geographical Society in London, and the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date the special consultative meeting of Antarctic treaty countries will take place; who will represent his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Arrangements for the meeting have not been finalised.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the petroleum companies whose representatives his Department has met within the last 12 months with regard to the convention on the regulation of Antarctic mineral resource activities; the dates of the meetings and the nature of the discussions.

Mr. Sainsbury: None.

Hong Kong

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of the People's Republic of China concerning the status of British overseas citizens in Hong Kong after 1997; what assurances he has received; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The right of abode of British overseas citizens in Hong Kong after 1997 is safeguarded under the agreement with the Chinese Government, and is set out in section XIV of annex 1 to the joint declaration.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to the numbers and ages of those held in custody in Sri Lanka by the security forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: According to figures released by the Sri Lankan Government, in November 1989 there were 8,000 youths in detention under emergency regulations. No more recent or comprehensive figures have been released.

Low Flying

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to make a formal response to the recent report of the Western European Union Assembly on low flying.

Mr. Waldegrave: Formal responses to recommendations in reports of the Western European Union Assembly are the responsibility of the WEU permanent council. We have no plans to make a separate response.

SCOTLAND

Under-fives

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what actions have been taken by the Government since 1979 to assist with the expansion of pre-five facilities;

(2) what financial assistance he has been able to offer regional councils to expand their pre-five facilities.

Mr. Lang: It is for local authorities to decide the extent and nature of the provision they make for children under five. In doing so they are assisted by financial provision made available as part of the revenue support grant settlement. This has enabled nursery education and day care places to be increased by 35 per cent. since 1979.

Mortality Rates

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the amount of *(a)* perinatal and *(b)* neonatal mortality in each health board in Scotland in each of the years 1986 to 1989.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

Health Board Area	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*[1]1989*
(a) Perinatal mortality numbers to Health Board Area, Scotland, 1986-89				
Borders	8	4	8	9
Central	31	26	35	39
Dumfries and Galloway	12	12	18	16
Fife	51	58	42	35
Grampian	70	57	48	52
Highland	20	18	31	18
Lothian	76	78	90	64
Argyll and Clyde	75	47	56	53
Ayrshire and Arran	60	60	46	36
Greater Glasgow	122	125	114	114
Lanarkshire	102	66	63	76
Tayside	40	31	36	38
Orkney	2	3	3	—
Shetland	4	5	2	1
Western Isles	—	4	2	2
(b) Neonatal deaths to Health Board Area, Scotland 1986-89				
Borders	3	2	4	3
Central	18	17	20	24
Dumfries and Galloway	10	7	8	12
Fife	24	33	24	17
Grampian	42	26	22	24
Highland	11	13	17	8
Lothian	57	49	41	39
Argyll and Clyde	40	27	33	21
Ayrshire and Arran	27	33	27	27
Greater Glasgow	53	58	58	64
Lanarkshire	38	30	32	39
Tayside	16	13	13	21
Orkney	1	1	—	1
Shetland	3	2	—	—
Western Isles	—	1	1	—

[1] 1989 figures are provisional.

Community Education

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what was the volume of community-based adult education provided in each year since 1979; and whether he has made any assessment of changes in the quality of the education provided over the same period;

(2) what steps he has taken to monitor the provision by education authorities in Scotland of community-based adult basic education and English as a second language services; and what criteria he has laid down for determining their adequacy in terms of *(a)* scale and *(b)* quality;

(3) what are his priorities and objectives for the expansion of community-based *(a)* adult basic education and *(b)* English as a second language provision in Scotland; and what guidance he has issued to local education authorities on the development of this provision;

(4) what plans he has to ensure that all those leaving long-stay institutions without essential skills in literacy and numeracy receive adult basic education;

(5) what steps he has taken to ensure the development of an educational dimension to care in the community;

(6) if he has any plans to make additional earmarked funds available to local authorities to enable them to develop community-based educational provision for priority groups.

Mr. Lang: The provision of community education in Scotland, including adult education and English as a second language, is primarily the responsibility of education authorities. They determine the extent and means of provision in the light of local needs and with regard to their own priorities and the total resources available to them, including those resources provided by central Government.

In 1990-91 revenue support grant of £2,479 million has been made available by central Government, representing an increase of 10·5 per cent. over the level of £2,244 million in 1989-90 and 23·5 per cent. over rate support grant of £2,007 million in 1988-89. There are no plans to make additional funds available in 1990-91 to local authorities specifically for community education purposes.

No central record is held of the volume of community-based adult education in Scotland. Her Majesty's inspectors of schools make inspections of providers of adult education, report on the quality of provision and make recommendations.

Detailed advice on service planning in the field of community care was issued in April 1985 to health boards and regional and district councils in respect of social work, education and health functions.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any plans to provide funding for the professional training and accreditation of adult basic education practitioners in Scotland along the lines of the local education authority training grants scheme in England and Wales.

Mr. Lang: Professional training and accreditation for adult basic education practitioners in Scotland is being developed by the Scottish adult basic education forum together with the community education validation and endorsement (Scotland) group, both of which were set up by the Scottish Community Education Council. I would expect such new developments to qualify for support under the current scheme for in-service training of teachers and community education workers.

Open Learning Centres

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any plans to increase the funding provided by his Department for local open learning centres.

Mr. Lang: We would be prepared to consider funding additional adult learning provision run by the voluntary sector, provided it is of an innovative nature.

Industrial Oil and Chemicals

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will immediately implement section 31A of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 as substituted by schedule 23 to the Water Act 1989 so as to regulate industrial oil and chemical storage on industrial sites.

Mr. Rifkind: I am considering, with the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales, the preparation of regulations to control the storage of industrial oil and chemicals.

Nursery Education

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from Strathclyde region on the need to place nursery school facilities on a statutory basis; and what response he has made.

Mr. Lang: No such representations have been received.

Lead Contamination

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide details of the reported cases of illness, or high levels of lead in the blood, caused by lead in the water supply, lead pipes and lead water tanks, in each of the years between 1979 and 1990 inclusive, for *(a)* pregnant women, *(b)* babies, *(c)* young children and *(d)* the general population; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available. The Government have always recognised the health implications of lead in water and have taken practical and positive steps to tackle them in the light of developing medical evidence and advice.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to privatise the Forestry Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government have no plans to privatise the Forestry Commission.

Sand-eel Fishing

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he intends to impose a moratorium on sand-eel fishing in Shetland waters.

Mr. Lang: Under arrangements already in place fishing for sand-eels in Shetland waters will close for this year on 15 June.

GPs (Fund Holding)

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether it is intended to reimburse the preparatory costs of those general practitioner practices preparing to submit formal applications for fund-holding status from April 1991.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Yes. A preparatory allowance of up to £16,000 per practice will be available to practices which have reached agreement with their relevant health board to undertake preparatory work for fund holding. The allowance will be used to reimburse the costs of additional work which practices will need to complete in order to be in a position to take on fund-holding status from 1 April 1991. Parliamentary approval to this new service is being sought in the main estimate for hospital and community health services, family practitioner services (part) and other health services, Scotland—class XV, vote 27. Pending that approval and the enactment of

the National Health Service and Community Care Bill when formal applications for GP practice fund-holding status can be made, urgent expenditure estimated at £160,000 will be met by repayable advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Fish Poisoning

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of *(a)* Nuvan chemicals and *(b)* Aquagard chemicals in the poisoning of salmon and sea trout.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Aquagard, formerly known as Nuvan, is a licensed veterinary medicine which is used to treat sea lice infestation in farmed salmon.

Responsibility for the assessment of the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines rests with the Veterinary Products Committee, which advises the Government in such matters. The committee considered the safety of Aquagard to both humans and animals, including fish, in its consideration of the application for a product licence under the Medicines Act 1968.

On the advice of the Veterinary Products Committee a one-year product licence for Aquagard was issued in June 1989. A review of the product is currently being undertaken and my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food hopes to make a statement shortly.

Fishing

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what conclusions he has drawn from his study of the deep oceanic intake of waters into Loch Coruisk in the Isle of Skye and the surrounding area in relation to sea trout numbers in north-west Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Loch Coruisk is a freshwater loch. Sea water cannot enter the loch, but its outflow is directly into the sea. The long-term sea trout catch records for the lochs on the Strathaird estate, including Coruisk, show a sustained decline. Fishing effort over the same period has remained stable and there has been no change in land use in the catchment area. It could be inferred that the cause of the decline lies in the sea, but there is no evidence to confirm this.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what study he has made of the impact on fishing in Scottish rivers of summer tourists; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* No special studies have been made on the effect of summer tourists, as opposed to fishermen generally, on fishing in Scottish rivers. It has been alleged that angling for immature sea trout by summer tourists may have contributed to the recent sharp decline in sea trout catches. But it is not possible to say how much, if any, of this increased mortality results from the activities of tourist anglers.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what financial provision he makes for the extra cost of working at night to carry out fishery research.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* This information is not available in the form requested. Total expenditure on overtime and allowances at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland marine and freshwater fisheries laboratories in 1989-90 was around £375,000.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his co-operation in fisheries research with experts in the west of the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Scientists of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland keep in close touch with scientists and fishery managers from the Salmon Research Trust of Ireland at Burrishoole and the Department of Marine in Dublin about their respective research programmes. There is also frequent contact with counterparts from the Republic of Ireland in various working groups of the International Council for Exploration of the Sea or meetings of other international organisations.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what study he is making of habitat erosion and fish spawning.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Some of the effects of habitat erosion on fish spawning are well understood. For example, bankside erosion is known to cause loss of cover for parr and adults, loss of terrestial food organisms from bankside vegetation and silting up of spawning gravel downstream.

These effects may result from over-graving, intensive bankside activity by anglers and changes in flow regime. The latter can have several causes including land use changes or exceptional rainfall in catchments or changes in drainage, planting or clear-felling in forestry. Research has shown that such changes can be minimised by adopting good management practices.

A study of the effects on salmonid fishes of changes in drainage patterns following afforestation is currently being undertaken by scientists from the freshwater fisheries laboratory at Pitlochry in co-operation with the Forestry Commission, the Institute of Freshwater Ecology and the Atlantic Salmon Trust. A study of the effects of clear-felling on salmonid fishes is also in progress with Forestry Commission help.

Extensive surveys of the distribution of juvenile salmonid fishes have recently been undertaken by freshwater fisheries laboratory staff. These surveys give an important indication of the success of salmon spawning in different areas of Scotland.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps are taken to ensure adequate enforcement of legislation providing that if a trawler catches more than 10 per cent. of its catch in the form of protected species, the skipper loses his licence.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The by-catch restrictions vary according to the target species and are all vigorously enforced by the fisheries department. The penalty provided for by legislation for exceeding by-catch limits is a fine not exceeding £5,000 plus a fine not exceeding the value of the fish in respect of which the offence was committed or actual forfeiture of the fish. In addition, any person guilty of such an offence is liable to forfeiture of the net or other fishing gear used in committing the offence. This penalty applies rather than licence revocation.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what study he is making of the impact of seals round the mouths of fishing rivers in dry summers on sea trout entering the rivers to spawn.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* There has been no specific study of the impact of seals at the mouths of fishing rivers although some work has been done on the diet of seals in the Moray Firth. A series of papers has been produced as a result of this and other research on seals commissioned by DAFS and the results will be published over the course of the next 18 months.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what study he is making on Loch Eriboll of the inter-breeding between wild and farmed salmon; and if he will make a statement on the results.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* In February 1989, a large number of growing salmon escaped from fish farm sea cages into Loch Eriboll in northern Scotland as the result of a single accident. By August it had become clear that escaped farmed fish were entering the nearby River Polla with the native run of wild fish. Scientists from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland supported by the Atlantic Salmon Trust, the university of Stirling and the Scottish Salmon Growers Association, studied the spawning of wild and farmed fish in the river.

The movements of radiotagged fish were monitored and it was established that wild fish and farmed escapees could be distinguished by appearance and by pigment analysis of samples of muscle taken from fish of both types. All the fish entering the river were sexually mature and farmed fish of both sexes were observed to spawn. All the females captured towards the end of the year had become spent. Farmed and wild fish were observed to cross. Wild fish were distributed throughout the river's length at spawning but the distribution of farmed fish was more restricted. Farmed fish of both sexes tended to spawn especially in the lower reaches of the river. This tendency was particularly marked in the case of females. The difference in the distributions of farmed and wild fish at spawning was confirmed, in the case of females, by pigment analysis of eggs sampled from redds located throughout the river's length. Farmed females tended to spawn later than wild ones. Farmed females cut redds on areas of spawning gravel on which redds had previously been constructed by wild fish.

The results of ths study were presented at an international symposium in Norway in April 1990 to consider "Interactions between Cultured and Wild Atlantic Salmon". Full details of the study have been submitted for publication in the scientific literature.

Study of the River Polla will be continued this year to determine whether farmed salmon enter the River Polla again and, if they do so, whether last year's findings may be generalised between years at the same site. Further studies are being performed to establish whether escaped farmed females spawned in the Rivers Hope—Strathmore—and Dionard which flank the River Polla to the east and west, respectively. Pigment analyses will be performed on eggs and alevins sampled recently from both rivers. In addition, with the Queen's university of Belfast, it is intended to test whether observations of the crossing of farmed and wild fish can be confirmed using genetic "fingerprinting" techniques to establish the parentage of juveniles.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give his salmon advisory committee a remit to concern itself with sea trout.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* We have no plans to do so. The salmon advisory committee already has a very substantial programme of work to complete on Atlantic salmon.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what study he is making of fish-bearing pathogens.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Scientists at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland's marine laboratory investigate the causes of pathological conditions in wild and farmed fish in Scotland and carry out research on the detection of pathogens and the diagnosis and prevention of infectious diseases in fish.

This research provides the basis for advice to my right hon. and learned Friend on the use of his powers under the diseases of fish legislation and to district salmon fishery boards, fish farmers and fishermen to help them prevent or minimise the effects of diseases in farmed fish.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research is being undertaken on the marine phase of sea trout life cycles.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Research has been undertaken by the Scottish Marine Biological Association on the movements and feeding behaviour of sea trout in sea lochs in Argyll. This will be followed up by a coastal sampling programme in north-west Scotland to obtain additional information on seasonal diets, insights into the distribution of the sea trout and material for parasitological and microbiological examination.

The work will be undertaken by scientists from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland's marine and freshwater fisheries laboratories, in co-operation with local fishermen.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research is being undertaken on the relationship between marine temperatures and the growth of sea lice on fish.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The Fisheries Departments have commissioned a study on the biology of sea lice at the Institute of Aquaculture, university of Stirling. This study, which is still in progress, has shown that the life cycle of the louse—lepeophtheirus salmonis—is temperature dependent. The following information has been gained from the project so far.

Sea temperature	*Time to complete cycle (weeks)*
6-9°C (Scottish west coast winter temperature)	8-9
10-12°C	7-8
13-5-14°C (Scottish west coast summer temperature)	7

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what conveniently available figures he has for the costs of ship time in all weathers for the study of rare migratory fish, such as sea trout.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The daily cost of operating inshore launches to conduct research is

between £200-£250. In the open sea the daily cost of the departmental research vessels is £2,450 for the smaller Clupea and £8,150 for the Scotia. These figures do not include the salaries and related costs of scientists on board ship.

Government Buildings (Security)

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he proposes to award any further contracts to private security companies to provide security services in respect of Government buildings in Edinburgh in the years 1990 to 1993.

Mr. Rifkind *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland will shortly invite tenders for security services at one of its scientific establishments. I have no other proposals under consideration, but I shall review the position when the existing contract for services at four offices expires in 1992.

Disabled People

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what will be the nature of the contractual obligations placed upon local enterprise companies which will ensure that training is made available to people who have disabilities;

(2) what safeguard over funding will be made to ensure that local enterprise companies are able to provide training opportunities for people who have disabilities;

(3) what plans he has to ensure that training for employment for people who have disabilities will continue under Scottish Enterprise at the same or enhanced level.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Local enterprise companies will be provided with appropriate levels of resources and obliged by the terms of their contract to meet performance targets relating specifically to provision for trainees with special needs. In the unlikely event of an individual local enterprise company failing to meet its contractual obligations in this or any other respect, Scottish Enterprise will take immediate remedial action, which can ultimately, if the issue is sufficiently serious, take the form of cancellation of the contract and direct delivery of services by Scottish Enterprise itself until an alternative local enterprise company is established.

The Government are determined that the creation of Scottish Enterprise and local enterprise companies should not result in a diminution of support for trainees with special needs of one sort or another.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what initiatives have been taken to ensure that adequate training for employment is available to meet the needs of people who have disabilities in Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Youth training will ensure that adequate training is available to meet the needs of young people aged 16 to 18 years who have disabilities, by a strengthened guarantee of training to all young people under 18 offering a training opportunity suitable to the needs of every young person. Funding arrangements are set to ensure that available resources are concentrated on the most vulnerable groups of young people.

Employment training will provide training for people with disabilities by special measures which include an extension of the training period to up to two years for people with special training needs, communication services for the deaf, adaptation to premises and equipment, special aids to employment, such as tools and equipment, and a personal reader service for the blind. In addition, for people with disabilities, there is no numerical ceiling on entry applied, the normal eligibility criteria are waived and people with disabilities can enter employment training immediately provided they are unemployed.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to improve the level and quality of training for people who have disabilities in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* I am satisfied that the new flexibilities introduced for youth training and employment training will make a significant contribution to improving the level and quality of training for people and unemployed people including those who have disabilities.

Sheltered Employment

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people whose principal handicap is a result of mental illness are employed under the sheltered placement scheme in Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Of the 668 disabled people who were employed under the sheltered placement scheme in Scotland at 31 March 1990, a total of 32 had a mental illness as their principal disability.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the sheltered employment services which are available to people who have mental health problems in Scotland, other than the sheltered placement scheme.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* In addition to the sheltered placement scheme, sheltered employment opportunities for people with mental health problems are provided in Scotland in Remploy factories and sheltered workshops run by local authorities and voluntary organisations.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many additional sheltered placement scheme places will be made available to sponsors in the coming year in Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* There will be no additional sheltered placement scheme places made available in Scotland this year. At current placement turnover rates, approximately 70 places will become available during the year.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to improve the sheltered employment services available to people who have mental health problems in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Sheltered employment for people with severe disabilities, including those with mental health problems, is among the matters being considered in a review of employment and training for people with disabilities which my right hon. and

learned Friend the Secretary of State for Employment has been undertaking. It is expected that a consultative document will be published shortly.

Women's Refuges

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the number of refuges for battered women; and how many places they provide in each local authority in Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Information is not available centrally on the total number of refuges or the number of places provided.

Fife Social Services Department

Mr. Douglas: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on progress made by Sheriff Kearney in reporting on the Fife regional social work department; and when he expects to receive the sheriff's report.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* I understand that the chairman has sought evidence from the social work department of Fife regional council on matters of concern which he has identified. Once the department has prepared its list of witnesses, he hopes to be able to predict a timetable for completing the inquiry and submitting his report.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fishing Boats

Mr. John Townend: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give further consideration to introducing a decommissioning scheme for the British fishing industry along the lines operated by other European Economic Community states.

Mr. Curry: No.

Shellfish

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what compensation he is offering to *(a)* fishermen and *(b)* processors affected by the ban on landings of shellfish and crustaceans.

Mr. Curry: None.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consultations were held with *(a)* the catching industry, *(b)* the processing industry and *(c)* the EC Commission to help prohibition of shellfish and crustaceans of the coast of northern England.

Mr. Curry: The warning to consumers of shellfish from the north-east coast issued by the Department of Health on 26 May was first brought to the attention of representatives of the industry on that day.

The EC Commission was also notified of this action at an early stage in accordance with agreed EC procedures for circulating information about food hazards.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research he has available on the effects of red algae bloom on *(a)* mussels, *(b)* shellfish and *(c)* crustaceans; and what regard the Commission has for imposing his prohibited code.

Mr. Curry: Scientists at the directorate of fisheries research routinely monitor molluscan shellfish, principally mussels, for the toxin which they can accumulate from certain algae. Monitoring of crustacea began this year in response to the very high levels of toxins observed in mussels, and associated research is under way to establish more precisely the consequences of algal blooms to crustacea, principally crabs.

The European Commission's proposal for a Council regulation on shellfish hygiene (COM (89) 648 Final) includes a provision that molluscs should not contain more than 80 microgrammes of paralytic shellfish poisoning toxin per hundred grammes of flesh. This is the same criterion as that currently employed in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement in respect of the emergency alert issued on 26 May by the Department of Health warning the public not to eat shellfish caught between the Humber and Montrose, north of Dundee, due to contamination by poisonous algae; how far he assesses this situation to have been brought about or aggravated by sewage pollution, farming and chemical waste; and what steps he proposes to deal with this situation.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* Paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) is a naturally occurring and naturally variable algal problem believed to be dependent mainly on weather and sea conditions. The period of greatest risk is in the months of May and June, when large increases in populations of the algae concerned can occur. Since 1968 this Department has monitored weekly toxin levels in mussels from this area during the period from March to August. Results of toxin assays are passed to local environmental health authorities and the Department of Health.

On 25 May very high toxin levels were recorded and, in addition to the warning which was sent to the environmental health authorities later that day, the Department of Health issued a public warning notice on the morning of 26 May advising against the consumption of any shellfish taken from the east coast between the Humber and Montrose. In the light of the results of further testing of shellfish samples the Department of Health was on 1 June able to lift its warning in respect of crustacean shellfish other than crabs and on 7 June was able to lift the warning in relation to crabs. We are continuing to monitor the situation closely and will lift the warning on molluscan shellfish as soon as it is safe to do so.

There is no correlation between pollution and the occurrence of this algae off our north-east coast. This phenomenon occurs in many other parts of the world where the appropriate natural conditions occur such as in France, Spain, Japan and the east and west coasts of Canada. It should also be noted that, between 1814 and 1968, 40 major outbreaks of this algal bloom were recorded off the north-east coast, resulting in 146 cases of illness and about 14 deaths; 78 persons were ill as a consequence of the last major outbreak, in 1968.

Functional Foods

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what labelling requirements apply to the sale of functional foods;

(2) whether he intends to impose restrictions on the sale of functional foods.

Mr. Maclean: Food legislation already addresses the safety of all foodstuffs, their labelling and description and claims that can be made about them. We have no plans at present to make any specific rules about foods which are being described as "functional" but we shall, as is normal, watch developments and will act if the consumer requirement suggests such a need.

Irradiated Food

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) of 17 May, *Official Report*, column *554*, if he will list those interested parties to which he refers.

Mr. Curry: We shall be consulting more than 300 organisations representing trade, consumer, health and enforcement interests for their views on our proposals for legislation in this area. A full list will be placed in the Library of the House.

Eggs

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was *(a)* the number and *(b)* the value of eggs imported into the United Kingdom in each month since January 1989 to the latest date available.

Mr. Maclean: The number and value of eggs imported into the United Kingdom monthly during 1989 and up to April 1990 (inclusive) is set out in the table:

	'000 Eggs	*Value £*
1989		
January	14,371	454,818
February	7,553	254,033
March	7,956	275,402
April	40,073	1,387,578
May	28,172	895,365
June	25,961	861,535
July	22,794	729,146
August	35,120	1,308,199
September	58,044	2,532,210
October	38,285	1,513,155
November	74,354	3,401,470
December	53,882	2,643,422
Total	406,565	16,256,333
1990		
January	37,755	1,670,107
February	34,982	1,520,792
March	66,290	3,226,961
April	54,212	2,187,086
Total	193,239	8,604,946

Exports of Live Animals

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under what legal provisions the United Kingdom Government have banned the export of live animals for slaughter to Spain.

Mr. Maclean: Licences are issued under the Export of Animals (Protection) Order 1981 only for exports to those countries which have properly implemented EC directives on welfare during international transport and on pre-slaughter stunning. We await assurances from the Commission that these requirements are fully in force in Spain.

Chernobyl

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by county for England and Wales *(a)* how many sheep and *(b)* how many farms still have restrictions in force because of the Chernobyl explosion.

Mr. Maclean: The information requested is as follows (estimated maximum post-lambing figures):

	Holdings	*Sheep*
Cumbria	150	170,000
Clwyd	4	2,500
Gwynedd	407	282,500
Powys	5	15,000

Less-favoured Areas

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will seek to progress a decision on the United Kingdom application to extend the less-favoured areas which was lodged with the European Community in July 1989.

Mr. Curry: We have been pursuing this point with the European Commission and we expect to be able to announce the outcome shortly.

Wylfa Power Station

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has received any results from the assessment of the effects of the radioactive discharges from the nuclear power station at Wylfa in Anglesey.

Mr. Curry: The effects of radioactive discharges from the nuclear power station at Wylfa are continually being assessed by this Department's scientists on behalf of the Secretary of State for Wales. The results of environmental monitoring, together with the assessments made of doses to members of the public via both terrestrial and marine pathways, are published in reports produced by this Department, copies of which are placed in the Library of the House. The doses received by the most exposed members of the public continue to be well within the internationally recommended limits.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to act on the recommendations from the Tyrrell report with regard to holding a formal study of the health of species fed offal, including pigs and poultry, and of animals such as hounds fed fallen livestock; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Studies are being conducted at the central veterinary laboratory involving the parenteral and

oral exposure of pigs and poultry to brain material from cattle confirmed as having BSE. An examination of hounds' brains is being planned.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that the infective agent responsible for bovine spongiform encephalopathy cannot be transmitted through milk; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Milk has never been shown to transmit any of the spongiform encephalopathies, and studies into scrapie have not found the agent in milk. Nevertheless, studies are taking place, using milk from BSE cattle, to confirm these findings. In addition, as a precautionary measure, milk from animals suspected of having BSE is banned from human and animal consumption.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to receive a copy of the longer report from Dr. Tyrrell referred to in the *Official Report* on 21 May, column 85.

Mr. Maclean: My right hon. Friend the Minister has asked the Tyrrell committee to provide the report as soon as possible.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals for the payment of compensation for losses incurred by United Kingdom farmers and dealers incurred as a result of bans on imports by European Community Governments in the light of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* No sir. Community market support continued throughout the period covered by the French, German and Italian import bans. It would not be possible to isolate the market impact of these bans.

Of course individuals would be able to obtain legal advice as to whether they could seek damages in the country concerned for specific effects of the disruption.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under what circumstances histopathological examination is undertaken of bovines born since August 1988; and how many such examinations have been carried out.

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The brains of all animals suspected of being affected by BSE are examined by histopathology. To date, four such examinations have been conducted on bovines born since August 1988; all were negative for BSE.

Animal Feedstuffs

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he proposes to end the practice of feeding chicken manure and litter to beef cattle.

Mr. Maclean: I have no plans to do so. Anyone who ensiles poultry manure or litter for use as animal feed is subject to the requirements of the Processed Animal Protein Order 1989 which inter alia requires registration with the Department and microbiological testing. Regular checks on the ensiling process are carried out by representatives of the state veterinary service.

ENERGY

Insulation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his answer of 5 June, *Official Report*, column *409, (a)* who estimated that 5·5 TWh of electricity could be saved, *(b)* whether this estimate has been published, *(c)* which insulation measures were included and *(d)* what other estimates made during the last two years on potential savings from better insulation are known to his Department.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The estimate was derived from a publication by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) entitled "Energy Use in Buildings and Carbon Dioxide Emissions"—BR 170 HMSO ISBN 085125 4365, £25. It is estimated in table 11 at page 36 that cost-effective insulation measures applied to houses in the United Kingdom would save 23·3 PJ of electricity corresponding to 6·5 TWh. The figure has been scaled down to 5·5 TWh to cover England and Wales only.

The recommended cost-effective insulation measures covered all existing houses and assumed that:

(i) 80 per cent. of all houses with cavity walls would be insulated.
(ii) Lofts with less or equal to 25mm insulation would be insulated up to 150mm.
(iii) All houses would be draughtproofed.
(iv) All hot water tanks with less than 50mm insulation would be insulated up to 80mm.
(v) All windows would be double-glazed when the existing window frames need to be replaced.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be writing to the hon. Member and will supply a list of publications, produced over the past two years, covering the potential for energy saving through better insulation of the housing stock.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the number of community insulation projects and the number of participant workers and trainees at end-year in 1987, 1988 and 1989 and at the latest available date for each region, Wales, Scotland and Great Britain as a whole.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The figures requested in respect of 1987 and 1989 are as follows:

Number of draughtproofing jobs completed

	1987	*1989*
East Midlands	10,236	10,245
London	7,839	1,353
North East	13,867	9,983
North West	16,125	22,230
Scotland	30,349	37,154
South East	6,728	4,942
South West	9,489	4,368
Wales	15,017	13,371
West Midlands	11,957	12,051
Yorkshire and Humberside	17,100	15,186
Total	138,707	130,883

Neighbourhood Energy Action advises that equivalent information in respect of 1988 is not available, and that reliable information in respect of early months of 1990 for comparison with the same periods in previous years is not yet available.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the number of draughtproofing jobs completed so far in the current year and completed in the equivalent periods of 1987, 1988 and 1989 for each region, Wales, Scotland and Great Britain as a whole; and what were the full-year figures for 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Available information in respect of the last three complete years is as follows:

Number of operating projects at period end

	1987	*1988*	*1989*
East Midlands	36	25	28
London	34	8	14
North East	25	17	18
North West	48	41	45
Scotland	66	30	77
South East	47	21	23
South West	34	15	16
Wales	47	27	36
West Midlands	50	22	26
Yorkshire and Humberside	34	22	24
Total	421	228	307

Number of participating workers/trainees at period end

	1987	*1989*
East Midlands	505	271
London	617	31
North East	493	253
North West	1,051	672
Scotland	978	780
South East	566	116
South West	534	190
Wales	1,047	335
West Midlands	775	314
Yorkshire and Humberside	679	353
Total	7,245	3,315

Neighbourhood Energy Action advises that information on numbers of participating workers/trainees at end 1988 is not available, and that reliable information in respect of the early months of 1990 for comparison with the same period in previous years is not yet available.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what was the spending on the community insulation programme in each year from 1983-84 and including estimated spending in 1989-90 for *(a)* the London borough of Camden and *(b)* the London borough of Islington;

(2) what was the number of community insulation projects and the number of participant workers and trainees at end-year 1987, 1988 and 1989 and at the latest available date for *(a)* the London borough of Camden and *(b)* the London borough of Islington.

Mr. Peter Morrison: There are no community insulation projects currently operating in the London boroughs of Camden and Islington. Detailed information on projects under the community programme which served those areas prior to 1988 is not available.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the radioactive inventory, in terms of alpha and gamma/beta components, together with a listing of the principal fission products and acticides and the properties thereof, contained within a single vitrified high-level waste container for liquid wastes arising from the reprocessing of magnesium oxide uranium alloy irradiated fuel at 4 to 5 GWeday/tonne uranium burn-up for irradiated oxide fuel of advanced gas-cooled reactor 18 and 24 GWeday/tonne uranium burn-up and light water reactor fuel at 33 GWeday/tonne uranium burn-up; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The detailed radioactive inventory for vitrified high-level waste containers is a matter for British Nuclear Fuels plc. This inventory has to be taken into account in preparing the safety case for the on-site storage of these canisters, which has to be agreed by the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate before the plant can be operated.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what arrangements he is now making to allow independent scientists to scrutinise "An Evaluation of Energy Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Measures to Ameliorate Them".

Mr. Peter Morrison: This document referred to was widely available within the intergovernmental panel on climate change, which is an open forum, from November 1989, and was published as energy paper 58 in January 1990. It was, and remains, open to any scrutiny.

DEFENCE

Iraq (Missiles)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will provide a table of the missiles Iraq is known to possess, together with their ranges.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The armed forces of Iraq deploy the following ballistic missiles:

Scud B—300 km range
Al Hussein—650 km range

Iraq also possesses a variety of anti-tank guided weapons—ranges between 0·5 km and 4 km; air-to-surface missiles—ranges between 10 km and 400 km; surface-to-air missiles—ranges between 3 km and 50 km; and air-to-air missiles—ranges between 3 km and 30 km.

HMS Warspite

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 22 May, *Official Report*, column *94*, if he will make a statement on what details he may release on the condition of HMS Warspite with respect to national security considerations, and if he will list *(a)* the date of entry into dock of HMS Warspite for refit, *(b)* the date, within the nearest four weeks, on which the Warspite was expected to finish her refit and *(c)* which British nuclear-powered submarines have so far been inspected following the report of defects in British nuclear-powered submarines.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: HMS Warspite's refit began in 1988 with a planned completion date towards the end of 1990. This date is currently under review. With regard to the nuclear submarine inspection programme I have nothing further to add to the reply given to the hon. Member on 22 May 1990 at column *94*.

Devonshire Dock

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has ordered an inquiry into breaches of security by persons seeking access to the Devonshire dock, Barrow-in-Furness, on the advice of Messrs. Nicholas Labour Hire of Preston.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No such breaches of security at the Devonshire dock hall have been reported.

Low Flying

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what regulations are in force concerning the height to be maintained by military aircraft crossing the coast at low level in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Neubert: Pilots of military aircraft are advised to cross coastlines, as a general rule, at a minimum height of 500 ft above ground or sea level in order to reduce the risk of birdstrike.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration has been given to the fitting of ground proximity warning systems to RAF aircraft.

Mr. Neubert: The Ministry of Defence is sponsoring a trials programme to develop a ground proximity warning system. No decision about whether the equipment will be fitted to RAF aircraft will be made until the results of the trials are available.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what height the specified weather minima for military aircraft operating in the United Kingdom low-flying system require pilots to remain vertically clear of cloud during low-level flight.

Mr. Neubert: When operating in the United Kingdom low-flying system, military pilots are required to remain a minimum of 500 ft vertically clear of cloud at indicated airspeeds in excess of 140 knots.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what actions have been taken to change or re-emphasise aspects of RAF aircrew training by syllabuses for low flying in the light of the findings of the board of inquiry into the accident to a Jaguar at St. Abb's Head on 13 April 1989.

Mr. Neubert: None. As no deficiencies in the RAF's present low-level training syllabuses were revealed during the board of inquiry's investigation into this accident, no further action was considered necessary.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if a survey has been conducted of the extent to which reheat is used by aircraft operating in the United Kingdom low-flying system; and what plans he has to carry out such a survey in future.

Mr. Neubert: Aircraft are instructed to use reheat as little as possible when flying overland at low level and use would be unusual unless required for flight safety reasons. This is confirmed by RAF police surveys which give no indication that reheat is regularly used in the United Kingdom low-flying system.

Aircraft Noise

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the changes made since 1984 in his Department's policy on exposure to aircraft noise levels in excess of 125 dB (A); and if he will list all Ministry of Defence commissioned research on the health effects of aircraft noise carried out since 1983 *(a)* within his Department, *(b)* by other Government Departments and *(c)* by non-governmental scientists upon which such changes in policy were based.

Mr. Neubert: There have been no changes since 1984 in MOD policy on exposure to aircraft noise levels in excess of 125 dB (A).

No Ministry of Defence commissioned research into the health effects of aircraft noise has been carried out since 1983 within the Department or by another Government Department but, as I announced on 17 May at columns *517-18*, a study to review available information is in progress.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review his policy of not indicating which of Her Majesty's ships are carrying nuclear weapons.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It has been the invariable practice of successive British Governments neither to confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons in any particular ship at any particular time. There are no plans to change this policy.

RAF Recruitment

Sir John Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he anticipates any reduction in the annual officer recruitment targets for the RAF following the recent improvements in east-west relations.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is too early to say whether there will be a reduction in RAF officer recruitment, but the changing international situation gives us hope that we shall be able to maintain our security and sustain our responsibilities overseas with lower force levels and less cost.

RAF Biggin Hill

Sir John Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the current estimates for the building of the additional accommodation required at RAF Cranwell following the closure of the officer and aircrew selection centre at RAF Biggin Hill.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The estimated cost of the new facilities required at RAF Cranwell amounts to some £7·5 million at current prices. This figure now allows for VAT and current levels of inflation in the construction industry.

Sir John Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the current estimates for the likely level of capital receipts from the disposal of the site at present occupied by RAF Biggin Hill.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Estimates of expected receipts are commercially confidential, but we expect income from disposals at Biggin Hill to more than cover the cost of reproviding facilities for the officer and aircrew selection centre at RAF Cranwell.

Sir John Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the anticipated demand for officers'

married quarters in the Greater London area over the next five years; and whether accommodation is to be provided at RAF Biggin Hill to meet this demand.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Present plans envisage that the requirement for officers' married quarters in the Greater London area will, over the medium to long term, be reduced. It is our intention to dispose of all the officers' married quarters at RAF Biggin Hill when the station closes. Present plans anticipate that the various elements of the Biggin Hill site will become available for disposal towards the end of 1992, excluding the memorial chapel enclave which will be retained.

Salerno Incident, 1943

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many representations he has received in the last 12 months concerning the incident at Salerno on 20 September 1943 which resulted in the court martial of 91 soldiers of the 51 Highland Division and 50 Northumbrian Division; and if he proposes to take the steps necessary to obtain a free pardon for them.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to the hon. and learned Member.

Radar

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on developments in the detection by radar of missile attacks.

Mr. Alan Clark: Steady progress has been made in developing the ability of radar to detect missile attacks. Work continues on a number of fronts.

Service Accommodation

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current backlog of unavoidable repairs to service accommodation.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The backlog of maintenance for essential and unavoidable repairs to service accommodation at 1 April 1990 was estimated at £36 million.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the influence of the quality of rented service accommodation on the rate of premature voluntary release.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No single factor influences personnel to leave the services prematurely and the results of attitude surveys conducted among service personnel indicate that the quality of service accommodation is not a major factor in the decision to leave.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many representations he has received from service personnel regarding the quality of service accommodation.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No records are kept centrally of representations on behalf of service personnel regarding the quality of service accommodation, but we are aware of a small number of such representations over the last 12 months.

Military Training

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what examination there has been of the options for changing the current requirements for military training in *(a)* the British Army, *(b)* the Royal Air Force and *(c)* the Royal Navy;

(2) what plans there are to make adjustments to training programmes for the armed forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The future requirements and organisation for training are kept under review.

Nuclear Accident, Greenwich

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans or studies have been made or commissioned by his Department to assess the measures that would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to the hon. Members for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 8 June, *Official Report*, column *724*.

Standing Military Forces

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are to alter the readiness and availability of British standing military forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The last ministerial session of the defence planning committee on 22 and 23 May decided to take steps to lower the readiness and availability of some of the alliance's standing forces. A copy of the communiqué is in the Library of the House. Work is in hand on the implications for British forces.

Retraining

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what retraining opportunities are offered to those personnel of his Department whose services are no longer required.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Pre-release training to help in the preparation for civilian life is available to eligible personnel who are about to leave the services. Eligibility for this training is determined primarily by length of service and the circumstances of discharge. All civilian staff are given the opportunity of pre-retirement training, but no specific retraining is provided by the Department.

NATO Military Review

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are for British participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation review of military strategy.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom will participate fully in the review of the alliance's military strategy to which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State agreed at last month's ministerial meeting of the defence planning committee. Ministers also agreed that this review would be based on the continuing validity of the principles of alliance security set out in the comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament.

Defence Review

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what communications he has had with the defence industry regarding the economic and industrial consequences of the options for change study.

Mr. Alan Clark: The work on options for change is addressing policy issues in the light of changing international circumstances. As such, it has yet to identify the full consequences of possible changes for the equipment programme.

Conventional Forces in Europe

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy that no relevant equipment be moved out of the area of application of the proposed treaty on conventional forces in Europe before such a treaty comes into effect in order to *(a)* deploy the equipment elsewhere or *(b)* sell the equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom attaches great importance to the NATO proposal that reductions of equipment holdings during the implementation of the conventional forces in Europe treaty should be by means of destruction. Before the treaty comes into effect, there will obviously be no legal bar to the transfer or sale of equipment outside the area of application. However, any large-scale activity of this sort would be contrary to the spirit in which we entered into the negotiations, and the United Kingdom would avoid such activities itself and discourage them on the part of others.

HEALTH

Chiropractic Treatment

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to introduce state recognition of registered members of the chiropractic profession and the availability of chiropractic treatment under the national health service in the light of the recent report of the Medical Research Council of the British Medical Association.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Statutory regulation of the chiropractic profession is a matter for the profession itself to pursue. All medical treatment provided under the national health service must, by law, be given or presented by a registered medical practitioner. There are no plans to change that long-established principle.

Mortality Rates

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the amount of *(a)* perinatal mortality and *(b)* neonatal mortality in each regional health authority area for England in each of the years 1986 to 1989.

Mr. Dorrell: The information is shown in the tables.

(a) Perinatal mortality and (b) Neonatal mortality: numbers and rates by Regional Health Authority in England for the years 1986 to 1989

Table (a) Perinatal mortality

Area	*1986*		*1987*		*1988*		*[1]1989*	
	Number	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*
England	5,977	9·5	5,742	8·9	5,731	8·7	5,424	8·3
Regional Health Authority								
Northern	408	10·1	344	8·5	362	9·0	362	9·2
Yorkshire	499	10·3	469	9·5	460	9·2	423	8·5
Trent	606	10·2	572	9·3	567	9·2	524	8·5
East Anglian	191	7·7	206	7·9	180	6·7	174	6·7
North West Thames	416	8·6	430	8·6	410	8·1	414	8·3
North East Thames	513	9·6	525	9·4	516	9·1	468	8·3
South East Thames	407	8·5	428	8·5	468	9·1	433	8·4
South West Thames	302	8·2	288	7·5	310	7·9	274	7·0
Wessex	317	8·8	331	8·9	331	8·7	317	8·3
Oxford	297	8·9	279	8·0	247	6·9	258	7·2
South Western	363	9·5	302	7·5	324	7·9	273	6·7
West Midlands	776	11·0	725	9·9	752	10·3	712	9·7
Mersey	302	9·2	296	9·0	249	7·4	270	8·2
North Western	580	10·4	547	9·6	555	9·6	522	9·2

Table (b) Neonatal mortality

Area	*1986*		*1987*		*1988*		*[1]1989*	
	Number	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*	*Number*	*Rate*
England	3,270	5·2	3,240	5·0	3,220	4·9	3,077	4·7
Regional Health Authority								
Northern	234	5·8	193	4·8	195	4·9	196	5·0
Yorkshire	290	6·0	281	5·7	253	5·1	221	4·5
Trent	351	5·9	325	5·3	327	5·3	293	4·8
East Anglian	102	4·1	99	3·8	97	3·6	94	3·6
North West Thames	233	4·8	232	4·7	240	4·7	222	4·5
North East Thames	286	5·4	319	5·8	256	4·5	264	4·7
South East Thames	194	4·1	255	5·1	233	4·5	246	4·8
South West Thames	167	4·5	158	4·1	182	4·6	166	4·3
Wessex	172	4·8	186	5·0	182	4·8	188	5·0
Oxford	176	5·3	165	4·8	152	4·3	156	4·4
South Western	176	4·6	181	4·5	204	5·0	158	3·9
West Midlands	414	5·9	411	5·7	452	6·2	445	6·1

Area	1986		1987		1988		[1]1989	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Mersey	161	4·9	153	4·7	146	4·4	137	4·2
North Western	314	5·7	282	5·0	301	5·2	291	5·1

Perinatal mortality: stillbirths and deaths in the first week of life. Rate per 1,000 live and still births.
Neonatal mortality: deaths in the first 28 days of life. Rate per 1,000 live births.
[1] 1989 figures provisional.

Dentists

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish a table showing for each of the last three years the gross annual earnings of national health service dentists in brackets of £10,000 up to £200,000 and over £200,000; and what was the highest gross earnings figure.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The table shows the gross annual earnings of dentists in England who are in contract with a family practitioner committee. Similar information for dentists working in the hospital and community health service is not available.

Gross earnings of dentists providing general dental services in the NHS through contracts with family practitioner committees in England

Earnings Bands (as at 31 March) £	1988	1989	1990
up to 10,000	2,201	2,061	2,139
10,001 to 20,000	1,135	955	969
20,001 to 30,000	1,163	993	935
30,001 to 40,000	1,459	1,150	1,137
40,001 to 50,000	1,877	1,412	1,465
50,001 to 60,000	2,296	1,810	1,850
60,001 to 70,000	1,924	2,028	2,027
70,001 to 80,000	1,526	1,708	1,756
80,001 to 90,000	957	1,368	1,400
90,001 to 100,000	592	947	938
100,001 to 110,000	348	638	584
110,001 to 120,000	195	404	407
120,001 to 130,000	116	233	250
130,001 to 140,000	65	141	149
140,001 to 150,000	34	88	98
150,001 to 160,000	29	58	57
160,001 to 170,000	6	35	37
170,001 to 180,000	11	24	24
180,001 to 190,000	3	16	10
190,001 to 200,000	5	13	9
over 200,000	8	18	16
Highest individual earnings	£311,469	£376,543	£280,777

Note:
Earnings figures refer to the total paid in fees for NHS treatment scheduled for payment by the Dental Practice Board in the financial year quoted. Fees paid in respect of treatment carried out by assistants are included in the gross figures quoted for their employment dentist.

NHS Trusts

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which national health service hospitals or other units have submitted draft business plans and draft applications for national health service trust status.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Draft applications have been submitted in confidence to the Department but no draft business plans have been received to date. Until Parliament approves the necessary legislation, formal applications from those units wishing to pursue trust status cannot be submitted. When the legislation has been passed, applications will be made available by the regions concerned to interested parties locally during the period of public consultation.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish all advice of his Department to any national health service hospital or other unit which has expressed an interest in self-governing status.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We intend to publish a compendium of guidance on national health service trusts in the autumn, which will update and bring together advice on the establishment and operation of NHS trusts which has been provided by the Department.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish all draft business plans and draft applications for national health service trust status.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All applications for NHS trust status will be publicly available documents. However, the supporting financial statements to be submitted by applicants for NHS trust status will include detailed information on their financial plans which it would not be appropriate to make publicly available.

Hospitals (Resource Management)

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what is the criterion for selecting hospitals for inclusion in the resource management scheme;

(2) whether the Normanton and Castleford district hospital in the Pontefract district health authority area can be included in the resource management scheme; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will publish the rules and regulations governing hospitals being included in a resource management scheme.

Mr. Dorrell: The criteria for including a hospital in the resource management extension programme are set out in the Government's White Paper "Working for Patients".

Since March 1989 a total of 14 of the larger acute hospitals in the Yorkshire regional health authority have been selected to join the programme. The Normanton and Castleford district hospital is not a large acute hospital and therefore does not meet the criteria for selection.

District Health Authorities

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals there are to pay members to sit on district health authorities.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Subject to parliamentary approval, the National Health Service and Community Care Bill makes provision for non-officer members of district health authorities to receive remuneration as determined by the Secretary of State with the approval of the Treasury.

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals there are for the future membership composition of district health authorities.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Subject to parliamentary approval of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, it is proposed that the new style district health authorities shall comprise of a chairman, appointed by the Secretary of State, five non-officer members, appointed by the relevant regional health authority, and up to five officer members who must include the chief officer and the chief finance officer. "Teaching DHAs" will have to include a non-officer member from a university with a medical or dental school.

Complaints Procedures

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to monitor and assess the operational procedure of district health authorities' complaints systems and publish their findings.

Mr. Dorrell: Directions on hospital complaints procedures made under section 17 of the National Health Service Act 1977 and issued to health authorities in June 1988, included a requirement for health authorities to monitor the arrangements made for dealing with complaints in the hospitals for which they are responsible. The directions also require quarterly reports to be made for use by the health authority to monitor progress on the procedure for dealing with complaints, for considering trends in complaints and for taking remedial action on complaints as appropriate. There are no plans to amend these arrangements.

Food Safety

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements the Government intend to introduce to strengthen microbiological surveillance of food as recommended in part I of the report of the committee on the microbiological safety of food.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and I have decided to establish a national microbiological food surveillance and assessment system. This will be based on a new, independent advisory committee on the microbiological safety of food and a new steering group on the microbiological safety of food. These arrangements will complement those which already exist for labelling, composition and chemical safety of food, which are within the remit of the present food advisory committee and steering group on food surveillance.

The new steering group will manage surveillance and research and will present policy conclusions to Ministers. It will consist both of officials and of experts from outside Government. The advisory committee will bring outside expertise to bear on the interpretation of the results of surveillance and on the policy formation process. The committee will have an entirely independent membership and chairman, who will be chosen for their expertise and invited from relevant backgrounds, including consumer interests.

These arrangements will give effect to the recommendation of the present committee on the microbiological safety of food that the Government should set up a system of microbiological surveillance and assessment. This committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Mark Richmond, has been invited to complete its work by the end of July. The Government plan to establish the new advisory committee in the autumn. The new steering group will be established as soon as possible before then as it can usefully begin preparatory work before the advisory committee first meets.

The membership of the new advisory committee and steering group, and their formal terms of reference, will be announced as soon as possible. The food advisory committee and the steering group on food surveillance will continue to fulfil their present functions but some updating of their terms of reference also is envisaged, to underline the complementary roles of this committee and the new advisory committee.

Mental Illness

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to strengthen support within the community for sufferers of severe anxiety-related conditions, and in particular phobias and obsessional or compulsive disorders.

Mr. Dorrell: The Government have set out their proposals to strengthen support within the community for all sufferers of mental illness, including severe anxiety-related conditions, in the White Paper "Caring for People". Key elements will be the introduction of the care programme approach, and the specific grant to help increase the social care available for people with a mental illness, which we hope to introduce from April 1991. We are currently consulting with interested bodies on both these developments.

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much is currently being spent to fund community-based initiatives offering support and education to families and sufferers of phobias and obsessional or compulsive disorders in the United Kingdom as a whole and by regional health authority.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is not held centrally by the Department.

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what figures he has as to how many people in the United Kingdom currently suffer from severe phobias and obsessional or compulsive disorders, by sex, age, regional health authority and ethnic origin; and what is his estimate of the cost to the national health service.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not available centrally. Most national health service provision for the treatment of these disorders is provided by general practitioners and out-patient clinics for which figures are not collected centrally.

The latest available information on admissions to national health service mental illness hospitals in England during 1986 for treatment of these conditions is set out in the table. Information on admissions to mental illness hospitals in each regional health authority in England for treatment of some broad diagnosis groups is given in table A6 of "Mental Health Statistics for England 1986: Booklet 7", a copy of which is in the Library. Severe phobias and obsessional or compulsive disorders are part of the neurotic disorders group, which accounted for around 8 per cent. of all admissions. No information is available on the hospital cost of treating the conditions.

All admissions in England by age, by sex, by ICD code

Age	Phobic state (ICD 300.2)	Obsessive-compulsive disorder (ICD 300.3)
Males		
<15	14	4
15	6	3
16	1	3
17	0	2
18	2	8
19	1	7
20–24	17	39
25–44	41	102
45–64	26	67
65–74	8	28
75–84	1	5
85+	0	1
TOTAL	117	269
Females		
<15	11	3
15	5	0
16	0	3
17	0	4
18	1	3
19	0	2
20–24	12	37
25–44	109	156
45–64	96	82
65–74	29	20
75–84	4	14
85+	0	0
TOTAL	267	324

The figures for Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Wales and for Northern Ireland. The figures for Scotland are the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

NHS Salaries

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much he estimates would be added to the national health service wage bill if all national health service employees were paid at least two thirds of the national average wage in 1990-91.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not available.

Cook-chill Food

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which regional health authorities have adopted or intend to adopt a regional catering policy based on cook-chill.

Mr. Dorrell: None. It is a matter for health authorities to use the catering system that they consider meets their requirements of quality and resources available, but we would expect health authorities to consider cook-chill as one of the alternatives.

Cancer Treatment

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list drugs for cancer treatment which have been through trials and been passed but which are not available on national health service prescriptions.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All drugs licensed for use in the treatment of cancer are available for prescription under the NHS. However, some hospitals have drawn up formularies of preferred treatments for many conditions which the doctors involved would usually prescribe.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the drug ondansetron to be available on a national health service prescription.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Ondansetron has been launched on to the market by its manufacturer. The drug is now therefore available for prescription by doctors throughout the national health service for the treatment of nausea and vomiting in patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy for cancer.

Diabetes and Glaucoma

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people he estimates were suffering from diabetes and glaucoma in *(a)* England, *(b)* each county in England during 1988-89 and 1989-90, respectively.

Mr. Dorrell: Precise information is not collected centrally. However, it has been estimated that there are about 1 million diabetics in the United Kingdom of whom about 200,000 inject insulin. The International Glaucoma Association estimates that glaucoma of some type is found in about 2 per cent. of the population over age 40.

NHS Pay Bargaining

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the changes in his responsibilities in relation to national or local pay bargaining arising from the changes in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill;

(2) what responsibilities he has with regard to decisions made by the head of personnel in the national health service in relation to the pay bargaining structure within the national health service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Bill provides for NHS trusts to have freedom to determine the pay and conditions of their staff. No other decisions have been taken about pay determination machinery.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Exchange Rate Mechanism

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has made any assessment of the pound sterling's subsequent movement in the bands had the pound sterling entered the exchange rate mechanism at the exchange rate prevailing on 1 January 1988, 1 January 1989 and 1 January 1990.

Mr. Major: No.

Government Expenditure

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out in tabular form the main areas of Government spending, expressed as a percentage.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The most recent detailed summary information about Government expenditure was published in chapter 21 of the 1990 public expenditure White Paper "The Government's Expenditure Plans,

1990-91 to 1992-93". Table 21.2.12 of this publication gives a percentage distribution of general Government expenditure on services by function.

Inflation

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the inflation rate average in the calendar years 1978 and 1980.

Mr. Ryder: The average rate of increase in the retail prices index, compared with 12 months earlier, was 8·3 per cent. for 1978 and 7·8 per cent. for 1989.

Radioactive Material

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the amount of radioactive material, during the last five years, that has been checked by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise that has been *(a)* imported and *(b)* exported through the ports of (i) Barrow, (ii) Dover, (iii) Felixstowe, (iv) Harwich, (v) Hull, Immingham, (vi) Liverpool, (vii) Portsmouth, (viii) Southampton and (ix) Workington.

Mr. Ryder: I regret that the information is not readily available and could be answered only at the cost of a disproportionate amount of time and effort.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those items of sporting equipment which are exempt from value added tax.

Mr. Ryder: All sporting equipment bears VAT at the standard rate. However sporting apparel falling within the description
"designed as clothing or footwear for young children and not suitable for older persons"
may be zero-rated.

Aggregate Taxable Income

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish his latest estimates of the aggregate taxable income for each *(a)* county, *(b)* former metropolitan county, *(c)* the Greater London area, *(d)* metropolitan district and *(e)* London borough area.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* I regret that estimates below regional level are not presently available. As explained in "Inland Revenue Statistics, 1989" estimates for counties have been discontinued owing to the emergence of problems in attributing addresses containing a shire county name which properly fall within a metropolitan county. Further investigation, which is continuing, has cast further doubt on the reliability of information at this level of detail. The problems also affect the reliability of the information given to the hon. Member on 4 April 1989, *Official Report*, columns *9-10*. Regional estimates for 1987-88, the latest available year, are as follows.

Region	*Taxable income £ million*
Northern	6,490
Yorkshire and Humberside	11,500
North West	15,000
East Midlands	8,880
West Midlands	12,600
East Anglia	5,460
South Eastern	60,000
South Western	11,900
Wales	5,350
Scotland	11,800
Northern Ireland	2,800

Community Charge

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much the rates of personal income tax could need to be increased if *(a)* the whole of the community charge were transferred to income tax and *(b)* the whole of the community charge less expenditure on social services and housing were transferred to income tax.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 6 June 1990]:* Local authorities in Great Britain are forecast to raise £11·2 billion in community charge income. If the whole of this were to be raised from income tax, this would be equivalent to an increase of around 7½p in the basic rate of income tax.

Local authorities' expenditure on social services and housing, excluding the housing revenue account, is budgeted to be around £5·3 billion. If the whole of the community charge income less this expenditure were to be raised from income tax, this would be equivalent to an increase of around 4p in the basic rate.

Women

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest estimated figures for the number of women in Britain, who have no regular income of their own from employment, investment or state benefits, excluding child benefit.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Estimates of total numbers of such women are not available. However, results of the 1988 family expenditure survey indicate that less than 10 per cent. of women (aged over 16 and not in full-time education) who live in private households in Great Britain had no regular income.

THE ARTS

Natural History Museum

85. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received on the implications for scientific research of the proposed cuts in services and staff at the natural history museum.

86. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received on the implications for scientific research of the proposed cuts in services and staff at the natural history museum.

Mr. Luce: I have received many representations about the natural history museum's restructuring proposals, including some 40 letters from hon. Members. I understand that the museum's director has invited leading scientists and researchers to a special seminar on 15 June, to present the museum's plans to them in detail and to give an opportunity for discussion.

TRANSPORT

Road Accidents

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what new information he has on regional road accident statistics.

Mr. Atkins: I have today published a report "Road Accident Statistics English Regions". I have placed a copy in the Library of the House.

This information will be of particular value to local authorities in setting their own casualty reduction targets and in developing local road safety plans. It will also enable them to assess their own local performance against that of other areas.

Concessionary Fares, London

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of concessionary fare schemes in London.

Mr. Freeman: The cost of concessionary travel in London is borne by the London boroughs. It must be for them to decide what form of concessionary travel scheme they want. However, if the boroughs cannot agree amongst themselves the terms of such a scheme, the statutory reserve free travel scheme in sections 51 and 52 of the London Regional Transport Act 1984 applies.

Roads, Essex

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he plans to increase the grants available to Essex county council for the building of new roads and bypasses in the next five financial years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Transport supplementary grant of more than £6·6 million will be paid to Essex county council in the current financial year towards expenditure on new roads and bypasses. Grant support will continue to be provided in future years to enable major projects currently under construction to be completed. All local highway authorities have been invited to bid for grant for 1991-92 and beyond for new schemes. We shall be studying the relative merits of all the bids and announcing our decisions later in the year.

Oil Tankers

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the review of tanker traffic in the deep water route west of the Hebrides and in the Minch; and if he intends to make a statement on this subject in the near future.

Mr. McLoughlin: I shall make a statement and put a copy of the review report in the Library as soon as our detailed consideration of the findings is complete.

Marine Pollution

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those oil pollution incidents reported to his officials by HM coastguard since 1 January 1989, giving in each case details of what follow-up investigations were made, whether a prosecution resulted and what the results of any prosecution were.

Mr. McLoughlin: Between 1 January 1989 and 1 June 1990, a total of 214 reports of possible oil pollution were passed on by HM coastguard to the marine pollution control unit.

Only 79 of those reports named a ship which might or might not have been the possible source of the pollution. After port state inspections in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, five cases were referred to the flag states of the vessels concerned to investigate further a possible illegal operational discharge of oil; one of these has resulted in a prosecution and a fine of £675 by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Of the other 74 cases, three are still being investigated by the MPCU. Follow-up action in the remaining 71 has now been discontinued because either *(a)* after port state inspection where appropriate, there was insufficient evidence of a possible illegal discharge to justify further action; or (b) the pollution was not an illegal discharge, for example, it resulted from the sinking of a vessel or from damage to a ship or its equipment.

Coaches

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement regarding the European Commission proposals to limit the speed of passenger coaches and the policy of Her Majesty's Government in respect of such proposals.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The Government have for many years attached high importance to securing safe coach travel. The Commission's proposed uniform technical standard for speed limiters, which we support, draws heavily on the British standard operative since 1987. All new coaches used in Britain have to be fitted with speed limiters and I am glad to say that the Bus and Coach Council is urging its members to retrofit older vehicles well before the deadline we have set of next April.

Exhaust Emissions

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers are available to the police and local authorities to curb excessive exhaust emissions from buses, lorries and cars; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* I refer my hon. Friend to my answer on 20 December last year to the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) at column *279*.

Since then, we have further tightened up emission controls through the regulations laid before the House on 5 June. These require vehicle users to keep the engine in tune and any emission control equipment, such as a catalyst, in good working order. Properly tuned engines not only benefit the community at large by cutting emissions but save fuel and thus cut running costs.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Sri Lanka

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will detail British aid to Sri Lanka in the current financial year, and for each of the following three years, giving dates of announcement of projects; if he will place copies of all associated press releases in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: British aid disbursements to Sri Lanka in the current financial year are expected to amount to around £12 million on a number of on-going activities. These include reconstruction aid, following the civil disturbances, for roads, schools and the Jaffna hospital as well as support for community development projects, the power, natural resources and education sectors.

It is not possible at this stage to indicate in detail what further projects will be supported from the aid programme in the next three years or when they will be announced. A number of possibilities are currently being appraised for possible eventual agreement between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Sri Lanka. These include forestry and road rehabilitation.

Copies of all press releases from the ODA are placed in the House of Commons Library.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Community Employment

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a list of sponsors of the action for community employment scheme run by the new Training and Employment Agency for Northern Ireland with their addresses, number of ACE trainees allocated and areas of work covered.

Mr. Needham: In view of the large amount of material to be collated, I will write to the hon. Member and place copies of the information in the Library.

Belfast Action Teams

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a list of the names and addresses of groups which have received funding from the Belfast action teams since they were first set up and the corresponding amount given to each such group.

Mr. Needham: In view of the large amount of material to be collated, I will write to the hon. Member and place copies of the information in the Library.

Health and Personal Social Services

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what advisory and consultative machinery will be established to represent public and consumer interests on the health and personal social services in Northern Ireland and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: It is intended, subject to the necessary legislation being made, that there should be four area councils, or health and social services councils as it is proposed they be known, one relating to each health and social services board. Councils will be able to set up sub-committees which may include co-opted members. Each council will appoint its own chairman and will operate within a budget set annually by the Department of Health and Social Services.

The duties of a council will include keeping under review the operation of health and social services in its area, making recommendations for improving the services of the relevant board, and commenting on the board's plan, particularly in relation to substantial developments or variations in the provision of services.

The council which relates to the Eastern board will have 30 members, while those relating to the other three boards will have 24. Forty per cent. of the membership of each council will be reserved for district councillors. Each district council will have the right to nominate one member. Membership will also include individuals appointed by the Department of Health and Social Services after consultation with voluntary and community organisations and other interested bodies.

I am confident that the new arrangements will give the public and consumers a strong voice in the provision and development of the health and personal social services.

ENVIRONMENT

Lakes (Acidity)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many lakes in England suffer from acidity problems; if he will list them and give some measure of how acidic they are; and if he will make a statement on what the Government are doing about the problem.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Government will continue to sponsor research totalling over £3 million over the next three years identifying susceptible lakes and ecosystems. Comprehensive monitoring networks are in place measuring acid deposition and lake chemistry, acidity and ecology in the most sensitive lakes and streams. However, natural lake acidity varies greatly with catchment geology and ecology in addition to the undoubted effect of acid rain. Consequently, the collection of data on the scale requested is not currently feasible.

Data on the effects of acid rain are published in Department of the Environment scientific review group and other reports, "Acidity in United Kingdom Fresh Waters"—United Kingdom acid waters review group second report, "Acid Deposition in the United Kingdom" —United Kingdom review group on acid rain second report and "Lake Acidification in the United Kingdom" —paleoecology research unit, University college London. Monitoring data have also been published in the first report of the United Kingdom acid waters monitoring network. Copies of all these publications are in the Library of the House.

The United Kingdom has agreed directives with our European partners which will reduce acid emissions significantly. Using 1980 as a baseline, the United Kingdom is committed to reducing emissions of SO_2 by 60 per cent. by 1993 and NOx by 30 per cent. by 1998 from existing large combustion plants. A directive requiring the fitting of catelytic convertors to most new cars before 1993 will reduce emissions of NO_2 by up to 90 per cent., and the United Kingdom is pressing for the strictest possible emission standards to be applied to diesel engines.

Red Squirrels

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environent what action his Department is taking to protect Britain's remaining red squirrels; what studies his Department is currently funding in this area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The red squirrel is fully protected through its listing on schedule 5 to the Wildlife and Countryside

Act 1981. I am advised that the NCC is considering mounting local surveys of red squirrels. The Forestry Commission carries out an annual survey of its own land holdings on a national basis for the presence of red and grey squirrels.

Common Land

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 27 March, *Official Report*, column *116*, to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond), and 11 May, *Official Report*, column *244*, whether he will now announce the Government's intentions on common land legislation; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for delay in making this announcement.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that my right hon. Friend has not yet been able to make the announcement referred to in the answers given on 27 March and 11 May. This has been due to the complexity of the issues involved and the need to consider the implications of the legal judgment given last month in the Hazeley heath case, and further representations received.

Environmental Protection

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made during the Republic of Ireland presidency of the European Community with regard to the European draft directive on the protection of habitats, flora and fauna; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: At the Environment Council on 7 June, I expressed regret at the lack of progress in negotiating a worthwhile European Community directive on the protection of habitats and flora and fauna, but acknowledged that the Irish presidency was absolved of blame for this. On funding for assisting member states to implement the directive, some progress has been made with the publication of a draft regulation on action by the Community relating to nature conservation (ACNAT).

Otters, East Anglia

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the number of otters in East Anglia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I am advised by the Nature Conservancy Council that there is no definitive record of numbers of otters in East Anglia. Since 1986, reports of sightings suggest an improving population in the west of the region while in the east of the region releases of captive-bred otters have strengthened the population.

Air Pollution

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has about the relative effectiveness of large and small carbon canisters in reducing air pollution from volatile organic compounds from motor vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The means of controlling petrol evaporation from cars and its effects are studied within the Department's air pollution research programme. The "smaller" carbon canisters, which control emissions from cars in use, offer further reduction of secondary air pollutants like ozone beyond the major improvement expected from agreed new EC exhaust emission controls. The effectiveness of "larger" canisters, which additionally absorb emissions during refuelling, is still being evaluated in relation to the overall evaporative emissions that occur between production and delivery. Results from the research programme have been made available to the Commission of the European Communities' expert groups and we are awaiting their proposals.

Waste Paper

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the factors underlying the drop in price for used newspapers; whether he has any plans to assist local authority and charity waste paper collection systems to be maintained during the present difficulties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The main factor causing the drop in price of certain grades of waste paper appears to have been a simple matter of supply and demand: collection of waste paper by volunteers and the trade has increased more quickly than production capacity capable of using waste paper as a feedstock. There is no evidence of any substantial level of imports of waste paper. Government intervention to maintain the price of waste paper through subsidising collection costs or other means could be ineffective or damaging since paper is an internationally traded commodity and users could switch to imported supplies and there are therefore no plans to intervene. The priority must be to encourage the market for all types of recycled paper and expand industrial capacity to process waste paper. In that context I am delighted to note that Kimberley-Clarke recently announced the construction of a £37 million plant for the manufacture of tissues in Flint. My Department and the Department of Trade and Industry are specifically examining the waste paper market to assess the economic and environmental benefits of waste paper recycling, the means of collecting waste paper, what new uses for waste paper might be promoted and how demand for recycled paper might be stimulated. Government Departments are also considering their own use of paper with a view to increasing the use of recycled products wherever feasible and economic.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take urgent steps to amend the arrangements relating to the standard community charge in cases where this charge is such as to equal or to approach either the value of the property itself or the value of the period of occupancy or ownership involved.

Mr. Chope: Charging authorities may set a standard charge of 0, ¼, 1, 1¼ or 2 times the personal community charge for their area. In addition to the classes of property which we have prescribed and in respect of which no charge or a lower charge than the maximum is payable, authorities may specify their own classes by reference to one of the factors set out in the legislation. These factors include the use to which properties are put or are intended to be put; the period for which they have been unoccupied; or the personal circumstances but not the financial circumstances of the individual who is subject to the standard charge. They do not, however, allow for

authorities to vary the amount of the standard charge by making reference to the value of a property, which would mean the return of rating or the creation of a capital value system.

One World Week

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department made any contribution to the BBC television's One World week of specialist programmes on the environment.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Department co-operated with briefing and offered participation, but the offers were not taken up.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money he estimates to have been saved by compulsory competitive tendering in areas for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years.

Mr. Chris Patten: Savings from competitive tendering in my Department, including the Property Services Agency, over the past five years were:

	£ million
1985-86	14·00
1986-87	27·25
1987-88	30·72
1988-89	23·41
1989-90	32·23

Radioactive Sediment

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to introduce precautions to reduce the harmful effects of radioactive sediment deposited on the shores of the British coastline.

Mr. Trippier: Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food carry out an extensive programme of monitoring of the marine and coastal environment, including the collection of samples of sediment. The results, which are published annually, show that doses to members of the public resulting from the discharge of liquid radioactive waste are well within accepted limits. There is no need for any special precautions to be taken.

Environment Council

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Environment Council on 7 and 8 June.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to ensure that the EEC habitats directive is discussed at the Environment Council on 7 June; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I represented the United Kingdom at this meeting.

The Council agreed a directive amending the 1975 framework directive—75/442—on waste. The new directive calls on member states to encourage clean technologies, waste minimisation and recovery methods. It also strengthens existing requirements concerning the licensing of waste disposal installations and the production of waste management plans. I particularly welcomed a new requirement for all member states to establish adequate networks of waste disposal installations so as to reduce the currently unacceptable level of transfrontier movements of waste.

The Council agreed a directive on batteries and accumulators containing certain dangerous substances—mercury, cadmium and lead. The directive will encourage the recycling or controlled disposal of spent batteries. It will also require batteries, and in some cases the appliances into which they are built, to be labelled to indicate recyclability and heavy metal content, and to facilitate their separate collection. Certain batteries containing more than a specified amount of mercury will be banned from sale from 1 January 1993.

Agreement was also reached on a directive to limit inputs of four dangerous substances to the aquatic environment. The directive sets limit values and quality objectives for significant discharges of trichlorobenzene 1, 2-dichloroethane, trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene. Small discharges of these substances will be controlled through national programmes. These measures will apply from 1 January 1993.

The Council agreed the final negotiating position of the Community for the second meeting of the parties to the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer, to be held in London later this month. The Community, and the United Kingdom, will press for early and substantial reductions in CFCs, and their elimination before the year 2000, along with strong controls on halons, carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroform. The Council also confirmed that assistance to developing countries, to meet their incremental costs in complying with a strengthened protocol, should be covered by additional funding. We are confident that with this position the Community will be able to play a key role in the finalisation at the London meeting of a strengthened protocol which many more countries will be able to join.

There was a short, but wide-ranging discussion of climate change. The European Commission was urged to bring forward its work on specific measures which might be taken at Community level to control greenhouse gas emissions, so that the issue could be considered again at the October meeting of the Council, before the second world climate conference. The United Kingdom urged other member states to draw up their own strategies for the control of greenhouse gas emissions in good time for that conference, so that they would be in a position to commit themselves to sensible precautionary steps aimed at ensuring that climate change problems do not get any worse in the period between now and 2005, by when many of the remaining scientific uncertainties should have been resolved.

Ministers endorsed the urgent need for a directive setting stringent new standards for motor vehicle emissions and regretted the fact that the absence of the European Parliament's opinion on the current proposal prevented immediate agreement. The Council instructed the presidency to write to the Parliament seeking its opinion as a matter of urgency so that the measure might be agreed at the next Council meeting. The United Kingdom also stressed the need for urgent action to limit

emissions from diesel engines in heavy vehicles, and regretted that the new Commission proposals in this area fell short of the stringent "US 1994" standard.

The Council also held brief discussions on proposals for establishing a regulatory committee to review existing directives on water protection, and on the scope of the proposed directive on the protection of water from pollution by nitrate.

The Commission gave progress reports on the preparation of a Community environmental labelling scheme, on discussions on a recent proposal concerning the treatment of municipal waste water, and on the proposed directive on the protection of natural and semi-natural habitats. On the latter the United Kingdom expressed concern at the lack of recent progress and pledged our assistance in helping to resolve outstanding issues.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the matters discussed at the meeting of Environment Ministers of the European Community on 7 June.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier today by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment and Countryside to my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack).

Specialist Inspectors

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on *(a)* the availability, *(b)* the qualifications required and *(c)* the cost of arrangements which he is making for an expanded corps of specialist inspectors to enforce new controls on gene release and related matters, envisaged in the Environmental Protection Bill.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Discussions are being held with the Health and Safety Executive on an agency agreement whereby its inspectors would enforce the provisions in part VI of the Environmental Protection Bill. If such an agency agreement is reached, then inspectors with appropriate qualifications and experience will be recruited and given training by the executive and guidance by my Department. The newly appointed inspectors would form a team with existing Health and Safety Executive inspectors responsible for the enforcement of human health and safety controls over genetically manipulated organisms. There would thus be a unified system of enforcement.

The costs of such an agency agreement cannot be determined accurately at present but are likely to be of the order of £100,000 per annum at current prices.

Westminster Abbey

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what grants have been given to Westminster abbey to improve security; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Security at Westminster abbey is not a matter for my right hon. Friend.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Family Credit

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the number of family credit claimants in the south-west by each Department of Social Security area for the latest period, and the percentage change from the respective figure of 12 months ago.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is in the table:

Social Security local offices in the South West.

	Number of families[1]	*Percentage change*[2]
Barnstaple	762	+3·8
Bath	598	−8·7
Bournemouth	711	+12·0
Bridgewater	559	+4·1
Bristol (Central)	402	−0·5
Bristol (East)	754	−6·1
Bristol (Horfield)	412	+0·2
Bristol (South)	688	+5·0
Bristol (West)	324	+0·3
Cheltenham	675	+8·9
Chippenham	449	+0·2
Devonport	273	+11·4
Exeter	1,747	+5·8
Gloucester	860	−1·0
Launceston	640	−0·2
Penzance	835	+5·3
Plymouth	1,490	+7·3
Poole	679	−2·6
Salisbury	557	+13·2
St. Austell	957	+3·0
Stroud	590	+13·0
Swindon	611	−0·5
Taunton	963	0·0
Torbay	1,436	+7·8
Trowbridge	401	−0·7
Truro	1,204	+9·8
Weston-super-Mare	461	+0·9
Weymouth	770	+7·1
Yeovil	605	+14·6

[1] Number of families in receipt of family credit on 1 June 1990 who at the time their award was made were living in the areas covered by each office.

[2] Percentage change compared with 3 April 1989 (the nearest comparable date in 1989 for which figures are available).

Medical Appeal Tribunals

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many appeals are made each year to medical appeal tribunals; what is the average length of time taken for a case to reach a tribunal and what is the number of successful appeals expressed as a percentage of those made.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The details quoted in the table relate to appeals to medical appeal tribunals in respect of mobility allowance and industrial injuries disablement benefit for the years from 1985 to 1988, the last full year for which details are held. I regret that figures for appeals to medical appeal tribunals in respect of severe disablement allowance are not available for this period. However, the Department has started collecting these figures from 1 July 1989.

	1988	*1987*	*1986*	*1985*
Appeals heard	17,661	15,568	13,190	12,054
Claimant successful	7,395	6,193	4,946	4,408

	1988	1987	1986	1985
Percentage successful	42	40	37	37

The Department has also recently begun compiling more detailed statistics relating to medical appeal tribunals, including information on the clearance time for such appeals. The latest statistics, for the three-monthly period ending 30 September 1989, show that the national average clearance time for appeals to medical appeal tribunals, from date of lodgement to hearing, is 17 weeks.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many parents of disabled children in receipt of attendance allowance had benefit deducted from their allowance due to them or their child staying in *(a)* respite care, *(b)* hospital and *(c)* any other form of scheduled accommodation for more than 28 days for the benefit year 1989-90.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to change the regulations governing the receipt of attendance allowance where the child stays in hospital for a period of more than 28 days.

Mr. Scott: There are no current plans to change the conditions for the receipt of attendance allowance when a child has been in hospital for more than 28 days.

Disability Benefit

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much it would cost at 1990-91 prices to extend disability benefit to all persons with a disability assessed at 40 per cent. or more.

Mr. Scott: There is a range of benefits available to disabled people of which only war pensions and industrial injuries disablement benefits are assessed according to a percentage of disability. Qualification for severe disablement allowance at age 20 or over depends on both incapacity for work and assessment as 80 per cent. disabled. As part of our review of disability benefits we considered whether a comprehensive disability income based on the level of a person's disability could replace the present structure of benefits. We concluded that the same principles could more effectively be implemented by changes which establish a more coherent system of financial help by building on the existing benefits, as set out in "The Way Ahead: Benefits for Disabled People" (Cmd. 917).

Income Support

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security for how many weeks a person who claims income support on becoming unemployed after a trial period of employment, and whose income support entitlement before that period included 100 per cent. of his or her mortgage interest, has to wait before again having the mortgage interest met in full.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: A person who claims income support on becoming unemployed after a period of employment which satisfies the conditions for employment on trial for unemployment benefit purposes, and whose income support before that period included 100 per cent. of mortgage interest, will have mortgage interest met in full from the outset of the claim.

Pensioners

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what has been the average increase in incomes, excluding the state earnings-related pension, since 1979 for those pensioners who receive all of their income from state benefits.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information is not available in the form requested.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much it would cost to uprate the severe disablement allowance to the full basic invalidity rate at 1990-91 prices.

Mr. Scott: We estimate that the gross cost of increasing the basic rate of severe disablement allowance to the basic rate of invalidity pension would be about £250 million a year; the net cost would be about £110 million a year.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much he estimates has been saved by compulsory competitive tendering in areas for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No separate records are kept of savings resulting from competitive tendering. In the financial year 1989-90 total purchasing savings (for the Departments of Health and Social Security combined) amounted to £79 million (9·7 per cent. of spend). This figure includes on-going savings from years prior to 1989-90. New savings in 1989-90 amounted to £30 million (3·7 per cent). These were achieved through a variety of methods including competitive tendering, post tender negotiation and changing suppliers.

Benefits Agency

Mr. Terry Fields: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what will be the role and responsibilities of the benefits agency which will be coming into being next April; how its establishment will affect current functions and staff of his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The social security benefits agency, to be established in April 1991, will provide for the cost-effective administration of social security benefits, and other services including the handling of claims reviews and appeals, and arranging payment.

The agency will bring together under a single line management structure the (currently separately organised) central offices and regional organisation. In addition a number of support functions currently carried out within headquarters will pass to the agency.

The principal aim of introducing agencies within the Department is to improve services to all customers of the Department. Part of this aim will be to streamline management structures to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Benefits

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people he estimates are currently eligible for family credit and/or income support in each county in England; and what is the percentage take-up in each case.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: This information is not available.

Information about the total number of families eligible for family credit or income support can be obtained only for Great Britain, and only retrospectively, from family expenditure survey data.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the number of unemployed claiming income support but not unemployment benefit whose claims were (i) disallowed, (ii) allowed and (iii) awaiting adjudication by his Department's adjudication officers following doubts about *(a)* actively seeking work, *(b)* restricted availability and *(c)* refusal of employment for each month since October 1989; and what was the number that corresponded and the number that did not correspond to the opinion given by Department of Employment adjudication officers.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is not available.

Fishermen, North-east England

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has made arrangements to assist onshore fishermen in the north-east of England unable to work because of the current restrictions on the sale of shellfish.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Under normal arrangements, share fishermen who pay a special rate of class 2 (self-employed) contributions are entitled to claim unemployment benefit when they are unable to work and can demonstrate that it is impossible for catches to be sold.

Retirement Pensions

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many retirement pensions were awarded to women aged 60 and men aged 65 years, including married women's pensions on their husbands' insurance, in each month of the latest year for which information is available.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 23 May 1990]:* Information is not available in the precise form requested.

The latest figures are for 1988-89. These show that in the six-month period ending September 1988 retirement pensions were awarded to 102,970 men aged 65 and 68,010 women aged 60. The awards to women included 20,960 married women's pensions based partially or wholly on their husbands' contributions and 420 retirement pension awards to widows based on their late husbands' contributions.

In the following six-month period, ending March 1989, 96,680 awards were made to men aged 65 and 66,020 to women aged 60. These included 20,320 married women's pensions and 520 retirement pensions awarded to widows based on their late husbands' contributions.

Departmental Savings

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what mechanisms exist in his Department for identifying and tracking value-for-money savings in its operations.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* The Department of Social Security uses a number of mechanisms to assist in the identification of value-for-money savings. These include a management services operation, internal audit and a directorate of purchasing and supply. The Department undertakes a number of efficiency scrutinies of discrete parts of its operations each year and also has an active staff suggestions scheme. Monitoring of progress in securing the identified savings is undertaken by a central unit.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what were the value-for-money savings in his Department's operations identified by internal audit and internal efficiency arrangements and by external audit and by management consultants retained by his Department between 1983-84 and 1988-89; and what is the amount of those savings fulfilled to date.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* The savings resulting from specific value-for-money activities are estimated to total £181 million over the period for the Departments of Health and of Social Security, but it is not possible to apportion identified savings between them. In addition, all managers are required to make a contribution to the Department's efficiency saving target of a minimum of 1·5 per cent. per annum from running costs as set by Her Majesty's Treasury and to contribute to other departmental value-for-money initiatives. As not all the results of other value-for-money activities are collected centrally this savings figure represents only a proportion of the total value-for-money savings achieved.

Disallowed Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide figures updating those contained in his answer to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden) of 4 April, *Official Report*, column *684*, on disallowed unemployment benefit for the period 1 January 1990 to date.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 6 June 1990]:* The information for the quarter ending 31 March 1990, the latest available, is in the table:

Decisions of adjudication officers on doubtful claims for unemployment benefit, period 1 January 1990 to 31 March 1990

	Fresh or renewal claims disallowed	*Reviewed claims revised adversely to claimant*
Capability	604	36
Employment not terminated	12	10
Engaged in employment	3,919	1,733
Employed to full normal extent	1,322	72
Normal idle day	146	16
Payment in lieu of notice or wages etc.	31,067	5,694
Recognised or customary holiday	709	93
Whether unemployed	7,720	1,500
Share fishermen:		

	Fresh or renewal claims disallowed	*Reviewed claims revised adversely to claimant*
Work as	32	18
No work available	24	1
Dependant's benefit:		
Child	39	21
Adult	279	119
Delayed claim	22,584	117
Failure to attend for interview (including restart)	97	1
Failure to keep to signing time	13	2
Occupational pensioners	69	191
Availability	6,617	478
Restricted availability	2,323	618
Share fishermen—neglect to avail	31	1
Trade dispute	74	2
Actively seeking work	297	26
Leaving voluntarily	42,831	201
Misconduct	13,889	84
Employment:		
Neglect to avail	469	7
Refusal of	644	2
Refusal or premature termination of training	191	39
Refusal to carry out written recommendations	11	5
Weekly earnings rule	22,147	730
Other questions	9,274	6,901
All questions	167,434	18,718

Note: The special entitlement conditions for seasonal workers were abolished from October 1989.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Education Authorities (Expenditure)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the five education authorities in England which spent the most per secondary pupil in 1988, together with their position in the examination league table.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Data on examination results are not yet available for 1988-89. Nor are some significant data on spending. In 1987-88, the five authorities spending the most per secondary pupil, and their position in an examination ranking based on school leavers with five or more good GCSEs over the past three years, were as follows:

	in the exam ranking
ILEA	88th
Waltham Forest	95th
Brent	75th
Newham	93rd
Croydon	57th

Teacher Vacancies

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his most recent estimate of the number of unfilled teacher vacancies in London; and if he will make a statement.

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his most recent estimate of the number of unfilled teacher vacancies in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his most recent estimate of the number of unfilled teacher vacancies in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Members to the earlier reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway).

In January 1989 there were 2,124 full-time teacher vacancies in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in Greater London, equivalent to about 4·3 per cent. of teachers in post. Of these, 1,305 were in nursery or primary schools and 819 in secondary schools.

Higher Education

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications there have been for undergraduate degree courses beginning in September 1990 and September 1991; and how many there were in the same period last year for degree courses beginning September 1989 and September 1990.

17. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many young people have applied for places on undergraduate degree courses at higher education institutions in the United Kingdom beginning in September 1990 and September 1991.

Mr. Jackson: By March 1990, the Universities Central Council on Admissions had received 851,693 applications from United Kingdom domiciled students for admission to United Kingdom universities at undergraduate level in autumn 1990. Applications for 1989 entry on 31 March 1989 numbered 774,469. By the same dates, the Polytechnics Central Admissions System had received 539,622 applications for 1990 admission to undergraduate degree courses at polytechnics and colleges in England and Wales compared with 480,568 for 1989 entry. Information on 1991 applications is not yet available.

16. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the future of quality assurance in higher education.

Mr. Jackson: Quality assurance is of increasing importance as higher education develops. The HE institutions, the validating bodies, and both the higher education funding councils are very conscious of their responsibilities in this regard. In addition, my right hon. Friend is seeking comments on the recommendations in the recently published review of the Council for National Academic Awards.

31. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to increase the participation of 16 to 19-year-olds in full-time education.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to increase the participation of 16 to 19-year-olds in full-time education.

Mr. Jackson: The Government have achieved a very substantial increase in full-time participation in post-compulsory education. For 16-year-olds, it has increased by 25 per cent., from 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. between 1979-80 and 1988-89. And for 16 to 17-year-olds taken together, it has increased from 34 per cent. to 42 per cent. These figures do not include YTS trainees who attend

college full-time. Our examination reforms and the Education Reform Act will raise standards in schools, giving more young people the qualifications and motivation to stay on.

74. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for qualifications for post-16-year-olds; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend is determined to ensure that A-level and AS courses and vocational courses together provide young people beyond 16 with a coherent spectrum of opportunities and a chance to develop their potential. He has asked the School Examinations and Assessment Council to advise him by July on the practicability of building core skills into A and AS syllabuses and on the credit transfer possibilities between A/AS and vocational qualifications. Once he has this advice he will be able to consider what further steps are needed in improving the nature and structure of the qualifications available.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much he estimates it costs to provide education for 16 to 18-year-olds at current prices; and how many individuals aged between 16 and 18 years are in *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time education.

Mrs. Rumbold: The education component of the 1990-91 grant settlement allows for education authorities in England to spend over £1,600 million on providing for 16 to 18-year-olds in secondary schools and further education colleges. This is net of further education tuition fees, and allows for the higher costs of 16 to 18-year-olds relative to other pupils in the secondary sector. The projected student numbers for the academic year 1990-91 consistent with that total assume 543,000 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time secondary or further education, and 295,000 in part-time further education.

AS-Levels

18. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment has been made of the success of AS-levels.

Mrs. Rumbold: There were 37,000 AS examination entries in summer 1989, the first year of the new examination. A total of 61 per cent. gained grades A to E. The School Examinations and Assessment Council has been asked to provide guidance to schools on A/AS combinations and to lay down principles governing A/AS syllabuses. Both measures should help to raise achievement in AS examinations.

Local Management of Schools

19. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has received any representations from teachers regarding local management of schools.

64. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has received any representations from teachers regarding local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend continues to receive representations from individual teachers and from teacher associations. Many of these support the principles of delegated budget management and welcome the opportunities which this will give them.

36. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of local management of schools.

75. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress being made by local education authorities in implementing local management of schools.

80. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of local management of schools.

82. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my hon. Friend the Member for Esher (Mr. Taylor) and the hon. Members to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) on 8 May 1990, *Official Report*, column 8.

39. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy to take action against those local authorities that hold back too high a proportion of a school's budget under the new system of local management.

Mrs. Rumbold: All those schemes for the local management of schools which were approved by my right hon. Friend for introduction in April 1990, were approved with the requirement that certain discretionary exceptions totalled less than 10 per cent. of the general schools budget. As with all aspects of LMS, we will be monitoring and reviewing the policy in the light of experience and in the light of LEAs' budget statements made under section 42 of the Education Reform Act.

43. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are his plans to introduce greater flexibility into the local management of schools.

79. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are his plans to introduce greater flexibility into the local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) on 8 May 1990, *Official Report*, column 11.

52. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to meet school governors regarding the local management of schools.

76. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to meet school governors regarding the local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has no such plans at present.

57. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what level of support is being given to Cumbria education authority for local management of schools in the present financial year.

Mrs. Rumbold: Of the £41·1 million of expenditure supported under the education support grant programme for the implementation of local management of schools, including governor training, and the £10·9 million supported through the LEA training grants programme, Cumbria education authority's share is £650,000.

69. **Mr. Barry Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what level of grant is being given to Wirral education authority for local management of schools in the current financial year.

Mrs. Rumbold: Of the £41·1 million of expenditure supported in 1990-91 under the education support grant programme for the implementation of local management of schools, including governor training, and the £10·9 million supported through the LEA training grants programme, Wirral education authority's share is £356,400.

83. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the total amount of funding being held back by each local authority in England and Wales under the new system of local management.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) on 5 February 1990, *Official Report*, column *451*.

General Teaching Council

20. **Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to establish a general teaching council.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The establishment of a general teaching council was one of the recommendations made by the Education, Science and Arts Committee in its report on teacher supply. My right hon. Friend is currently considering the report and will respond as soon as possible.

School Buildings

21. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his most recent information regarding the condition of school buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department published the survey of school buildings in November 1987. Information is also received annually from local education authorities in their capital expenditure plans, from Her Majesty's inspectorate, and from representations by the local education authorities made from time to time. The maintenance of the buildings is a matter for the local education authorities and governors.

24. **Mr. Caborn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from local education authorities regarding the repair of school buildings.

55. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from local education authorities regarding the repair of school buildings.

61. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from local education authorities regarding the repair of school buildings.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor).

28. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much money has been allocated for the current financial year to each education authority for the specific purpose of repairing school buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Current funding for the repair of school buildings is not separately identified in the Government's revenue support grant allocations to individual authorities. Provision for such spending is included within the total grant settlement, which in 1990-91 allows for local authorities in England to spend nearly £15 billion on education. But it is for each local authority to decide how much to spend on repairing school buildings from the current resources available to it. Annual capital guidelines for local education authorities for 1990-91 were announced on 20 December 1989, *Official Report*, columns *254-58*; again, it is for each local authority to decide its priorities for capital spending in the light of local needs and circumstances.

Education Expenditure, London

22. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for education spending in inner London after 1992.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government will continue to provide a financial framework within which the 13 inner London local education authorities can provide an effective education service.

77. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consultations he has had with London borough councils concerning the adequacy of his assessment of necessary expenditure on education in the current financial year.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend and I have meetings from time to time with London borough councils, both individually and in representative groups. These cover a range of financial and other issues. These issues are also the subject of correspondence with Ministers.

History Teaching

23. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he proposes to announce details of the national curriculum on history.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend published the final report of the history working group on 3 April. That document is currently the subject of consultation which ends on 15 June. After this and in the light of the responses received my right hon. Friend will make his proposals. These will then be published by the National Curriculum Council and subject to consultation in England required by the Education Reform Act.

School-business Links

25. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools have links with local businesses.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information is not collected for all schools in England. However, a recent DES survey of 500 secondary and 500 primary schools, the findings of which will shortly be published in a DES statistical bulletin, found that 90 per cent. of secondary and over 50 per cent. of primary schools had links with local businesses.

National Curriculum, Northumberland

26. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the operation of the national curriculum in Northumberland.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is for the Northumberland education authority in the first instance to monitor the operation of the national curriculum in the schools it maintains. Evidence from Her Majesty's inspectorate shows that in general schools across the country are making satisfactory progress in introducing the new requirements.

Higher Education (Capital Investment)

27. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the capital investment needs of higher educational institutions.

47. **Mr. John Garrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the capital investment needs of higher educational institutions.

Mr. Jackson: Responsibility for identifying such needs lies with the funding councils concerned in discussion with institutions. The Government's current expenditure plans provide for an increase in higher education capital funding of £90 million over three years from 1990-91.

EC Scholarships

29. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will initiate discussions with his European Community counterparts on the development of a fully Community-wide scholarships system for further education applicants.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has no plans to initiate any such discussions, but further education students already benefit from a number of existing EC programmes.

Nursery Education

30. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the percentage of three and four-year-old children in state-run nursery schools in the United Kingdom; and what are the equivalent figures for West Germany, Sweden and Denmark.

Mrs. Rumbold: The readily available information is as follows:

Percentage of 3 to 4 age group in education and day-care, 1987

Country	*Education*		*Day-care*	
	Public	*Private*	*Public*	*Private*
United Kingdom	42	3	38	3
West Germany	40	[1]16	n/a	n/a
Sweden	[2]40	n/a	[2]21	n/a
Denmark	—	—	n/a	n/a

[1] 1982; private sector provision subsidised by public funds.
[2] 1988, includes private sector.
— = nil or negligible.
n/a = not available.
Source:
Statistical Bulletin 13/89: International Statistical Comparisons of the Participation in Education and Day-care of three to six-year-olds.

Teacher Recruitment

32. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to improve teacher recruitment and retention in London and in the south-east.

Mrs. Rumbold: On 11 April my right hon. Friend announced a 7 per cent. increase by 1993 in the number of places available for initial training courses in England and Wales. Within that increase, he has asked the funding councils to take account of the recruitment difficulties faced by primary schools in the south-east of England and to increase the number of places available in that area.

My right hon. Friend has accepted the recommendations of the interim advisory committee which will allow substantial pay increases for teachers, an 8·8 per cent. increase in the London weighting allowance with a discretionary supplement of £750 for inner London and give LEAs and governing bodies greater flexibility on pay. He is providing funds through education support grant and the local education authority training grants scheme to encourage local education authorities, as the employers of teachers, to introduce flexible and innovative recruitment and retention packages.

We have already announced an increase in the bursary paid to students on initial training courses in shortage subjects; in March we provided £182,000 for a London recruitment campaign and we recently launched a national advertising campaign. We will continue to support and extend the measures we have taken since 1986 to combat teacher shortage.

48. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received since the launch of the "Teaching Brings Out the Best in People" campaign; and if he will make a statement.

49. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what progress has been made since the launch of the "Teaching Brings Out the Best in People" campaign.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what impact so far has been made by the "Teaching Brings Out the Best in People" campaign; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Since the teacher recruitment advertising campaign was launched on 16 May, over 13,000 requests have been received from people seeking information about teaching as a career in response to the advertisements.

66. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to recruit more graduates into the teaching profession.

71. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to recruit more graduates into the teaching profession.

Mrs. Rumbold: On 12 March my right hon. Friend announced an extension of the bursary scheme for students on initial teacher training courses in shortage subjects to modern foreign languages; the bursary will be increased to £1,500 for students on courses in maths, CDT and technology, chemistry and modern foreign languages and to £2,000 for students on physics courses. The changes apply from September 1990.

In addition, my right hon. Friend is matching generous industrial sponsorship with £40,000 funding to support a paid work experience scheme for undergraduates run by the teaching as a career unit.

It is proposed that the first of the graduates taking part in the pilot for the articled teacher route into teaching will begin training in September.

We shall continue to support teacher taster courses for mature people, including graduates, who wish to switch careers.

City Technology Colleges

33. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of the city technology college programme.

61. **Mr. McWilliam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of the city technology college programme.

Mrs. Rumbold: The city technology college programme continues to make excellent progress. Three colleges are up and running and a further nine are due to open in September 1990 and 1991.

63. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last visited a city technology college; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend visited the Djanogly CTC (Nottingham) on 29 September 1989, when he attended the official opening, performed by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Opting Out

34. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the geographical spread of schools in England and Wales that have applied to opt out of local authority control; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Of the 54 proposals for grant-maintained status that have so far reached my right hon. Friend for decision, he has approved 41 and is minded to approve a further school subject to agreement with the governing body about minor technical adjustments to the proposals.

The 42 schools which he has approved or is minded to approve for grant-maintained status are drawn from 31 LEAs. The geographical breakdown is as follows:

Geographical breakdown for each school approved for GM status

Region and School	*LEA*
Northern	
Castle Hall GM School	Kirklees
Heckmondwike Grammar School	Kirklees
North West	
Audenshaw High School	Tameside
Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School	Lancashire
Bankfield High School	Cheshire
Lancaster Royal Grammar School	Lancashire
St. Francis Xavier's College	Liverpool
St. James's CE School	Bolton
Midlands	
Adams' Grammar School	Shropshire
Baverstock GM School	Birmingham
Netherthorpe School	Derbyshire
Old Swinford Hospital School	Dudley
Small Heath School	Birmingham
Southfield School for Girls	Northamptonshire
Wolverhampton Girls High School	Wolverhampton
Eastern	
The King's School	Lincolnshire
Queen Elizabeth's GM Grammar School	Lincolnshire
Skegness Grammar School	Lincolnshire
Carre's Grammar School	Lincolnshire
Long Field High School	Leicestershire
London North and Home Counties	
Bishopshalt School	Hillingdon
Claremont High School	Brent
Hendon School	Barnet
Queen Elizabeth's GM School for Boys	Barnet
Queensbury School	Bedfordshire
Rickmansworth School	Hertfordshire
Watford Grammar School for Boys	Hertfordshire
Inner London	
Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School	Kensington and Chelsea
London Nautical School	Southwark
London Oratory School	Hammersmith and Fulham
South East	
The Grammar School for Girls, Wilmington	Kent
Guildford County School	Surrey
Wilson's School	Sutton
South West	
Beechen Cliff School	Avon
Brindley Hall School	Buckinghamshire
Bridgewater Hall School	Buckinghamshire
Colyton Grammar School	Devon
Marling School	Gloucestershire
Ribston Hall High School	Gloucestershire
Southlands School	Berkshire
Stroud Girls High School	Gloucestershire
Bournemouth Grammar School[1]	Dorset

[1] Denotes minded to approve subject to agreement with the governing body about minor technical adjustments to the proposals.

42. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications he has received from schools wishing to opt out of local authority control; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: A total of 64 proposals for grant-maintained status have been published following parental ballots. Of these, 54 have so far reached my right hon. Friend for decision: he has approved 41, is minded to approve one and has rejected 12.

46. **Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has

received from parents about the conduct of local authorities towards schools that wish to opt out of local authority control; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Concern has been expressed from time to time by governors and parents about the actions of some local authorities towards schools seeking grant-maintained status. My right hon. Friend has said repeatedly that it is important that parents, governors and staff at such schools should have an informed debate about the options available to them; and that LEAs should not obstruct that debate in any way.

56. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the consequences for schools of opting out of local authority control; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Grant-maintained schools have many advantages: they are run by local people who know the schools; their governing bodies have considerable autonomy, including the freedom to choose how to spend most effectively their share of LEA expenditure on central services; and they are proving popular with parents; and attracting teachers to work in them.

Teachers' Pay and Conditions

35. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the level of teacher salaries.

65. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the level of teacher salaries.

68. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the level of teacher salaries.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend announced on 5 April that he had decided to accept the recommendations contained in the third report of the Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions, subject to some minor modifications. They will be implemented in full by 1 January 1991.

84. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what meetings he is having with the teaching unions over the new pay machinery proposals; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has recently completed a series of meetings with the teacher unions to discuss his proposals for new permanent pay negotiating machinery.

Grant-maintained Schools

37. **Mr. Robert. B. Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the level of funding available for grant-maintained schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Government's policy is that each grant-maintained school should be funded at the level its former local education authority would have spent on it. This includes provision for services previously provided centrally, which amounted on average to about 15 per cent. of the direct costs of the schools in 1989-90.

70. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has had from teachers at grant-maintained schools about the new system of grant-maintained schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has not received any such formal representations. Grant-maintained status has been welcomed by teachers as well as by governors and parents. For example, in a recent report to the governing body the head teacher of Bankfield school in Widnes said the new freedom of action as a grant-maintained school had helped raise morale among the school community. He said:

"Morale amongst staff is exceptionally high—and this has had a beneficial effect on our pupils. The school is totally united, staff, pupils, parents as never before".

72. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many pupils attend grant-maintained schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: We have recent information on the numbers of pupils in 41 of the 42 schools which my right hon. Friend has so far approved or is minded to approve for grant-maintained status. In January 1990 there were 29,200 pupils in those schools.

81. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he is planning to take to make it easier for schools to achieve grant-maintained status.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is open to all LEA-maintained secondary schools, and LEA-maintained primary schools with 300 or more pupils, to consider the option of seeking grant-maintained status. It is for parents and governors to decide whether to put a proposal for grant-maintained status to my right hon. Friend. The statutory procedure requires that each proposal for grant-maintained status together with any statutory objections is considered carefully by my right hon. Friend.

Modern Languages

38. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his response to the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities on modern language learning and teacher supply.

Mrs. Rumbold: The report of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities on European schools and language learning in United Kingdom schools was published on 15 May. My right hon. Friend will be studying the report carefully before responding. In doing so, he will wish to take account of the forthcoming final report of the national curriculum working group on modern foreign languages, which is expected to be completed by the end of July and will be published later in the summer.

Local Government Finance

41. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his latest estimate of the effect of the poll tax caps on the education service in the former Inner London education authority boroughs proposed for capping.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is considering appeals from the relevant inner London boroughs about the level of their caps, including representations made by the boroughs about likely service implications.

50. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will meet representatives of those local education authorities which have been charge-capped to discuss the implications for education.

78. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will meet representatives of those local education authorities which have been charge-capped to discuss the implications for education.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon).

Student Loans

44. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the administration of the student loans scheme.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall).

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much he estimates will be raised in total from student loans in the first full year of their operation.

Mr. Jackson: If 80 per cent. of students take up their maximum entitlement to loans, £178 million will be made available in the academic year 1990-91. Borrowers will not be liable to repay their loans until the April after they leave their course. The first graduates are therefore not expected to start repaying until April 1992. Estimates of the long-term cost and savings were announced on 18 December 1989, *Official Report*, columns *36-40*.

School Discipline

45. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received following the announcement of his intention to implement a number of the recommendations contained in the Elton report on school discipline.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Since my right hon. Friend made his announcement on 13 March 1989, a total of 25 representations have been received about the report.

Computers

51. **Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many computers there are in schools currently.

Mr. Alan Howarth: There is an average of three microcomputers per maintained primary school and 30 per maintained secondary school being used for educational purposes.

Eastern Europe

53. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he is having with education authorities to allow young people from central and eastern Europe to visit and study at schools in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department is not directly involved in developing school visits and exchange programmes. It does however fund the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges to undertake activities of this kind. Additional resources have been made available to the bureau in the 1990-91 financial year to expand its programme of educational visits and exchanges, including those with eastern Europe.

Humberside College

54. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to make an announcement as to whether Humberside college of higher education is to be granted polytechnic status.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend is awaiting further advice from the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council after the council meeting today. He hopes to respond to that advice shortly after it is received.

University Studies

58. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to encourage the participation of United Kingdom institutions in the trans-European mobility scheme for university studies.

Mr. Jackson: I wrote on 14 May to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics and the Standing Conference of Principals inviting their members to participate fully in the TEMPUS programme.

Teacher Supply

59. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to respond to the Education, Science and Arts Select Committee report on teacher supply; and if he will make a statement.

67. **Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to respond to the Education, Science and Arts Select Committee report on teacher supply; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to respond to the Education, Science and Arts Select Committee report on teacher supply; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend is currently considering the report of the Education, Science and Arts Committee on teacher supply. He will respond as soon as possible.

Capital Allocations

Mr. Bright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the system of capital allocations for *(a)* grant-maintained schools and *(b)* local authority-maintained schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: Each year grant-maintained schools are invited to submit bids for capital allocations for the next financial year. My right hon. Friend assesses these across the sector as a whole taking account of each school's needs relative to other GM schools. For further details I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce) on 26 January 1990, *Official Report*, columns *899-902*.

Within the LEA-maintained sector, my right hon. Friend sets an annual capital guideline for each local education authority and makes capital allocations for governors' expenditure at voluntary aided and special agreement schools following his assessment of local education authority capital expenditure plans. For further details I refer my hon. Friend to the reply my right hon. Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) on 20 December 1989, *Official Report*, columns *254-58*.

Cathedral Choirs

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will visit the choir schools at Salisbury and York to discuss proposals to establish girls' choirs in English cathedrals.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so.

Deaf Students

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether deaf students will be counted as disabled students for the purpose of loan repayments.

Mr. Jackson: Subject to Parliament's approval, the Education (Student Loans) Regulations provide that, in determining a borrower's income for the purpose of deferment, no account shall be taken of specific disability-related benefits. While there is no separate provision for deaf borrowers, those who do receive these disability-related benefits will have them disregarded in the assessment of their income. Eligible deaf students will benefit while they are studying from the new disabled students' allowance announced on 19 March.

Under-fives

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the committee on policies for the under-fives will report; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The committee of inquiry set up by my right hon. Friend's predecessor under my chairmanship is considering the quality of the educational experience of three and four-year-olds across various institutional settings. I expect to submit its report to my right hon. Friend during the summer.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much money he estimates to have been saved by compulsory competitive tendering in education in each of the last five years.

Mrs. Rumbold: No such estimates have been made for education, since the money saved by compulsory competitive tendering, and the scope for further savings, will vary between local education authorities depending on their circumstances.

Haberdashers' Aske's Schools, Deptford

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will take steps to ensure that during periods when the schools are in session, any visits by his officials or other persons instructed by his Department to the Haberdashers' Aske's schools in Deptford, for purposes of conducting surveys or other works in connection with the establishment of a city technology college, will take place only at times expressly agreed by the head teacher of each school;

(2) what were the dates and purposes of the visits by his officials, or other persons instructed by his Department, to the Haberdashers' Aske's schools in Deptford; and whether they were conducted at times agreed with the local education authority and head teacher of each school.

Mrs. Rumbold: This Department has agreed to provide advice to the Haberdashers' Company in relation to the establishment of the Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college. It is for the project director employed by the Haberdashers' Company to make the appropriate arrangements, in consultation with the local education authority and the head teachers of both schools, for any necessary visits to the schools. The most recent visits made by officials, on 18 and 24 May, were arranged in this way.

Lorne Felgate

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he received the appeal in respect of Lorne Felgate of Gunners road, Shoeburyness, Essex in relation to the educational provision for his dyslexic condition; when he hopes to come to a decision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend received the appeal on 22 May 1989. He hopes to be in a position to make a decision shortly.

Assisted Places

Mr. Day: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to improve publicity for the assisted places scheme.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Schools participating in the scheme take the lead in publicising its benefits and the availability of places locally, but my right hon. Friend's recent announcement of an expansion of the scheme, in areas of lower provision, has heightened considerably public awareness of assistance available.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make regulations under section 13 of the Education Act 1981 relating to the approval of independent schools to admit pupils with statements of special educational needs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department has today issued for consultation draft regulations and a related circular which would lay down requirements in this respect. A copy has been placed in the Library.

Teacher Vetting

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many outstanding applications there are for vetting teachers; and how many there were six months ago;

(2) what is the total number of teacher vetting requests his Department has received since the inception of the scheme;

(3) what is the longest period a local education authority has waited for the results of a teacher vetting application.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department does not handle vetting requests on behalf of local education authorities. The checks are made by local authorities directly with their local police force.

Departmental Savings

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what mechanisms exist in his Department for identifying and tracking value-for-money savings in its operations;

(2) what were the value-for-money savings in his Department's operations identified by internal audit and internal efficiency arrangements and by external audit and by management consultants retained by his Department between 1983-84 and 1988-89; and what is the amount of those savings fulfilled to date.

Mrs. Rumbold *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* The Department constantly monitors expenditure on its administration to ensure that value for money is achieved. To this end, the Department makes use of a range of formal and informal mechanisms including surveys, policy reviews, organisation and methods studies, staffing reviews and other monitoring arrangements. The improvements resulting from all such inquiries and studies are taken into account in the setting of annual budgets and internal targets. Audit arrangements are concerned principally with securing adequate financial controls, but wherever audit work has shown opportunities for securing value-for-money savings the relevant recommendations have been implemented. The results are not collected centrally within the Department.

Meningitis

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what public resources were committed through the Medical Research Council for research into meningitis in 1988-89; and what is the figure for 1990-91.

Mr. Jackson *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Expenditure on research into meningitis during the 1988-89 financial year was £161,000. The Medical Research Council is always prepared to consider soundly based proposals for research and the figure for 1990-91 will depend on the number of successful applications submitted.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 13 June 1990

THE ARTS

Departmental Achievements

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the major achievements of his Department in the last four years.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The Government's achievements in the arts in the last four years have been numerous and varied. Among the most important I would list the following:

The maintenance of central Government support for arts activities, and the introduction of measures to encourage greater self-reliance among arts institutions—the arts budget for this financial year stands at £494 million, and will rise by 22 per cent. by 1992-93.

The establishment of a three-year programme of funding for the arts, to give arts bodies a firmer base from which to plan their activities.

The introduction of corporate planning for the national museums and galleries and other non-departmental bodies, linked to the three-year funding programme.

The major expansion schemes at some national museums and galleries, including the Clore gallery at the Tate, the new Tate gallery in Liverpool, the redevelopment of the imperial war museum, and the opening of the Victoria and Albert museum's theatre museum at Covent Garden. The building and maintenance grants to the national museums and galleries have increased by 15 per cent. in real terms over the past four years, and in December 1989 an incentive funding initiative was launched to help these institutions get their fabric into prime condition by the year 2000.

The participation of over 2,000 museums in the Museums Year celebrations in 1989, with visitor numbers reaching over 100 million in that year.

The Government's support for the development strategies designed to give the regions a larger share of arts spending facilities and to increase access to the arts.

New initiatives to encourage arts bodies to market themselves more professionally and to improve the quality of their management.

The significant and continuing upsurge in business sponsorship of the arts, encouraged by the business sponsorship incentive scheme through which nearly £33 million of new money for the arts has been raised.

The development of incentive funding schemes for the performing arts and for public libraries, designed to encourage subsidised bodies to become more self-reliant in their development and growth.

The maintaining of the public lending right scheme introduced in 1981, by which authors are paid for the borrowing of their books from public libraries. This year, the PLR provision is £3·5 million, and it will rise to £4·5 million in 1991-92.

The very substantial progress that has been made with the British Library's St. Pancras project, the first phase of which is on schedule for completion in 1993, still within its budget of £300 million. This will bring together most of the Library's London-based collections and reading rooms on a single site, and provide much-improved storage conditions.

The publication of the consultative paper "Financing the Public Library Service: Four subjects for debate" prompting possibly the widest debate on the service this century, and resulting in the protection of the core of the free public library service, through the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The continuing commitment to preserving the nation's heritage. Over £105 million of public money has gone into the national heritage memorial fund since it was established in 1980.

The growth in the use of the acceptance in lieu of tax provisions. In 1989-90, a record level of tax was satisfied in this way, with over £11·5 million satisfied by 14 offers.

NATIONAL FINANCE

ECOFIN Council

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the latest meeting of the European Community's Economic and Finance Council.

Mr. Major: The ECOFIN Council met in Luxembourg on 11 June. The Paymaster General and I represented the United Kingdom. Future progress towards economic and monetary union was discussed and oral reports were heard from the chairmen of the central bank governors, monetary and economic policy committees and from President Delors. The Council agreed that it was important to ensure that stage 1 was successful and that more work was needed in how the Community might progress beyond that stage. It was agreed that Finance Ministers should be involved in the forthcoming intergovernmental conference on EMU. The presidency will submit a progress report to the European Council before its meeting on 25 to 26 June.

Political agreement was reached on a package of three corporate tax measures to encourage cross-border co-operation. When finally implemented, these measures will end the double taxation of subsidiaries which transfer dividends to a parent company in another member state and will remove the tax disincentive to cross border mergers. This is a very welcome step forward and will be of real benefit to British industry.

The Council also welcomed a report from the Commission on the main features of its new proposals for a system of VAT control and for the collection of intra-EC trade statistics after 1992. The raising of travellers' allowance was also discussed. It was agreed that the Court of Auditors report on export refunds should be submitted to the Committee of Permanent Representatives for urgent further consideration. The investment services directive was also discussed, and it was concluded that the Council should aim to reach a common position on the directive by 31 December 1990.

TRANSPORT

Protected Countryside

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy concerning the avoidance of motorway and major road construction through designated protected countryside; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: There has been no change in the Government's longstanding policy, which is to keep roads away from protected areas like areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of special scientific interest wherever possible. Special attention is also paid to the effects of new roads on inalienable land owned by the National Trust. In national parks, the Government are committed to ensuring that no new trunk route will be constructed or an existing road upgraded unless there is a compelling need which cannot be met by any reasonable alternative means.

Carbon Canisters

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has about the relative cost implications to the motor industry of fitting large or small carbon canisters to motor vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Carbon canisters are used to control evaporative emissions from motor vehicles. The component cost is likely to range between £15 and £40. The cost of installation is difficult to estimate, but is likely to be higher for the larger canisters that are designed to capture refuelling emissions, because they are more sophisticated and require electronic controls.

Tachographs

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence he has of tachograph discs in heavy goods vehicles being discarded when used up and being replaced with new ones so as to allow a further nine hours' driving time; what steps he intends taking to prevent this from happening; and if he has any plans to introduce a system of serialised tachograph discs.

Mr. Atkins: The Department carries out checks on tachographs of heavy goods vehicles both at the roadside and at operators' premises. These can detect the person who drives for a period and then inserts a new chart. There is no evidence that this practice is common. I will write to the hon. Member shortly about the serialisation of tachograph discs.

Pedestrian Crossings

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrians were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured, while using zebra or pelican crossings in 1989.

Mr. Atkins: Provisional estimates are that 109 persons were killed and a further 4,978 persons injured while crossing the road using pedestrian crossings during 1989.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been for failure to stop for pedestrians at a zebra crossing, since the introduction in the current year of the spot fine.

Mr. John Patten: The information collected centrally does not separately identify fixed penalty notices issued for the offence of failing to give precedence to pedestrians at a zebra crossing.

Motor Vehicles (Roadworthiness)

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions in the last five years vehicle examiners from the Department of Transport have carried out checks on the roadworthiness of motor cars on garage forecourts in accordance with the Road Traffic Acts; and how many prosecutions have been successfully instituted.

Mr. Atkins: The vehicle inspectorate has not hitherto maintained separate statistics of such inspections, but is now starting to do so. Any subsequent prosecutions would normally be pursued by local authority trading standards officers.

Jet Engines (Exhaust Fumes)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has made an assessment of the potential damage being caused to the ozone layer as a result of exhaust fumes from jet engines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: For the most part, aircraft operate in the troposphere. Increasingly, however, they are reaching into the lower stratosphere and the Warren Spring laboratory has been asked to consider what contribution they might make to stratospheric ozone depletion. This is an issue that is also the subject of an extensive three-year programme of research by NASA in connection with possible future supersonic transport development programmes. These are important studies, and the results could have a bearing on future policy decisions with regard to aircraft engine emission standards.

M11 Link Road

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the inspector in the M11 link road public inquiry has submitted his report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The report has been received and is under consideration together with all the objections and representations made. The Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Transport will announce their decisions as soon as possible.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he has received from Messrs. Eurotunnel details of the inspection procedures which will be made on cars and other vehicles before they enter the channel tunnel; and if, in particular, any progress has been made in providing X-ray machines for vehicles as referred to in the debate on 3 February 1987, *Official Report*, column 943;

(2) if the intergovernmental commission and safety authority has reported to him on the safety arrangements for inspecting vehicles going into the proposed channel tunnel; and if it has indicated whether it is satisfied with the arrangements.

Mr. Freeman: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) on 11

June at column 62. Eurotunnel's designs and operating procedures in relation to safety and security are being considered in accordance with the arrangements specified in the treaty and concession agreement. Further work remains to be done before final approval can be given.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the latest estimate he has received of the number of vehicles which are likely to go through the proposed channel tunnel each day.

Mr. Freeman: A joint working group, representing the Department of Transport, Kent county council and Eurotunnel, has forecast that an average of 10,000 vehicles per day will use the tunnel in 1993, rising to 14,000 in 2008.

Motorways

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his latest estimate of the number of miles of new motorways completed since 1979.

Mr. Atkins: Since 1979, 285 miles of new motorway have been completed, and 30 miles of existing motorway widened.

Danbury Bypass

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will bring forward proposals to build a bypass around Danbury; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* This is a matter for Essex county council as local highway authority.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Mr. Alexander Bora

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now allow Mr. Alexander Bora, a United States citizen, to enter the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Mr. Bora was refused leave to enter the United Kingdom by an immigration officer at Gatwick airport on 12 March 1987.

So far as I am aware, Mr. Bora has not sought admission since that date. Should he do so, his case would be given full consideration in the normal way.

Obscene Telephone Calls

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the total number of prosecutions under section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984.

Mr. John Patten: It is not possible from the information held centrally to identify offences under section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 from others under the aforesaid Act.

Civil Defence

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on nationally recommended minimum standards to maintain civil defence cover.

Mr. John Patten: There are no nationally recommended minimum standards for civil defence.

Arson (Wales)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the National Association of Probation Officers concerning his Meibion Glyndwr police investigations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a letter from the National Association of Probation Officers calling for an independent inquiry into recent arrests by north Wales police. He replied on 11 May confirming that the chief constable had decided that the circumstances of the arrests should be investigated by a senior officer from another force under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the terms of reference of the investigation being conducted by Lancashire police into the way in which North Wales police have undertaken action relating to the arson campaign in Wales; whether the investigation is into the entire sequence of police action since the arson campaign first started; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The investigation relates only to certain arrests, the circumstances of which were referred to the Police Complaints Authority by the chief constable of North Wales under section 88 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The authority approved the appointment of an investigating officer from the Lancashire constabulary and is supervising the investigation. I understand that the terms of reference are:

To enquire into the circumstances leading to and surrounding the arrest of Bryn Fon, Anna Wynne-Williams, Henryd Myrddin Jones and Dyfed Wyn Thomas, to determine whether or not the police action was proper and reasonable.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which groups concerned with reforming the law on Sunday trading he has met; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Since 1986 my ministerial colleagues and I have met individuals and groups with widely differing views on the subject. In the past year these have included representatives of OPEN (previously, the Community Shops Group), the British Hardware Federation, Keep Sunday Special Campaign, the Association of District Councils, the British Videogram Association, the Retail Consortium and the Shopping Hours Reform Council. No proposal to reform the law has yet been put forward which seems likely to command sufficient support to provide the basis for legislation.

Chinese Refugees

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received concerning the refusal to grant asylum to Chinese refugees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Representations have been received in respect of one Chinese national who was refused asylum

here but was granted exceptional leave to remain. We have also received some 20 representations about the decision not to consider the asylum applications from 33 Chinese nationals who came here from Panama. This group has failed to comply with their terms of temporary admission and their cases will be further considered when they are traced.

Police Buildings

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what approval he has given for the acquisition or building of new police headquarters and at what cost in England and Wales since 1980.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information for force headquarters buildings is as follows:

	£ million
1982	
Avon and Somerset force headquarters—purchase of site and preparatory works	0·974
1983	
Metropolitan police—Bessborough street and Vauxhall Bridge road adaptations work (lease rental £1·175 million per annum)	1·28
Metropolitan police—Drummond gate adaptations work (lease rental £1·795 million per annum)	1·64
1984	
Leicestershire force headquarters—phase 1	3·655
Dyfed Powys force headquarters	5·9
1989	
Thames Valley force headquarters—acquisition of site	1·1
Avon and Somerset force headquarters—phase 1	4·772
Avon and Somerset force headquarters—phase 1A	1·5

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to value the police estate in England and Wales, and for the more effective management of police buildings, within the 43 Home Office inspected forces.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The ownership of the police estate is vested in police authorities, or, in the case of the Metropolitan police, the Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District.

Home Office circular No. 32/1987, issued in May 1987, asked the authorities to review their management of the police estate with a view to identifying accommodation and sites which are surplus to requirements, either for disposal or, where appropriate, to meet emerging new needs for accommodation. The procedures for reviewing the estate are matters for the police authorities themselves, but Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary has generally expressed its satisfaction with the arrangements which have been made.

A proposal to carry out a valuation of the Metropolitan police estate on commercially accepted principles and updating the information on a continuing basis is being considered.

Trafalgar Square (Incident)

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on those detained, following the 31 March incident in Trafalgar square, as to those *(a)* released without charge, and *(b)* charged, by offence, and by age, sex and place of residence.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that by 8 June 471 people have been arrested in connection with the disorder which occurred during and following the demonstration against the community charge which took place in London on 31 March. Of these, 58 were subsequently released without charge.

The information readily available about the charges preferred and the age and sex of those charged with these offences is set out in table 1:

Table 1

Charge	*Age* 14-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	Over 35	*Total*
Males						
Riot	—	4	—	—	—	4
Violent disorder	19	37	20	7	6	89
Affray	7	10	8	—	—	25
Public Order Act						
Section 4	21	45	17	6	2	91
Section 5	10	18	11	2	—	41
Grievous bodily harm	1	2	—	1	—	4
Other assaults	6	22	8	3	2	41
Burglary	12	8	3	3	1	27
Theft	12	8	3	—	—	23
Dishonest handling	10	2	4	—	—	16
Criminal damage	4	15	6	1	2	28
Arson	1	1	—	—	—	2
Enclosed premises	1	—	—	—	—	1
Obstructing police	6	11	5	—	1	23
Highway obstruction	8	8	4	1	1	22
Drunk and disorderly	—	1	1	—	3	5
Drugs	1	3	2	—	—	6
Total	119	195	92	24	18	[1]448
Females						
Riot	—	—	1	—	—	1
Violent disorder	4	4	3	—	—	11
Affray	—	—	1	—	—	1

Charge	Age 14-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	Over 35	Total
Public Order Act						
Section 4	4	3	1	—	—	8
Section 5	3	—	—	—	—	3
Grievous bodily harm	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other assaults	2	4	2	—	—	8
Burglary	7	—	—	1	—	8
Theft	3	2	—	—	—	5
Dishonest handling	1	—	—	—	—	1
Criminal damage	1	—	—	—	1	2
Arson	—	—	—	—	—	—
Enclosed premises	—	—	—	—	—	—
Obstructing police	2	3	3	—	—	8
Highway obstruction	1	3	1	—	1	6
Drunk and disorderly	—	—	—	—	—	—
Drugs	—	1	—	—	—	1
Total	28	20	12	1	2	[1]63

[1] Some individuals may be charged with more than one offence.

The stated place of residence of those arrested (including those subsequently released without charge) is set out in table 2:

Table 2

	Numbers
London	245
No Fixed Abode	31
Essex	21
Hampshire	15
Avon and Somerset	15
Surrey	16
Kent	14
Hertfordshire	9
Sussex	9
Yorkshire	8
Nottinghamshire	8
Berkshire	7
Greater Manchester	6
Lancashire	5
West Midlands	5
Cambridgeshire	4
Merseyside	5
Buckinghamshire	4
Dyfed	3
Humberside	3
Leicestershire	3
Suffolk	3
Oxfordshire	3
Wiltshire	3
Eire	3
Channel Islands	2
Cleveland	2
Dorset	2
Spain	1
Malta	1
Derbyshire	1
Devon	1
Gloucestershire	1
Norfolk	1
Northamptonshire	1
Staffordshire	1
Warwickshire	1
Worcestershire	1
Glamorgan	1
Dumfries	1
Shropshire	1
France	1
Strathclyde	1
Rosshire	1
Gwent	1
Total	471

Animal Experiments

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to review the effectiveness of the current provisions to prevent undue pain and suffering in experimentation on live animals.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has no such plans.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list in the *Official Report* the annual number of lethal dose toxicity tests permitted over the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Lethal dose toxicity tests have been separately identified in the statistics since 1987. The numbers of such tests carried out in 1987 and 1988 are published in table 14—columns 8 and 9—of the annual "Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain" for 1987 and 1988, Cm. 515 and 743. Copies of these publications are in the Library.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what representations he has made to the pharmaceutical and other commercial companies undertaking tests on live animals to move towards alternative methods of testing;

(2) what further steps he proposes to encourage provision for alternative methods for use in basic research in toxicity testing and drug development to replace experimentation on live animals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: It is a fundamental principal of the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 that animals are used in scientific procedures, for whatever purposes, only where there are no alternatives to their use. All applicants for a project licence issued under the Act must satisfy the Home Office that they have given thorough consideration to the scope for using alternative methods not involving animals.

While the use of animals for research and safety testing will remain necessary for the foreseeable future, those involved in animal procedures are well aware of the need to move towards non-animal techniques whenever possible. Work involving living animals is not permitted where alternatives exist.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list in the *Official Report* those

organisations which have received grants from Her Majesty's Government for research into replacement alternatives to experimentation on live animals indicating the amount of the grant in each case.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: In 1984 financial assistance was provided to two organisations concerned with animals in research. Some £185,000 was given to the fund for the replacement of animals in medical experiments (FRAME) to help with three projects: a feasibility study of validation of in vitro techniques which might replace animal experiments; work on a possible database of tissue culture techniques; and on examination of the use of human tissue cultures instead of animals in medical research and toxicity testing. Some £30,000 was given to the universities federation for animal welfare (UFAW) to support an evaluation of the effects of various cage sizes and social groupings on the well-being of laboratory rats.

With the passing of the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, the Home Office established a scheme which is administered by a sub-committee of the Animal Procedures Committee to grant aid research to reduce, refine or replace the use of living animals in scientific procedures. The Home Office also funds research concerned with the welfare of laboratory animals. In 1988-89, the first year of the operation of the scheme, it was decided to fund the following four projects:

(i) Dr. P. A. Botham and Dr. G. J. A. Oliver, ICI Central Toxicology Laboratory. "Validation of an enucleated eye model" (£26,700 over two years)

(ii) Dr. A. F. Bristow and Dr. S. Poole, National Institute for Biological Standards and Control. "Assay of Pyrogens measuring lymphokine production *in vitro*". (£72,700 over three years)

(iii) Dr. A. Robinson, Public Health Laboratory Service "Alternative potency tests for cellular pertenssis". (£9,800 over three years)

(iv) Dr. R. M. Stagg, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland "Fish cell culture for toxicity assessment". (£25,700 over two years)

In 1989-90 it was decided to fund the following projects:

(i) Dr. M. E. G. Boursell, AFRC Institute for Animal Health. "Recombinant vaccine against infectious burial disease virus". (£77,700 over three years)

(ii) Dr. M. Ferguson, National Institute for Biological Standards and Control. "The use of *in vitro* assays for the potency of rabies vaccines". (£10,000 over two years)

(iii) Mr. A. Knight, Wellcome Research Laboratories. "A replacement for the clostridium chauvoei vaccine potency test". (£67,000 over three years).

(iv) Professor D. B. Morton, University of Birmingham. "Evaluation of welfare in the husbandry of laboratory rabbits". (£59,900 over three years).

In addition, on the advice of the Animal Procedures Committee research sub-committee, the Home Office commissioned a report of an investigation into antibody production. The Home Office has also supported, and part-funded, international work on acute toxicity testing aimed at further reducing the need for formal LD50 tests.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of experiments on live animals carried out in each year since the 1986 provisions took effect, showing how many animals were used for scientific testing in each year.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information is published in table 18 of "Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain, 1988", Cm. 743, a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his consideration of the representations made on behalf of Mr. Colin Wallace concerning his conviction, referred to in a letter of 4 June from Mr. J. H. Miller, Private Secretary to the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, to Mr. Wallace.

Mr. John Patten: We hope to be able to reply shortly to the latest representations made on Mr. Wallace's behalf regarding the safety of his conviction.

Plutonium Contamination

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on plans or studies that assess the measures that would have to be taken by the police or civil defence authorities in the event of widespread contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces to a question from the hon. Member and the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 8 June, at column *724*.

War Crimes

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to investigate the allegations made by Arthur Lane of alleged war crimes committed by Kiyoaki Tanara and Shigeyuki Hashimoto; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 22 May.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mortgage Repossession

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the number of private mortgage possession orders granted in each English region, for the years *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* 1989.

The Attorney-General: The number of private mortgage possession orders made in county courts in England for the years 1986 to 1989 are as follows. The numbers of such orders made in the six circuits within England are also given.

Private mortgage possession orders granted in England 1986-89

Circuit	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
Midland and Oxford	9,382	9,304	8,405	8,756
North Eastern	6,548	7,727	7,221	5,847
Northern	6,323	7,342	8,167	7,984
South Eastern	11,300	11,738	11,844	18,832
Wales and Chester	714	811	564	647
Western	4,784	4,861	4,160	5,027
England total	39,051	41,513	40,361	47,093

The figures given for Wales and Chester circuit exclude private mortgage possession orders granted in Wales.

Divorce

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on progress towards a fair and equitable system for all parties in divorce with particular regard to maintenance of, and access to, the children involved.

The Attorney-General: The Children Act 1989 represents a major reform of the law relating to children including access to them. It is, however, only a first step in a programme to review family law and its administration which includes consideration of the Law Commission's expected report on divorce later this year, conciliation arrangements and the Government's current consideration of the assessment, collection and enforcement of maintenance.

In considering and implementing policy on all these matters, the Government recognise the need for fairness and equity, but regard the interests of the child as their first priority.

Mr. Kevin Taylor

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on developments since the Director of Public Prosecutions was in touch with Greater Manchester police about the outcome of the trial of Kevin Taylor.

The Attorney-General: The question of any action subsequent to the DPP's letter of 19 January 1990 to the chief constable of Greater Manchester is one for the chief constable alone.

ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Finance

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to grant specific relief or exemption from part of the community charge for those couples who are both blind.

Mr. Chope: Disabled people, including those who are registered as blind, can already receive higher levels of community charge benefit, which may reduce bills by up to 80 per cent, because of their disability. The income level at which they are entitled to maximum community charge benefit, and where the sliding scale of reductions begins, is higher than for other people. A disabled person who is not a former ratepayer or the partner of a former ratepayer may also be entitled to extra transitional relief.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the inquiries or audits undertaken by the Audit Commission on the finances of individual local authorities in 1990.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* As for every financial year, auditors appointed by the Audit Commission will undertake audits of the accounts of all local authorities for 1990-91. Information on public interest reports made by auditors to local authorities under section 15 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982 is held by the Audit Commission.

Beaches

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to ensure that hoteliers and business are compensated against loss of earnings as a result of drops in the tourist trade due to dirty beaches.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No.

Water Charges

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what alternative methods of charging for water supply and sewerage disposal for domestic customers have been discussed between him and chairmen of water companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: None. Subject to the general supervision exercised by the Director General of Water Services, it is a matter for each water company to decide what methods of charging to adopt for its services before charging by rateable value is prohibited in the year 2000.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the estimated costs of installing meters in all properties now charged on rateable values.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No estimates have been prepared. The cost of installing meters depends on a variety of factors and in some cases installation may not prove practical without excessive cost. I understand that information on the costs of installing meters will be contained in the second interim report on the national metering trials which the water industry intends to publish early in July. The decision whether to install meters on a wide scale will be taken by each water company, in the light of all the circumstances in its area and under the general supervision of the Director General of Water Services.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the Government's contribution to the water meter trials by area; and what is the total cost of each water meter trial.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The latest estimated cost of each metering trial and the Government's contribution to each trial is shown in the following table:

	Total cost £	*Government contribution* £
Isle of Wight (Southern Water)	16,133,000	7,394,000
Chandlers Ford (Southern Water)	124,700	62,350
Chorleywood (Rickmansworth Water Company)	220,000	nil
Briston-Hotwells (Bristol Waterworks Company)	331,300	165,650
Haling Park (Thames Water)	548,400	274,200
Bromsgrove (East Worcestershire Waterworks Company)	382,500	191,250
Brookmans Park (Lee Valley Water Company)	694,200	347,100
Turlin Moor (Wessex Water)	197,500	98,750
Broadstone (Wessex Water)	307,000	153,500
Camberley (Mid Southern Water Company)	319,600	159,800
Hutton Rudby (Northumbrian Water)	331,200	165,600
South Normanton (Yorkshire Water)	375,800	187,900

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultations he has had with the Director General of Water Services to ensure that competition is assured in the provision of water services in Yorkshire and value for money is obtained by consumers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: None. The Water Act requires the director general, in carrying out his regulatory functions, to protect the interests of customers in respect of charges and other terms on which services are provided, to promote economy and efficiency on the part of appointed companies and to facilitate effective competition, subject to the primary duties to ensure that water and sewerage functions are properly carried out and that appointed undertakers can finance the proper carrying out of those functions.

In setting the initial charges limits for the companies the Secretary of State was subject to the same duties. He took account of the comparative efficiency of each company and incorporated target efficiency savings in the cost projections on which the charge limits were based.

Uniform Business Rate

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will consider making adjustments to the payment of the uniform business rates to help with the loss of the former business rates paid to the town and parish councils; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has received from town and parish councils over the introduction of the community charge and the uniform business rate and their effects on financing local government; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he intends to take action to assist in the retention of town and parish councils where the reform of the business rate is having some effect on their future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has received many representations from town and parish councils about the introduction of the community charge and the uniform business rate, and about the effects on financing local government. District councils have powers to assist town and parish councils in meeting their costs. The new system means that all councils are now accountable to their charge payers for their decisions.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what evidence he has of evasion by hotels, guest houses and tourist accommodation of their obligations to pay the uniform business rate;

(2) if he has any plans to investigate the use of the fire certificate threshold of six letting bed spaces as a suitable starting point for imposition of the uniform business rate.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* I have no evidence of such evasion. I have received representations from home owners providing bed-and-breakfast accommodation for a more generous exemption than the 99-day maximum which currently operates: but others, particularly the hotel trade, believe that any exemption in this area could lead to unfair competition. The tourist authorities have represented that the existing exemption could lead to a shortening of the season in which some accommodation is available. We are considering these arguments and others that have been put to us.

River Quality

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the criteria used to determine river quality are identical throughout the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Member states each use different systems for monitoring and assessing river quality. A review of the various European systems prepared for the Department in 1987 included a comparison of the quality of European rivers according to the classification system in use in England and Wales. This showed that 95 per cent. of river length in the United Kingdom was of good or fair quality compared with 75 per cent. in the European Community as a whole. The review showed that no other member state bettered our position.

Disabled People (Employment)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the respective percentage of registered disabled persons who are employed by each urban development corporation.

Mr. Moynihan: At 1 April 1990, the percentage of registered disabled people employed by London Docklands development corporation was 0·7 per cent. and by Trafford Park development corporation 2·3 per cent. The other corporations currently employ no registered disabled people.

Sewage Discharges

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the extent of his programme to monitor the presence of viruses in sewage discharges; and what research is being undertaken to establish any possible health implications resulting from the presence of viruses in sewage discharges.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The monitoring of sewage discharges is a matter for the National Rivers Authority. The Department has commissioned research into the health effects of bathing in sea water, and the results are expected to be available soon.

Housing Action Trusts, Lambeth

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department intends to proceed with proposals for housing action trusts for the Angell and Loughborough estates in Lambeth.

Mr. Chope: No.

Shopping Facilities

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest guidance given to local planning authorities regarding the design of new shopping facilities.

Mr. Moynihan: Planning policy guidance note 6 sets out the Government's general planning policies for major retail development. My right hon. Friend's statement of 6 March, about standards of design for major new buildings, made it clear that considerations such as the density and bulk of a development, and its compatibility with its

surroundings, may be relevant planning issues. Only exceptionally should planning authorities seek to control design details, if the sensitive character of the area or the particular building justifies it.

Sea Birds (Poisoning)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what research has been undertaken to establish any possible adverse environmental impact resulting from the discharge into the sea from the north Norfolk coast of glycol; what permissions exist in respect of such discharges; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The National Rivers Authority and the former Anglian water authority have undertaken extensive monitoring of discharges of glycol and a survey of the receiving waters off the north Norfolk coast over the past two years. The results have shown that the discharges are having no detectable impact on the North sea.

Details of discharge consents and information from routine monitoring of the discharges are held on the public registers maintained by the Anglian region of the National Rivers Authority, under the terms of the Water Act 1989.

Local Government (Legislation)

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the Acts of Parliament made in each year from 1969 to 1989 which relate to *(a)* local government and *(b)* local government finance.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Public general Acts of Parliament between January 1969 and June 1979 which affect local authorities in England include

Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act 1969*
Mines and Quarries (Tips) 1969
Nuclear Installations Act 1969
Tattooing of Minors Act 1969
Public Health (Removing Nuisances) Act 1969
Vehicles and Driving Licences Act 1969
Housing Act 1969
Transport (London) Act 1969
Late Night Refreshment Houses Act 1969
Children and Young Persons Act 1969
Transport (London) Amendment Act 1969*
Expiring Laws Act 1969
Rent (Control of Increases) Act 1969
Police Act 1969
Food and Drugs (Milk) Act 1970
Local Employment Act 1970
Education (School Milk) Act 1970
General Rate Act 1970*
New Forest Act 1970
Parish Councils and Burial Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970
Riding Establishments Act 1970
Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970
Local Authority Social Services Act 1970
Trees Act 1970
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
Indecent Advertisements (Amendment) Act 1970
Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970
Local Authorities (Qualification of Members) Act 1970
Courts Act 1971
Water Resources Act 1971
Rating Act 1971*
Fire Precautions Act 1971
Highways Act 1971
Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Act 1971
Education (Milk) Act 1971
Housing Act 1971
Town and Country Planning Act 1971
Local Employment Act 1972
Road Traffic Act 1972
Deposit of Poisonous Waste Act 1972
Sunday Theatre Act 1972
Police Act 1972
Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1972
Children Act 1972
Housing Finance Act 1972*
Local Government Act 1972*
National Theatre and Museum of London Act 1973
Housing (Amendment) Act 1973
Furnished Lettings (Rent Allowances) Act 1973
Fire Precautions (Loans) Act 1973*
Education Act 1973
Education (Work Experience) Act 1973
Employment of Children Act 1973
Land Compensation 1973
Rate Rebate Act 1973*
National Health Service Reorganisation Act 1973
Employment Agencies Act 1973
Water Act 1973
Fair Trading Act 1973
Maplin Development Act 1973
Slaughterhouses Act 1974
Local Government Act 1974*
Charlwood and Horley Act 1974
Town and Country Amenities Act 1974
Control of Pollution Act 1974
Housing Act 1974
Education Act 1975
General Rate Act 1975*
Housing Rents and Subsidies Act 1975*
Reservoirs Act 1975
Referendum Act 1975
Nursing Homes Act 1975
Mobile Homes Act 1975
Housing Finance (Special Provisions) Act 1975*
Children Act 1975
Local Land Charges Act 1975
Community Land Act 1975
Education (School-Leaving Dates) Act 1976
Rating (Caravan Sites) Act 1976*
Police Pensions Act 1976
Adoption Act 1976
Foods and Drugs (Control of Food Premises) Act 1976
Rating (Charity Shops) Act 1976*
Police Act 1976
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Amendment) Act 1976
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
New Towns (Amendment) Act 1976
Weights and Measures &c. Act 1976
Education Act 1976
General Rate (Public Utilities) Act 1977*
Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1977
Control of Office Development Act 1977
Local Authorities (Restoration of Works Powers) Act 1977
Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977
Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
European Assembly Elections Act 1978
Home Purchase Assistance and Housing Corporation Guarantee Act 1978*
Local Government Act 1978
Rating (Disabled Persons) Act 1978*
Homes Insulation Act 1978
Inner Urban Areas Act 1978
Public Lending Right Act 1979

Acts relating (at least in part) to local government finance are marked with an asterisk (*).

For Acts after June 1979 I refer the hon. Member to the answer of my right hon. Friend the then Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities to the hon. Member for Copeland on 4 May at columns *676-78*.

Bathing Water Directives

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what beaches in Europe outside the United Kingdom are subject to legal proceedings for failing to meet the bathing water directives; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I understand that the Commission is pursuing legal proceedings against all member states except Portugal in respect of directive 76/160/EEC.

The Commission has powers under the EC treaty to take proceedings against individual member states which it considers are not complying with their obligations under the treaty. It is for the Commission to decide when to commence such legal proceedings.

Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to monitor the effects of the community charge on grant aid to local voluntary organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Government monitor the main categories of expenditure of local authorities, which this year will be affected by the introduction of the community charge and the level of charges, but the grant aid which local authorities provide to voluntary organisations is a matter for them to decide, not the Government.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the effects on grant aid to local voluntary organisations of local authorities not recovering the level of community charge anticipated when preparing their budget.

Mr. Chope: If authorities collect charges efficiently, there is no reason why the cash volume of arrears should be greater than under the rating system. There is no reason why local authorities, or those voluntary organisations which receive grant aid from local authorities, need be in any way disadvantaged in the way the right hon. Member implies.

Urban Programme

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all groups and organisations within the Sunderland borough council area that have received urban programme support in *(a)* 1989-90 and *(b)* 1990-91; and if he will identify the level of grant received in each case and any conditions attached.

Mr. Moynihan: I regret that the detailed information is not readily available to the Department. However, Sunderland borough council, as managers of the urban programme, should be able to provide the information requested direct to the hon. Member.

Builders and Decorators

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans for, or anticipates direction from the European Commission on plans for, a standard registration for all builders and decorators; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no such proposals, nor does he anticipate any from the European Commission.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the protection available to individuals who receive unsatisfactory service from people purporting to be builders and decorators; and how this is likely to change after 1992.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Under the Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982, in contracts for the supply of services, which would include building and decorating, the service must be carried out with reasonable care and skill. Any materials used must be of "merchantable quality", and fit for the job in hand. If the builder or decorator fails in these obligations, the law treats the matter as a breach of contract and the consumer may then look to him for redress through the courts. A number of trade associations operate insurance-backed guarantee schemes, offering protection for the individual against the "cowboy" builder. The Office of Fair Trading is also working with the industry to devise a model fair deal contract for small home improvement works and is examining how an industry-led body could carry out the assessment and approval of insurance-backed guarantee schemes.

The position would be unaffected by current proposals for the completion of the single European market.

Homelessness (Sunderland)

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many *(a)* families and *(b)* single people accepted as homeless within the borough of Sunderland area are at present in (i) bed-and-breakfast accommodation, (ii) other forms of temporary accommodation and (iii) of no fixed abode, and are in receipt of state benefits.

Mr. Chope: The latest available figures for the number of homeless households in bed-and-breakfast and other forms of temporary accommodation are for the end of December 1989. These appear in table 7 of "Local authorities" action under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England; Results for the fourth quarter of 1989; Supplementary Tables", which is the Library.

The number of single people among the households accepted as homeless is not reported to the Department by local authorities and we have no estimates.

Statistics on the numbers of homeless people in temporary accommodation or of no fixed abode and in receipt of state benefits are not available centrally in the form requested.

Bottled Water

Mr. Knowles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what responsibility his Department has for bottled drinking waters.

Mr. Trippier: Responsibility for regulating the quality of the two main categories of bottled waters—natural mineral water and artificially carbonated mineral or spring water—lies with my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Responsibility for any other bottled water has hitherto fallen to the Secretary of State for the Environment, because my right hon. Friend has overall responsibility for EC directive 80/778 on the quality of water intended for human consumption.

The existence of separate legal and administrative regimes for different types of bottled water has inevitably caused confusion to producers, local authorities and the

public. The current Food Safety Bill will make it possible to establish a single regime under the Food Acts and the food hygiene regulations for all types of bottled water. The Prime Minister has therefore agreed that the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in conjunction with the Agriculture Ministers in Wales and Scotland, and the Minister for Health and Social Services in Northern Ireland, should in future have ministerial responsibility for all types of bottled water.

Home Insulation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of dwellings in each district in England are insulated to the standard recommended by his Department.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 6 June 1990]:* Information at district level is not available. Nationally, we estimate that 90 per cent. of dwellings with accessible lofts have insulation and 15 per cent. of all dwellings have cavity wall insulation. The proportion which meet the higher standards of thermal insulation required by new building regulations, introduced in April this year, is not known.

Household Statistics

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the total number of households in England and the numbers and percentages of those households which are *(a)* single-pensioner households, *(b)* other single-adult households, *(c)* two-adult households and *(d)* three or more adult households;

(2) what are the numbers and percentages of total households, broken down by sex and racial composition, of people living in *(a)* single-pensioner households, *(b)* other single-adult households, *(c)* two-adult households and *(d)* three or more adult households in England.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* The available estimates from the 1988 labour force survey are as follows:

Households by number of adults and sex and ethnic group of head of household: 1988 England

(a) Number of households (thousand)

Sex and ethnic group of head of household	*Single pensioner*	*Other single adult*	*Two adults*	*Three or more adults*	[1] *All*
Males					
Indian	1	5	111	68	186
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	1	3	70	23	98
West Indian	2	24	65	25	116
Other	3	26	112	37	178
All ethnic minorities	7	59	359	152	578
White	587	1,180	9,247	2,417	13,433
All ethnic groups	595	1,239	9,606	2,569	14,011
Female					
All ethnic minorities	16	101	36	13	166
White	2,135	1,343	712	203	4,396
All ethnic groups	2,151	1,445	748	217	4,563
All					
Indian	4	17	119	73	212
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	1	8	71	24	104
West Indian	6	78	80	30	194
Other	12	58	125	39	234
All ethnic minorities	23	160	395	166	744
White	2,723	2,524	9,959	2,620	17,830
All ethnic groups	2,746	2,684	10,354	2,786	18,574

(b) Percentage of all households

Sex and ethnic group of head of household	*Single pensioner*	*Other single adult*	*Two adults*	*Three or more adults*	[1] *All*
Male					
Indian	1	3	60	37	100
Pakistan/Bangladeshi	1	3	72	24	100
West Indian	2	21	56	22	100
Other	2	15	63	21	100
All ethnic minorities	1	10	62	26	100
White	4	9	69	18	100
All ethnic groups	4	9	69	18	100
Female					
All ethnic minorities	10	61	22	8	100

Sex and ethnic group of head of household	Single pensioner	Other single adult	Two adults	Three or more adults	[1]All
White	49	31	16	5	100
All ethnic groups	47	32	16	5	100
All					
Indian	2	8	56	34	100
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	1	8	68	23	100
West Indian	3	40	41	15	100
Other	5	25	53	17	100
All ethnic minorities	3	22	53	22	100
White	15	14	56	15	100
All ethnic groups	15	14	56	15	100

[1] Includes a small number of households with no adults.

Source:—1988 Labour force Survey—estimates are subject to sampling error; and the sample of ethnic minority households with female heads is too small to provide the same breakdown as for male heads.

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Jonathan Moyle

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement about the death of Mr. Jonathan Moyle in Chile; whether any official of Her Majesty's Government has made a statement as to cause and nature of his death; and what representations Her Majesty's Government have received from Mr. Moyle's family.

The Prime Minister: The tragic death of Mr. Jonathan Moyle is under investigation by the Chilean authorities. Her Majesty's coroner for Exeter and East Devon has also opened an inquest. It would not therefore be appropriate for me to make a statement at this time. No official statement has been made by any Government Department or agency in London or by the British embassy in Santiago as to the cause of Mr. Moyle's death. Consular officials in London are in regular contact with Mr. Moyle's family.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what criteria have been used since October 1989 when separating papers relating to Mr. Wallace's case between 10 Downing street, the Ministry of Defence, the Home Office and the Northern Ireland Office.

The Prime Minister: Departments are given copies of relevant papers.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fair Employment

Rev. William McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the numbers of employees in each public organisation by the Fair Employment Agency's definition of Protestant and Roman Catholics in *(a)* the Omagh council area and *(b)* with a postcode BT79 for those companies or organisations on the fair employment register.

Mr. Needham: Of the 101 public authorities specified in the Fair Employment (Specification of Public Authorities) Order (NI) 1989, only two—Omagh district council and the Western education and library board—have registered addresses in Omagh. The number of employees in the former is 293 and in the latter 3,514.

The only public authorities with registered addresses with a postcode of BT79 are Omagh district council and the Western education and library board.

The Fair Employment Commission is not releasing information on community composition from individual monitoring returns at present.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to publish the Planning Appeals Commission's report on the public inquiry into the SIBEC (Scotland) Ltd., proposals for a shopping centre, food court and leisure facilities at Bloomfield road, Bangor; and if he will treat the matter as an issue of urgency.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Planning decisions on the applications submitted by SIBEC (Scotland) Ltd. were issued on 5 June 1990 and the report of the Planning Appeals Commission on the public inquiry is now available for public inspection or purchase. A copy of the report was sent to the hon. Gentleman for his information on 7 June.

Labour Statistics

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the present level of unemployment in Londonderry city; and what were the corresponding figures in 1969, 1972, 1979 and 1985.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

	Numbers
April 1990 (latest available)	7,588
April 1985	9,070

Similar information is not available prior to 1984.

"Making Belfast Work"

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a list of the names and addresses of groups which have received money under the "Making Belfast Work" initiative since it was set up and the corresponding amount given to each group in the relevant financial years.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* In view of the large amount of material to be collated, I will write to the hon. Member and place copies of the information in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Romania and Bulgaria

Mr. Thorne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what plans he has to visit Romania; and what steps are being taken to promote trading opportunities there;

(2) what plans he has to visit Bulgaria; and what steps are being taken to promote trading opportunities there.

Mr. Redwood: At present, my right hon. Friend has no plans to visit Romania or Bulgaria. My Department promotes United Kingdom trade with both countries by providing companies with information about economic conditions and about specific business opportunities; by using joint commissions and other official contacts to find out as much as we can about local economic policies and priorities; and to support British companies pursuing significant business. I myself led a delegation to Romania in February 1990, and senior officials have recently visited Bulgaria.

Additionally, in Bulgaria, we are supporting trade promotion events such as the Plovdiv autumn fair; and we would support similar events in Romania.

Waste Minimisation

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department has taken on waste minimisation in industry; how many staff are employed in this area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: Waste minimisation in industry is a key focus of my Department's environmental programme. In November 1989, the Department published a business guide to waste minimisation called "Cutting Your Losses". Some 29,000 copies of the booklet have been taken up so far. The Department and the Confederation of British Industry are currently running a series of regional seminars to inform businesses of the requirements of new legislation on waste and to promote waste minimisation.

The Department's environmental inquiry point at Warren Spring laboratory gives general advice to business on a range of environmental issues including waste minimisation; and smaller firms needing more detailed advice from consultants can receive assistance under the Department's consultancy initiatives. My Department is also assisting the development of new environmental technologies through a growing range of initiatives.

Separate figures for the amount of staff time devoted specifically to waste minimisation are not available, but the topic involves many members of the Department's environment task force and they also call upon assistance and advice, for example from the Department's research establishments and regional offices, as well as from external organisations.

Single Market

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give consideration to amending the terms of reference of the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the light of Britain's forthcoming membership of the single European market.

Mr. Redwood: The achievement of the single European market does not require changes in the statutory duties of the Director General of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The Fair Trading Act provisions allow the director and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to take account of competition from outside the United Kingdom—whether from in the Community or elsewhere—in looking at whether a merger would damage competition in the United Kingdom. Mergers with a Community dimension as defined by the EC merger control regulation will, from 21 September this year, be subject to examination by the European Commission. Under the regulation, mergers leading to or strengthening a dominant position and significantly impeding competition in the Common Market will be prohibited by the Commission. The director and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission will retain their important competition responsibilities within the United Kingdom, including responsibility for mergers outside the scope of the regulation.

Harrods Bank

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to hear from the Bank of England regarding Harrods bank.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend hopes to hear from the bank before long.

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on discussions between his Department and the Bank of England concerning the control of Harrods Bank Ltd.; and whether the Bank has been sent any recommendations for action since receiving the official investigation report in August 1988.

Mr. Redwood: My Department sent the report to the Bank of England in view of the Bank's regulatory responsibilities under the Banking Act.

It is for the bank alone to determine whether any action by it is required under that Act.

Financial Reporting Council

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the members of the Financial Reporting Council, together with other relevant information as to their experience, directorships and partnerships.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to his question on 5 June at column *435*.

City Regulation

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's latest assessment of the effectiveness of City regulation.

Mr. Redwood: Regulation of investment business is for the most part the responsibility of the Securities and Investments Board, which is the designated agency under the Financial Services Act 1986. Other aspects of City activity are regulated under other arrangements, such as

the Insurance Companies Act 1982 and the Banking Act 1987. I am generally satisfied with this regulatory structure.

Overseas Trade

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase the profitability of overseas trade; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: It is for individual companies to consider how best to increase their profitability.

Packaging

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to encourage industry to reduce the amount of packaging used for products.

Mr. Forth: The promotion of waste minimisation in general is a key focus of my Department's environmental programme. The need to minimise packaging and, where essential packaging is concerned, to use materials which lend themselves to recycling, is being promoted through my Department's participation in relevant seminars and conferences and through meetings with representatives from the packaging industry.

In March, my Department was co-organiser with the Institute of Metals of an international conference which discussed all aspects of the design of products so as to avoid harm to the environment, including the minimisation of packaging. An example of a product designed with reduced packaging in mind is included in the booklet "Design for the Environment", which my Department has produced with assistance from the Design Council.

Caravans

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure that all caravans meet fire safety standards.

Mr. Forth: The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations came into force, with respect to caravans, on 1 March 1990. Their enforcement is a matter for the trading standards departments of the local authorities, which have the necessary powers to inspect businesses selling caravans.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will estimate the cost to the caravan industry of complying with fire safety legislation in March 1990 instead of 1991.

Mr. Forth: The Department's cost compliance assessment of improving the fire safety in caravans by the introduction of the 1988 regulations estimated the cost to the industry to be between £3 million and £4 million per annum.

Public Safety

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department takes to ensure that correspondence with firms and trade associations relating to public safety is received and acknowledged.

Mr. Forth: Every effort is made to send prompt replies to all letters asking questions, seeking information or raising issues about product safety. The views of a wide range of trade associations, consumer bodies and representative organisations are sought by the Department on matters relating to product safety. These views are always taken into account but not all such correspondence requires an individual response. If the hon. Member is concerned about a specific case, perhaps he would let me have the details so that I can investigate the matter.

Bank Accounts

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress is being made on the implementation of the European Community's bank accounts directive.

Mr. Redwood: My Department intends to issue a consultative document before the recess inviting comments on draft regulations to implement the EC bank accounts directive. Copies will be placed in the Library.

The directive establishes common rules in relation to the content, valuation methods, audit and publication of the individual and consolidated accounts of banks and other financial institutions.

The consultative document will report on the responses to the consultative document issued on 31 July 1989, and will explain the decisions which have been taken on the scope of application of the directive and on the way in which the member state options it contains should be exercised. It will also explain that, in the light of the arguments presented in the responses to the consultative document issued last year, and the significant progress which has been made recently in the development of statements of recommended accounting practice (SORPs) and of an international accounting standard aimed at providing fuller disclosure in the accounts of banks and similar financial institutions, the Government have decided not to include disclosure requirements in the regulations which go beyond those in the directive but to leave the banking industry to develop its own response to the need for fuller disclosure. However, the consultative document will make it clear that, if there is undue delay in the preparation of appropriate SORPs, the option of legislating to impose such requirements will be reconsidered.

Iraq (Trade Losses)

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what has been the cost to public funds of payments made during the last three years to compensate creditors for losses in respect of trade to Iraq; and when the last such payment was actually made.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* I am replying to this question, since I believe that it relates to ECGD's operation.

It has been the policy of successive Governments not to publish details on individual countries arising from the operation of ECGD cover, not least since this could prejudice the position of the commercial parties involved.

Live Horses (Export)

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy insofar as his Department's responsibilities are concerned not to allow the export of live horses to Europe for slaughter to start again.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is not responsible for the live export of horses to Europe, which is a matter for the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Hunterprint

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the company Hunterprint had, or has outstanding, any printing contracts for work associated with privatisations by his Department since 1983.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* Hunterprint has not been engaged as primary contractors for printing but may have been used as a subcontractor on DTI privatisations. However, this information is not available within the Department and to obtain it would be at disproportionate cost.

Trade in Services

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the proposed GATT framework agreement on trade in services; when he expects the European Community to reach a common position on this matter; and whether the Commission is insisting on the inclusion of financial services in the agreement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The Government attach a high priority to achieving, as part of the GATT Uruguay round, an agreement which will extend GATT rules and discipline to trade in services. The United Kingdom and the European Community are aiming for a comprehensive agreement, covering all service sectors, including financial services.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Eastern Europe

Dr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the projects supported by the eastern Europe know-how fund to date.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) on 14 March at column *236*. The additional activities approved since then under the know-how fund are as follows:

Poland

- Consultancy assistance in advising on inward investment applications to the Foreign Investment Agency—£100,000.
- Four privatisation consultancies for the Privatisation Foundation—£1,600,000.
- Secondment of an accountant and secretary to the Privatisation Foundation—£112,000.
- Secondment of three expatriates to the Export Development Bank—£600,000.
- Audit studies of nine commercial banks—£200,000.
- Company doctor training for official and private sector participants—£350,000.
- Advanced corporate finance training for commercial bank staff—£15,000.
- Assistance with auditing standards and establishment of a professional body—£250,000.
- Advice on accountancy standards to the Accountancy Association of Poland—£15,000.
- Provision of accountancy books to university libraries and management training institutions—£275,000.
- Four workshops for accountants with particular reference to joint ventures—£137,000.
- Short-term industrial attachments with British companies in cooperation with the Confederation of British Industry—£270,000.
- Secondment of an adviser on financial markets to the Ministry of Finance—£100,000.
- Assistance to the Ministries of Industry and Finance for industrial restructuring—£300,000.
- Four consultancies in the energy sector looking at the economic restructuring of the hard coal, oil and gas, lignite and electricity sectors, and a study on gas pricing —£1,600,000.
- Management training for Polish railways—£150,000.

Hungary

- Secondment of two staff to the State Property Agency—£350,000.
- Management training course for the National Savings Bank—£55,000.
- Small enterprise development project managed by B'nai B'rith—£150,000.
- Short-term attachments by all 14 State Secretaries—£35,000.

Czechoslovakia

- Follow-up visit by Czechoslovak employment officials—£8,000.
- Seminar attended by Czechoslovak environmental officials —£13,000.
- Health workshops for Civil Forum and the Ministry of Health—£13,000.
- Study tour of Czechoslovak social security officials—£4,000.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Income Support

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answers of 6 June to the questions by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South on income support, what information is maintained at *(a)* national and *(b)* sub-national level on the numbers of, and expenditure on, people on income support living in private residential care.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information on all income support claimants is collected by way of quarterly and annual 1 per cent. samples of live cases in each local office. This method means that, for the small population of claimants in homes, reliable information is limited to numbers of claimants and expenditure at national level. Reliable data on claimant numbers at regional level can be obtained from averages of a number of quarterly surveys.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answers of 6 June to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South on severe disablement allowance, what information is maintained at *(a)* national and *(b)* sub-national level on numbers in receipt of the severe disablement allowance.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information on severe disablement allowance is maintained as follows:

A return is made every calendar month by each local office producing a figure comprising the number of claimants to the benefit and including those cases where final action is still outstanding although benefit has ceased. These figures are collated regionally and nationally.

Additional statistics based on a 1 per cent. sample of cases, are produced once a year for Great Britain and for standard statistical regions. Reliable figures cannot be produced for any smaller geographical area.

For completeness, pursuant to my reply on 6 June, I would add that information on recipients of the income support severe disability premium is maintained at a national and regional level.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 6 June to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South on attendance allowance, what information is maintained at *(a)* national and *(b)* sub-national level on the numbers in receipt of attendance allowance and payments from the independent living fund.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No information is maintained at *(a)* national and *(b)* sub-national level on numbers in receipt of both attendance allowance and payments from the independent living fund.

Pensions

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to be able to make a statement in the light of the outcome of the Barber case on pension ages, in the European Court.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 21 May at column 10.

Nuclear Test Veterans

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many nuclear test veterans have made claims for pensions; how many have been awarded; how many have been rejected; and how many are still under consideration.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Records show that 248 claims for war pension have been made by ex-service men, or the widows or dependants of ex-service men who participated in the United Kingdom nuclear weapons test programme. Most, but not all, of these were for disablement or death resulting from alleged exposure to ionising radiation. Fourteen claims are still under consideration. The war pensions scheme provides for pensions where there is reliable evidence which raises a reasonable doubt that a condition is caused or aggravated by service or that death was due to or substantially hastened by service. It is accepted that the evidence raises such a doubt in the case of participants who have contracted leukaemia (excluding chronic lymphatic leukaemia) or multiple myeloma. Two war disablement pensions and eight war widows' pensions have been awarded as a result.

Child Benefit

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be *(a)* the gross and *(b)* the net cost of raising child benefit in a full financial year in line with the rise in tax thresholds in between 1989-90 to 1990-91 uprated according to the statutory formula.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The costs would be about £345 million gross and £260 million net.

Repetitive Strain Injury

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on present policy towards compensation for repetitive strain injury; and what changes are being considered.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Two forms of upper limb disorder caused by repetitive movements are included in the list of prescribed diseases allowing entitlement to industrial injuries benefits:

Cramp of the hand or forearm due to repetitive movements—in any occupation involving prolonged periods of handwriting, typing or other repetitive movements of the fingers, hand or arm.

Traumatic inflammation of the tendons of the hand or forearm, or the associated tendon sheaths—in any occupation involving manual labour, or frequent or repeated movements of the hand or wrist.

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, who advise the Secretary of State on matters relating to the industrial injuries scheme, announced on 5 June a study to review all new evidence which has become available since 1986 on the occupational causation of upper limb disorders.

Family Benefits

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people are currently receiving family credit or income support in *(a)* Wales as a whole, *(b)* each county in Wales and *(c)* each district council area in Wales.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) on 18 May at column *568*. Income support information is only available by social security region, or for Wales as a whole. At November 1989, some 253,000 claimants in Wales were in receipt of income support.

Source: Quarterly statistical inquiry November 1989.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Research and Development

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will set out the procedures and criteria for deciding priorities when allocating funds for scientific and technological research and development in Europe.

Mr. Jackson: Funds from the science budget are not specifically allocated for the support of European scientific research. From the resources made available to them annually, however, research councils and other agencies expend substantial sums on collaborative research within Europe. Decisions on priorities will generally reflect the scientific judgments of those involved. In reaching decisions in individual cases account is likely to be taken of a range of factors including the added value likely to be achievable from particular collaborative arrangements; their complementarity to domestic research priorities; their scope for improving the quality of European science; the likelihood of technology transfer; the pursuit of research goals requiring study of trans-border issues; and the extent to which the costs and risks of large-scale investment may be shared.

Retirement (Ill Health)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many ill health retirements took place in maintained further and higher education for each academic year from September 1979 to August 1989, inclusive.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Teachers (Further Education)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many full-time teachers aged *(a)* less than 30 years, *(b)* 30 to 39 years, *(c)* 40 to 49 years, *(d)* 50 to 59 years and *(e)* 60 years and above were employed in maintained further and higher education for each academic year from September 1979 to August 1989, inclusive.

Mr. Jackson: The numbers and age distribution of full-time teachers in establishments of further and higher education maintained by local education authorities in England and Wales are given in the table.

January	*Total number*	*Percentage aged*				
		Under 30	*30 to 39*	*40 to 49*	*50 to 59*	*60 and over*
1980	77,941	7·1	30·6	33·4	24·7	4·2
1981	77,465	6·1	30·9	33·0	25·4	4·6
1982	77,378	5·6	31·4	32·7	25·7	4·6
1983	79,036	5·4	31·6	32·8	25·6	4·6
1984	79,852	5·2	31·1	33·4	25·7	4·6
1985	80,408	5·0	30·4	34·4	25·6	4·6
1986	80,288	4·9	30·2	34·9	25·7	4·3
1987	80,776	4·5	28·5	36·8	25·9	4·3
1988	82,167	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
1989	81,538	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]

[1] Not yet available.

Note: All figures include lecturers in establishments now funded by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council.

Building Programmes

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much public money has been spent in real terms on major building programmes in maintained further and higher education for each academic year from September 1979 to August 1989, inclusive.

Mr. Jackson: The information (by financial rather than academic year) is as follows:

Capital expenditure on maintained further and higher education (1979-80 prices)

	£ million
1979-80	82·2
1980-81	108·2
1981-82	76·4
1982-83	88·7
1983-84	84·4
1984-85	87·4
1985-86	88·5
1986-87	94·1
1987-88	73·5
1988-89	76·8

The figures refer to gross capital expenditure in England, and include expenditure from the urban programme.

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mrs. Rumbold: The studies conducted during the financial years 1986-87, 1987-88, 1988-89, 1989-90 were as follows:

1986-87
Arthur Young—Financial Management
Deloitte, Haskins and Sells—Audit Management

1987-88
CCTA—Education Information Study
Coopers and Lybrand—Financial Delegation to schools
Peat Marwick McClintock—Review of Inspection reports
Research Services—Undergraduate income and expenditure survey
Deloitte, Haskins and Sells—Financial Management advice and assistance to the UGC
Spicer and Pegler—Review of accounting procedures at one of the grant aided bodies

1988-89
Ernst Whinney—Management of HMI travelling and subsistence
Peat Marwick McClintock—Resource Management
ITS Ltd—Training review
Coopers Lybrand—Management framework
Deloitte, Haskins and Sells—Financial Management of UGC

1989-90
Peat Marwick McClintock—Financial management survey of SERC
Peat Marwick McClintock—Student loans
Price Waterhouse—Student loans
PAS Limited—Parent awareness survey

It is not possible to state the amount paid in respect of each consultancy without breach of commercial confidentiality. The total cost was £23,200 in 1986-87; £255,413 in 1987-88; £153,939 in 1988-89 and £332,502 in 1989-90. The results of these studies where appropriate have been implemented. Details of studies undertaken in previous years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Scientific Research

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether he intends to implement the recommendation of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils that higher education institutes should receive an

extra £259 million for additional equipment to support current scientific research and an extra £200 million for equipment to initiate new scientific research;

(2) what are his latest estimates of the cost of additional equipment necessary for higher education institutes to *(a)* support current levels of scientific research and *(b)* initiate new scientific research.

Mr. Jackson: The "Survey of Academic Research Equipment in the United Kingdom" commissioned by the Advisory Board for the Research Councils and published in November 1989 identified the equipment needs of universities and polytechnics. The advice which the ABRC offered my right hon. Friend last year on the Government's expenditure plans for the science budget took into account these needs.

The increases to the science budget announced on 15 November included substantial provision for expenditure on equipment in higher education institutions via the science budget, the UFC and the PCFC.

The funding requirements for the science base, including equipment needs, will of course be reviewed again in this year's survey in the usual way.

Governing Bodies

Mrs. Peacock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to repeat the survey on the composition of governing bodies; and how many business men or women without connections with the education world are members of governing bodies.

Mrs. Rumbold: The third in a series of surveys, currently being conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research, will provide further information about the composition of school governing bodies. The results will be available in the autumn. The second survey in the series, conducted last year, showed that over 40 per cent. of working governors, other than heads and elected teacher representatives, came from business or the professions.

John Ball School

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received concerning the judgment of the Court of Appeal in the case of Regina *v.* London Borough of Greenwich ex parte the governors of John Ball school.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations from local authorities following the judgment in the case to which my hon. Friend refers. These have been carefully considered.

Mr. Evenett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to introduce legislation to amend the Education Act 1980 in the light of the judgment in Regina *v.* London Borough of Greenwich ex parte the governors of John Ball school.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend is not at present contemplating a change in the law following the judgment in the case to which my hon. Friend refers.

Licensed and Articled Teachers

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the local education authorities participating in *(a)* the licensed teacher schemes and *(b)* the articled teacher schemes, with the number of trainees in every case, and the estimated cost per place, together with an estimate of the cost of training, by postgraduate, of certificate of education and bachelor of education route.

Mrs. Rumbold: Licensed teachers are appointed by local education authorities and schools to specific posts, and the nature and the cost of the training to be provided will depend on the needs of the individual teachers appointed.

The training costs of licensed teachers are eligible for support under the local education authorities training grants scheme. Table A lists the local education authorities which are to receive support for licensed teacher training and associated costs in the financial year 1990-91. The amount of eligible expenditure to be supported, the number of licensed teachers expected to be supported and the average training costs implied by this for the financial year are also shown in each case. However, local education authorities and schools may appoint licensed teachers beyond these.

Consortia of local education authorities and initial teacher training institutions were invited to submit bids to run articled teacher pilot schemes in June 1989. The number of places allocated to successful consortia is listed in table B, together with the participating local education authorities and the estimated costs per student.

The annual cost of PGCE and BEd places varies considerably from institution to institution. For the 1991-92 academic year the guide price for initial teacher training places applied by the UFC is £3,500, which includes the tuition fee but excludes any research costs. Institutions in the PCFC sector have been advised that, as an upper reference point, the mean unit of funding in 1990-91 is £1,950 and that they should assume that they will receive through the tuition fee £2,500 for a band 2 student (which includes PGCE students and some BEd students) and £1,675 for a band 1 student. Both the UFC and the PCFC sector figures exclude provision for student maintenance.

Table A

Local education authority	*(a) Training of licensed teachers*	*(b) Expected number licensed teachers*	*(c) Implied average training costs*[1]
Barnet	30,000	10	3,000
Bexley	37,100	10	3,710
Bromley	9,000	10	900
Ealing	48,400	10	4,840
Enfield	47,700	10	4,770
Haringey	72,000	14	5,142
Harrow	52,000	9	5,777

Local education authority	(a) Training of licensed teachers	(b) Expected number licensed teachers	(c) Implied average training costs[1]
Havering	31,000	10	3,100
Hillingdon	42,700	15	2,846
Hounslow	14,600	5	2,920
Kingston upon Thames	26,000	10	2,600
Merton	30,000	10	3,000
Newham	91,000	16	5,687
Redbridge	17,500	5	3,500
Richmond upon Thames	10,000	15	666
Sutton	28,000	6	4,666
Waltham Forest	58,000	11	5,272
Greenwich	13,000	20	650
Hackney	37,000	30	1,233
Hammersmith and Fulham	17,000	12	1,416
Islington	106,000	140	757
Kensington and Chelsea	30,000	10	3,000
Tower Hamlets	38,330	10	3,833
Wandsworth	31,500	20	1,575
Westminster	8,000	6	1,333
Coventry	31,800	7	4,542
Dudley	42,000	10	4,200
Sandwell	48,250	10	4,825
Bolton	3,000	1	3,000
Stockport	1,000	1	1,000
Bradford	20,500	5	4,100
Bedfordshire	35,000	10	3,500
Berkshire	30,000	10	3,000
Buckinghamshire	72,000	14	5,142
Cambridgeshire	27,360	6	4,560
Derbyshire	34,000	12	2,833
Devon	24,500	6	4,083
Dorset	20,000	6	3,333
Essex	162,000	25	6,480
Gloucestershire	30,330	10	3,033
Hereford and Worcester	6,000	2	3,000
Hertfordshire	93,000	32	2,906
Kent	120,000	35	3,428
Lancashire	30,000	10	3,000
Lincolnshire	40,600	20	2,030
North Yorkshire	24,000	15	1,600
Northamptonshire	138,000	25	5,520
Nottinghamshire	12,200	4	3,050
Oxfordshire	10,950	10	1,095
Somerset	28,400	6	4,733
Staffordshire	28,000	10	2,800
Surrey	50,000	16	3,125
West Sussex	10,000	3	3,333
Wiltshire	38,300	10	3,830

[1] (a) ÷ (b).

Bid area	Participating LEAs	Number of student places allocated	Annual cost per student excluding bursary (£)
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire Bedfordshire Hertfordshire	50	4,000
Hampshire	Hampshire West Sussex Isle of Wight	50	3,181
East London	Havering Tower Hamlets	34	4,681
Leeds	Leeds	50	4,810
Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire	16-20	4,655
Kent	Kent	50	1,747
Cheshire	Tameside	30-35	3,223
Devon	Devon	60	4,053
Humberside	Humberside	36	3,810
North East London	Newham Tower Hamlets	30	3,607
North London	Brent Islington Camden Hackney Enfield	50	1,210
South West London	Wandsworth Kensington and Chelsea Hillingdon Westminster Croydon Ealing	52	607
Warwickshire	Warwickshire Coventry Solihull	15	5,876
Central/ North London	Camden Hackney Harrow Islington	40	5,000

Bid area	Participating LEAs	Number of student places allocated	Annual cost per student excluding bursary (£)
Manchester	Oldham Rochdale Salford Wigan	50	4,983
Bristol	Gloucestershire Wiltshire	30	4,357

Notes:
1. Costs are incurred for two academic years.
2. Figures exclude institutional funding from the UFC and PCFC which will be based on 0·5 of a full-time equivalent place each year.
3. 65 per cent. of the costs will be met from the LEA Training Grants Scheme; the other 35 per cent. will come from LEAs.
4. The cost of the bursary per student, over the two year training period is £13,000 in London and £11,000 elsewhere.

Local Management of Schools

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many teachers in which local education authority areas have been declared redundant as a consequence of the introduction of local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not available. Where there have been reports of possible teacher redundancies, it is by no means clear that these would be solely a consequence of the introduction of local management of schools rather than a reflection of the constant process of adjustment that has always been necessary as the circumstances of individual schools change over time.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what data are collected by his Department about the consequences of local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department is collecting budget information for 1990-91 from statements prepared by each LEA under section 42 of the Education Reform Act. Information on actual expenditure in 1990-91 will also be collected from outturn statements, prepared under the same section. We are monitoring and reviewing all aspects of the effects of local management with the help of Her Majesty's inspectorate of schools.

Higher Education Expenditure

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was *(a)* recurrent and *(b)* capital spending by the Government on *(a)* universities, *(b)* polytechnics and *(c)* colleges of further education for each year since 1978-79 in (i) cash terms and (ii) real terms, indexed so that 1978-79 = 100.

Mr. Jackson *[holding reply 11 June 1990]:* The information for universities covered by the University Grants Committee and, from April 1989, by the Universtities Funding Council, is as follows (real terms figures are derived using the GDP deflator):

Financial year	Recurrent		Capital	
	Cash £'000s	Real terms	Cash £'000s	Real terms
1978-79	612,599	—	79,304	—
1979-80	741,190	634,622	101,370	86,795
1980-81	956,464	691,997	110,598	80,017
1981-82	982,335	647,316	116,308	76,642
1982-83	1,193,333	733,413	118,926	73,091
1983-84	1,240,179	728,217	117,616	69,063
1984-85	1,272,416	707,007	119,195	66,230
1985-86	1,302,752	691,686	132,688	70,450
1986-87	1,341,817	689,021	145,465	74,696
1987-88	1,490,175	726,267	144,106	70,233
1988-89	1,608,497	731,818	157,457	71,638
1989-90	1,711,604	726,968	179,247	76,131

It is not possible to disaggregate from other local education authority expenditure that element which represents recurrent or capital expenditure on colleges of further education or polytechnics which were or are funded by local authorities.

WALES

Beef

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received about the need for direct governmental assistance towards additional promotion of the sale of beef; and what has been his Department's response.

Mr. David Hunt: This issue was discussed at a recent meeting between the Farmers Union of Wales and my Department.

Promotion of the sale of beef is a matter for the Meat and Livestock Commission, whose promotional activities are supported by the industry itself.

Housing Improvement Grants

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on what date he sent to local authorities in Wales draft application forms for housing improvement grants under the new legislation which comes into force on 1 July; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Application forms for the new renovation grant regime are included in the Application for Grant (Prescribed Forms and Particulars) Regulations 1990, which will be laid before the House shortly. Copies will be placed in the Library and will be sent to all housing authorities.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many letters he has received concerning the poll tax since its introduction in April; and how many of these have been *(a)* in support of and *(b)* opposed to the new system.

Mr. David Hunt: Between 1 April and 8 June 339 letters have been received from members of the public and 239 letters from hon. Members on behalf of constituents. These have covered a wide range of issues concerning the community charge. Many have sought information or explanation about particular aspects of the new arrangements as they affect individuals. No meaningful analysis along the lines requested by the hon. Gentleman can be provided.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he has taken to advertise in the press in Wales

the method of transitional relief operational in Wales for poll tax payers, and to counteract the incorrect impression given by advertisements placed in English newspapers, relating to the different transitional relief system operational only in England.

Mr. David Hunt: No Government advertisements have conveyed an incorrect impression of the Welsh transitional relief scheme. In Wales transitional relief does not have to be claimed. The appropriate reductions have been made by the local authorities concerned.

School Meals

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many and what percentage of children took school meals in 1989; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the number and percentage of free school meals provided; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: In September 1988, the latest year for which information is available, the number and percentage of pupils provided with school meals in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in Wales were as follows:

	Pupils
Number of pupils provided with free school meals	59,802
as a percentage of all pupils on roll	14·6
Total number of pupils taking school meals	213,341
as a percentage of all pupils on roll	52·0

Local education authorities are empowered to provide at their discretion refreshment and facilities for the consumption of refreshments in the middle of the day for pupils in schools maintained by them. The Social Security Act 1986 requires that pupils whose parents are or who themselves are in receipt of income support should receive such provision free of charge.

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average price of a school meal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: The average price of school meals in primary schools in September 1989 was 68p. It is not possible to give a figure for secondary schools as most operate a cash cafeteria system.

Coed Mawr Site, Bangor

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether proceeds from the sale of the Coed Mawr offices site at Bangor are included in the former financial plans of Gwynedd health authority.

Mr. Grist: No.

Arthritis

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the number of arthritis sufferers in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is not available centrally.

Rheumatologists

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many rheumatologists are employed by each of the health authorities in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Grist: The information which relates to consultants with a main specialty of rheumatology is given in the table:

Numbers of consultants in post

Health Authority	*Whole time equivalent*
Clwyd	0·9
East Dyfed	0·1
Gwent	—
Gwynedd	—
Mid Glamorgan	2·0
Pembrokeshire	—
Powys	—
South Glamorgan	2·5
West Glamorgan	2·0
Wales	[1]7·5

[1]Provisional figures for September 1989.

The level of staff and resources for rheumatology services in Wales is an operational matter for the district health authorities to determine.

Job Creation, Fishguard

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what special measures he intends taking to create jobs in the Fishguard, Pembrokeshire area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: There already exists a range of measures which are helping to reduce unemployment and create jobs in the Fishguard area. The fact that unemployment in the Fishguard travel-to-work area fell by 122—two percentage points—in the year to April 1990 is evidence that this policy is working.

Bypasses

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many bypasses in Wales are currently under construction; how many further ones are planned before the year 2000; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: Seven are under construction and 25 planned schemes are included in "Roads in Wales: Progress and Plans for the 1990s". Bypass schemes identified as a result of route studies are likely to be added to the forward programme.

Beach Pollution

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities in Wales have the resources to maintain up-to-date information on pollution levels on beaches in Wales.

Mr. Grist: Provision is made for local government's environmental protection responsibilities in the annual local authority revenue settlements and is thus reflected in standard spending assessments for revenue support grant purposes.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to arrange the display of information on beaches in Wales to show accurately the level of pollution recorded for such beaches.

Mr. Grist: Although it is for local authorities to determine whether and how to display information on bathing waters, we shall be encouraging them to make the information more readily accessible.

Ophthalmic Clinics

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many attendances at ophthalmic clinics were recorded in the last quarter of 1989 in each district health authority area in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The total ophthalmology out-patient attendances recorded in NHS hospitals is given in table:

Total attendances during quarter ended December 1989

Health authority	*Number*
Clwyd	7,565
East Dyfed	5,072
Gwent	6,111
Gwynedd	4,564
Mid Glamorgan	7,483
Pembrokeshire	1,685
Powys	690
South Glamorgan	7,710
West Glamorgan	6,556

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many children aged under 16 years received free eye tests in Wales *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mr. Grist: The data requested were not collected centrally prior to 1 April 1989, since when they have been collected on a six-monthly basis.

The available information is given in the table.

Estimated[1] number of sight tests paid for by family practitioner committees

Six months ending:	*Children aged under 16*
30 September 1989	36,680
31 March 1990	41,950

[1] Estimates based upon a 2 per cent. sample of all such sight tests.

Teachers

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his parliamentary answer of 5 June, *Official Report*, column *454*, regarding teacher wastage, if he will provide, in a form similar to table 1, information on wastage among teachers of Welsh.

Mr. Roberts: Information on teacher wastage by subject taught is not available.

Youth Training

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will list those managing organisations of youth training schemes in Wales which submitted proposals for the future development of youth training in response to the request last year by the Training Agency in Wales.

Mr. Roberts *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The following organisations submitted proposals to the Training Agency for schemes under the new youth training arrangements.

South Glamorgan
Glamorgan Counties GTA
Focal Development
Post Office Counters
Resource UK
Atlantic College
Royal Mail Letters
Neway
Vale of Glamorgan Training Agency
TDS
Link (Wales) Ltd.
Howells
Cardiff ITEC
AMS
Albertos
Cardiff Inner City Initiative
JHP Training
Metcon
HCTB
South Glamorgan Area Health Authority
Cardiff City Council
South Glamorgan County Council
Beacon Training
Bros. Constantinou
CITS
ACE
Cardiff Group Training Consort

West Wales
Neath Borough CTA
Neath College
Link Wales
Kenyons Ltd.
Ford Motor Company
Link Services
Neath ITEC
Work Skills Training
Port Talbot YOC
British Steel Corporation
West Glamorgan CC
Indent
Swansea City Council
STACS
Swansea ITEC
BEVIS
ACO
David Evans
Post Office
Neath Borough CTA (Initial Training)
Swansea City Council (Initial Training)
Cardiff GTA (Initial Training)
Glamorgan Counties GTA
WDA
Llynfi Training Workshop
DVLA
Llanelli TA
British Steel (Tinplate)
Acclaim
East Dyfed ITEC
St Teilo
Dinefwr Borough Council
European Profiles Ltd.
Focal
HCTB
Preseli District Council
Nayland Training Initiative
Dyfed County Council
Carmarthenshire and Wales Game Farm
Mainport
West Dyfed ITEC
LTA (Initial Training)
Nacro (Aberystwyth) Initial Training
Community Industry
Nayland Training Initiative (Initial Training)

Luton and Dunstable
Mid Wales Development
Post Office Counters
Welsh Water Authority
Resource UK Ltd.
Post Office Counters (N Wales)
BP Chemicals

Gwent

Beacon Training
ICI Fibres
Lucas Girling
Michael Carter
Focal Development
Heads of Valleys GTA
Islwyn BC
Victoria Training
Agency for Caring Environments
Lloyds British
Borough of Torfaen
Alfred Teves
British Alcan
HCTB
Pill Enterprise Project
CITS
CITS Youth in Business
CITS Initial Training
Crosskeys College of FE
Gwent-Train
Newport College of FE
USK College of Agriculture
JHP Training
Michael J. Smith Associates
BSC Panteg
Glamorgan Counties Training Services
Training Development Services
AMS
Royal Mail Letters
Link Organisation
RO Glascoed
Saunders Valve
South Wales Switchgear
Resource U.K.
Arrow Training
BSC Orb
BSC Llanwern
BSC Tinplate
Blaenau Gwent BC
Blaenau Gwent ITEC
Monmouth BC
Newport Training Services
Gwent Training Ltd.
Newport and District GTA
Ebbw Vale College of FE
Gwent CC Planning Department
Pontypool College of FE
Post Office Counters
Crosskeys College of FE Initial Training
Alberto Education Centre
Gwent Skillcentre

North West Wales

Penyffridd
Ynys Môn Borough Council
Gwynedd Health Authority
Arfon Borough Council
Community Industry
Llandrillo CFE
Vale of Clwyd ITEC
University College of North Wales
North Wales Training Agency
Post Office
Gwynedd CC Agriculture
Gwynedd CC Multi Route including ITEC
Hotpoint
Anglesey Training
Penrhyn Quarry
Arfon/Dwyfor
Mid Wales Training
Skills Development Agency
NECTA
Mid and North Wales Training Group
Coleg Pencraig
Northop College of Horticulture
Clwyd Training

North East Wales

British Steel Corporation
British Aerospace PLC
Skills Development Agency
C and M Training (UK) Ltd.
NECTA
Air Products Ltd.
Llysfast College
Clwyd Training
Delyn Business Partnership
Northop College of Horticulture
Wrexham Training
NEWI
Clwyd County Council
Wrexham ITEC
Deeside ITEC (now merged with NEWI)
Iceland frozen foods (contract now with NTP unit Moorfoot)
BICC
Commercial Consultants Europe Ltd.
Mid and North Wales Training Group
Tamic Institute

Powys

Laura Ashley
Coleg Powys
Mid and North Wales Training Group
Powys Training
Mid Wales Training
Ministry of Defence
Welsh Water Authority
WSJ Training Ltd.

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate his Department has of the number of young people, under the youth training scheme, pursuing training in *(a)* engineering, *(b)* advanced motor vehicle maintenance and *(c)* science in 1989; and how many young people are expected to pursue such courses in the year following the issuing of new contracts for managing organisations in Wales.

Mr. Roberts *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The Training Agency's estimates are set out in the following table:

TEC area	*Engineering*		*Motor vehicle trades*		*Science*	
	Filled places YTS at 30 March 1990	*YT contract*	*Filled places YTS at 30 March 1990*	*YT contract*	*Filled places YTS at 30 March 1990*	*YT contract*
Mid Glamorgan	1,107	1,262	303	237	0	0
South Glamorgan	165	222	221	293	23	23
West Wales	591	555	464	471	29	11
Powys	60	59	62	72	3	21
North East Wales	459	404	120	178	10	76
North West Wales	192	116	159	179	11	55
Gwent	376	452	215	314	2	132

Notes:

1. Figure for Mid, South Glamorgan and West Wales are based on Training Occupational Classifications (TOCs) throughout.
2. Figures for Gwent, Powys, NE Wales and NW Wales based on TOCs for occupancy at 31 March 1990 and Standard Occupational Classifications (SOCs) for YT contracted places.
3. Specific information on Advance Motor Vehicle Maintenance is not held, but Training Agency Area Offices confirm that demand for training at this level can be met through the network of providers contracted for Youth Training.

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate his Department has of *(a)* the expenditure on youth training in (i) 1988-89, (ii) 1989-90, (iii) 1990-91, (iv) 1991-92 and (v) 1992-93, *(b)* the number of school leavers aged 16 and 17 years entering the market, *(c)* the numbers joining YTS or YT and *(d)* the gross public cost in pounds per trainee week, in each of those years.

Mr. Roberts *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* Expenditure on youth training in Wales for 1988-89 and 1989-90 in respect of those places contracted by YTS providers with local area offices was £52·610 million and £50·746 million respectively. Additionally, it is estimated that a further £10 million of expenditure per year is spent on youth training in Wales through the Training Agency's national providers unit which contracts with large companies with outlets throughout the United Kingdom. For 1990-91 planned expenditure in respect of those places contracted by YT providers with local area offices is £45·750 million. Figures are not available for future years.

The number of 16 and 17-year-olds leaving school in Wales in the school years 1988-89 and 1989-90 was 30,200 and 29,000 respectively. For future school years, the estimate is 28,000 in 1990-91, 26,900 in 1991-92 and 26,500 in 1992-93. These figures refer to all school leavers and not just those entering the labour market, for whom separate figures are not available.

The numbers joining YTS in the 1988-89 and 1989-90 financial years was 18,758 and 17,781 respectively. For 1990-91, the provisional estimate for those entering youth training is 17,300. No figures are available for future financial years.

Figures on the gross public cost in pounds per trainee week are not available for Wales. Figures for Great Britain for the financial years 1988-89 and 1989-90 were £49 and £50 respectively. For future years the Great Britain estimate is £42 for 1990-91, £37 for 1991-92 and £33 for 1992-93.

HEALTH

Blood Products

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the first known sero-conversion to HIV took place in a person with haemophilia as a result of using English factor concentrates.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not available centrally. The routine reporting of HIV infection in haemophiliacs to the public health laboratory service communicable diseases surveillance centre does not cover the country of origin of factor concentrate.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of factor VIII concentrates were imported into the United Kingdom from United States-based pharmaceutical companies each year between 1979 and 1985 and the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will list the pharmaceutical companies involved, along with their share of the market.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not held centrally.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list all known forms of disease and infection which his medical and scientific advisers consider may have some connection with toxic waste incineration, and in particular relating to all forms of dioxins which may be created by the incineration process.

Mr. Dorrell: Emissions of toxic compounds, including dioxins, from hazardous waste incinerators, are restricted to levels well below that which might be expected to cause harmful effects. Studies conducted in the United Kingdom have found no evidence of an unusual incidence of disease around such incinerators, nor is there evidence that human disease or infection has resulted from dioxins arising from the process of toxic waste incineration.

The independent expert Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products, and the Environment (COT) reviewed the extensive toxicity data on dioxins, and this review was published in "Dioxins in the Environment", (pollution paper No. 27 1989), a copy of which is available in the Library. The report describes a range of effects, such as chloracne, following massive accidental dioxins exposures, as well as those described in animal experiments using high exposures over a long period of time.

The COT noted that the available data on the toxic effects of dioxins in human health are, on the whole, reassuring. However, the COT recommended action to identify sources and control emissions of dioxins, in order to reduce human exposure. The Government have therefore extended rigorous controls, on combustion conditions and emissions, to all incinerators, which should reduce dioxin emissions from such sources by up to 90 per cent.

Distinction Awards

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply of 23 April, *Official Report*, column *28*, what is the salary of the chairman of the Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards; and if he will give a breakdown of the committee members' expenses; what are the number of consultants who hold awards,, and the number of consultant obstetricians or paediatricians who have held awards in the North West Durham health authority since the advent of medical and management audit; and how often the chairman and vice-chairman of the Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards have met those consultants who do not hold awards.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I regret that the figure given for committee members' expenses was incorrect in my reply to the hon. Member on 23 April at column *28*. The correct figure for the year ended 31 March 1989 is £15,552. This is broken down as follows:

	£
Overnight subsistence, travel, miscellaneous expenses for the visits by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to the 15 Regional Committees	4,102
Chairman's secretarial expenses	2,976
Travelling expenses of members of the Advisory Committee	164
Subsistence and travel of members of the 15 Regional C awards and higher awards Committees, and of the Dental Sub-Committee	8,310

The salary of the chairman of the Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards was £11,990 in 1988-89. Following a review of the responsibilities of the post, the salary was increased to £21,450 in 1989-90.

In England and Wales 5,698 consultants currently hold a distinction award. As previously stated, statistics on awards by district health authority are not maintained centrally.

About 11,000 consultants do not hold an award. It would not be practicable for the chairman and vice-chairman to meet non-award holders collectively or individually. However, it is open to any consultant to submit a case for an award to the chairman or relevant regional committee.

Clinical Standards Advisory Group

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from which quarters he will draw his appointments for members of the clinical standards advisory group.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Membership of the group will be from nominations made by medical, midwifery and nursing royal colleges.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the intended role of the clinical standards advisory group; and what is his Department's definition of the term clinical in this instance.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is described in the Government's amendment No. 198 to the National Health Service and Community Care Bill debated in another place on Tuesday 12 June at columns 245-46.

Medical Services, North-East Thames

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will call for a report from the North East Thames regional medical advisory committee about reductions in medical services caused by financial pressures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: I understand that North East Thames regional health authority is working with the regional medical advisory committee to consider the current provision of medical services across the region.

Multiple Births

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will indicate the number of *(a)* twin, *(b)* triplet, *(c)* quadruplet and *(d)* quintuplet pregnancies occurring through (i) IVF, (ii) GIFT and (iii) other forms of assisted reproduction during 1989.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The figures requested are not available for 1989. Data relating to multiple pregnancies following IVF treatment and GIFT for earlier years are given in the annual reports of the Interim Licensing Authority (copies of which are available in the Library) which was set up jointly by the Medical Research Council and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Serious Illness

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to investigate ways in which the families of individuals who are seriously ill can be given better financial security.

Mr. Dorrell: Life-threatening illnesses vary greatly in the speed with which they need to be treated in order to avert the threat. The National Health Service is founded on the principle that help should be given most rapidly to those patients whose condition requires the earliest clinical intervention. That will always be its objective.

Population Density

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current population density in thousands per square mile for each of the English district health authorities.

Mr. Dorrell: The latest available population estimates for district health authorities, relating to mid-1988, have been published in OPCS monitor PPI 89/1 (revised), a copy of which is available in the Library. Information about the area of each authority is not kept centrally.

Disability

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has had from the North Regional Association for the Blind; what reply he is sending; if there is any action he will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department has received a letter from the association suggesting that ophthalmologists may no longer be eligible for a fee for examining blind and partially sighted people for the purposes of registration with the local authority. This suggestion is wholly unfounded. There has been no change in the terms and conditions for payment of this fee. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will respond to the association shortly.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations the Minister of State has received from Crossroads Care; what replies he is sending; if there is any action he will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have received a number of letters about the future role of Crossroads care schemes in the light of community care proposals. We have a high regard for the work of the organisation, whose central administrative costs we fund at the level of £80,000 a year. We anticipate that Crossroads will continue to make an important contribution in the years ahead.

Ambulance Dispute

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many appreciation certificates were issued by South West Thames regional health authority in respect of the ambulance dispute; to whom were they issued; and how much they cost.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This is a matter for the South West Thames regional health authority. The hon. Member way wish to contact the chairman, Baroness Cumberlege, for the information he requires.

Social Workers

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to improve social service workers' knowledge of social work law.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work receives funding from the Department for a programme of improvements in social work training. This currently includes a project aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning of relevant law. This includes the definition and assessment of legal competence in a social work practitioner, and the elaboration of the CCETSW's requirements in relation to the law for all social work courses, particularly the new diploma in social work programmes. In addition the CCETSW's routine approval and monitoring of qualifying courses pays particular attention to the teaching of law.

Leukaemia

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking in respect of its Leukaemia Research Fund's report entitled "Leukaemia and Lymphoma: an Atlas of Distribution in parts of England and Wales", a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: We have received from the independent Leukaemia Research Fund its report entitled "Leukaemia and Lymphoma: an Atlas of Distribution in parts of England and Wales", and we have given copies to members of the expert independent Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment for information. COMARE will no doubt wish to take account of this database, together with other relevant epidemiological studies, in pursuing the programme of work outlined by my hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, South (Mr. Yeo) on 10 January at columns *662-63*.

Milk

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on the present retail market share of various infant milk formulations; and if he will distinguish separately those using products containing soya, giving their aluminium content.

Mr. Curry: I have been asked to reply.

Soya-based infant formulae have been analysed for aluminium content by my Department. The content was in the range of 0·64–1·34 mg/litre, with a mean of 0·98 mg/litre. These results, which have been published in the scientific literature, are similar to those reported by other research workers. It is not our policy to disclose information by brand name. The Department of Health's independent Committee on the Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment has considered this Department's results and has advised that no action is needed to reduce aluminium from infant formulae.

HIV

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each health authority in England, the number of persons infected with HIV; and if he will separately distinguish these numbers by age.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The number of reports of cases of HIV infection to 31 March 1990 is 11,638. The following table shows the totals reported by age and health authority to the Public Health Laboratory Service communicable diseases surveillance centre. In line with the procedure followed in reports under the AIDS (Control) Act, and to safeguard confidentiality, actual figures in the range of one to nine diagnosed in individual regional health authorities are not published. These are indicated by [1]—.

Age distribution of reported HIV infections
Cumulative to 31 March 1900
Age group is as at when first tested positive

Regional health authority	*Age group*					
	0–14	*15–24*	*25–34*	*35–44*	*45+*	*Not known*
Northern	12	42	113	43	22	101
Yorkshire	17	78	137	83	28	13
Trent	[1]—	91	150	65	37	10
East Anglia	[1]—	25	66	37	30	24
North West Thames	29	504	1,378	872	358	932
North East Thames	32	329	795	485	238	384
South East Thames	37	263	547	276	142	169
South West Thames	11	55	130	67	53	21
Wessex	[1]—	63	96	53	36	36
Oxford	[1]—	79	136	55	32	56
South Western	[1]—	67	108	52	30	12
West Midlands	33	93	100	79	40	69
Mersey	17	29	56	36	17	22
North Western	31	165	314	155	70	12
Channel Islands	[1]—	[1]—	10	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—

Regional health authority	Age group 0–14	15–24	25–34	35–44	45+	Not known
TOTAL (ENGLAND)						11,638

[1] To safeguard confidentiality, actual figures in the range of one to nine diagnosed in individual regional health authorities are not published.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give a breakdown by regional health authority area of the incidence of confirmed cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease for each of the last 30 years.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* Accurate information on numbers of cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is not at present available. The study to be conducted by Dr. R. G. Will, with support from the Department of Health, will attempt to gather together this information from the recent past, as well as making arrangements to collect it in future.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Beith: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many prayers relating to statutory instruments which have been tabled during the current Session have not so far been debated either on the Floor of the House or in Committee and how many of these undebated prayers have been the subject of representations seeking that they should be debated, including representations by letter and by means of a business question.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Up to and including Tuesday 5 June 1990, 127 prayers relating to statutory instruments had been tabled this Session. (This total does not include motions to similar effect relating to S.I.s and other laid papers, eg motions for disapproval, withdrawal, revocation or that drafts be not made in the form submitted.) Fourteen instruments with prayers against them have been debated on the Floor of the House, and 11 have been debated in Standing Committee. Two revocation motions relating to previously prayed against instruments have been taken on the Floor of the House, one such instrument has been debated in Standing Committee and one stands referred to a Committee. (In addition, one instrument stands referred to a Standing Committee under a revocation motion and a business motion, although it had not previously been prayed against.)

It is not possible separately to identify how many undebated prayers have been the subject of representations without incurring disproportionate costs.

Vote Bundle

Mr. Allen: To ask the Lord President of the Council what saving he estimates would be made to public funds if written and oral questions were not reprinted in the Vote bundle after appearing for the first time.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is estimated that savings to public funds of between £1 million and £2 million could arise. It is not possible to be more precise, since a radical change of this nature would require a fundamental review of how the relatively fixed costs of HMSO's parliamentary press are recovered in the pricing of various documents produced for the House.

ENERGY

Spent Magnox Fuel

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will make a statement on the safety assessment of the storage of Magnox spent fuel in ponds at Sellafield;

(2) what recent assessment he has made of the safety and appropriateness of storage in ponds of spent Magnox fuel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The safe storage of spent Magnox fuel, at nuclear licensed sites, is a matter for the site operators who must satisfy the licensing requirements of the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate.

The NII carries out regular inspections of the storage facilities. Arrangements to ensure their safety include the provision of safety assessment cases by the operator for review by the NII.

With regard to Sellafield, the NII reviewed and was satisfied with the safety assessment case prepared by British Nuclear Fuels plc for the Magnox storage facilities in the new fuel handling plant (B311) before it became operational in 1988. The most recent safety case for the older storage pond (B30) was received by the NII at the end of 1989 and is currently being assessed.

Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what publications, and in what numbers, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority has produced for educational distribution on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in preparation for the nuclear non-proliferation treaty fourth review conference in August and September of the current year.

Mr. Baldry: I am not aware of any such publications.

Nuclear Materials

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has agreed the criteria adopted by the safeguards authorities of the International Atomic Energy Agency to define significant quantities of nuclear materials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The definition of a significant quantity of a particular nuclear material is given in paragraph 107 of the IAEA safeguards glossary 1987 edition [Ref. IAEA/SG/INF/1 (Rev.1)], a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. This definition is accepted by the member states of the IAEA, including the United Kingdom.

Radioactive Waste Storage (Sellafield)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what countries currently have contracts with British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. for the storage of radioactive waste at Sellafield.

Mr. Baldry: British Nuclear Fuels plc does not have contracts purely to store radioactive waste. BNFL has contracts to reprocess spent fuel from overseas utilities in Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Since 1976, BNFL's overseas reprocessing contracts have contained options for the return of wastes arising. The Government intend that such options should be exercised and that wastes should be returned.

Rural Electricity Supplies

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what grant or other aid is available for rural householders or farmers seeking to have a main electricity supply installed.

Mr. Baldry: I do not believe that arrangements for rural supplies require financial assistance by the Government.

Under the new arrangements for post privatisation those requesting a supply do have the right of appeal to the director general if they feel that connection costs quoted by a supply company are unreasonable.

Plutonium

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the isotopic composition of the Central Electricity Generating Board/South of Scotland Electricity Board origin plutonium sold, or currently leased, by Nuclear Electric or Scottish Nuclear to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority for fast reactor research and development since 1969.

Mr. Baldry: The plutonium supplied to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority by the utilities for the fast reactor research and development programme is mostly plutonium 239 in a variety of concentrations up to 80 per cent.

Insulation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his answer of 5 June, *Official Report*, column *409*, if he will give the appropriate figures for the savings in *(a)* gas and *(b)* solid fuels (i) in absolute terms and (ii) as percentages of total consumption if the same range of insulation measures were applied.

Mr. Peter Morrison: If all cost-effective insulation measures (as listed in my answer to the hon. Member on 12 June) were applied to the United Kingdom housing stock, a saving of 272·1 PJ of gas and 64·8 PJ of solid fuel might be achieved. This represents approximately 14 per cent. of the gas and a similar proportion of the solid fuel consumed under boilers, kilns and furnaces and in other heating appliances in the United Kingdom.

As indicated in my response of 5 June, householders are likely to opt, at least in part, for greater warmth rather than simply saving energy.

Offshore Supplies Office

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will clarify the role of the offshore supplies office post-1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: After 1992, the Offshore Supplies Office will be responsible for ensuring fair opportunity for the United Kingdom offshore supplies industry in the home, European and overseas markets. It will continue to support the development of new technology on the United Kingdom continental shelf and promote United Kingdom exports to international oil and gasfield markets.

DEFENCE

Nuclear Non-proliferation

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what specific actions have been taken by the United Kingdom in pursuit of its obligations under article VI of the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have been asked to reply.

We and our NATO allies fully support negotiations aimed at balanced and verifiable arms control agreements, which aim to enhance security at lower levels of forces. We are currently involved in negotiations aimed at reducing conventional forces in Europe, and welcome the prospect of a START agreement between the United States and Soviet Union.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action Her Majesty's Government have taken since 1985 to reduce their stocks of nuclear weapons in accordance with the provisions of the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Since the United States and Soviet Union possess between them the majority of nuclear weapons, prime negotiating responsibility falls to them. We fully support their efforts to secure a START agreement and welcome the progress made at the recent Washington summit.

Low Flying

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-flying sorties at less than 250 ft have been authorised over the United Kingdom in each year since 1985.

Mr. Neubert: In 1989 the number of movements authorised for flying below 250 ft within tactical training areas was as follows:

Tactical training area	*Operational low flying movements*	*Number of days on which operational low flying was authorised*
Northern Scotland	817	129
Central Wales	89	105
Borders	1,788	157

Figures for sorties that have been flown below 250 ft are not available, but figures for movements for previous years have been given in the replies given by my hon. Friend the Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman) to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) on 30 October 1987 at column *487* and on 20 January 1988 at columns *764-65*, and in the answer that I gave the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on 25 May 1989 at columns *732-33*.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the maximum permitted number of aircraft in a formation during low-flying training at less than 250 ft in each of the three tactical training areas.

Mr. Neubert: The number of aircraft in a tactical formation at low level is determined by aircraft role and the type of exercise being carried out. However, formations do not normally consist of more than eight aircraft.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the authorised low-flying movements below 250 ft over the United Kingdom in each of the years from 1985 to 1989 consisted of continuation training sorties to maintain aircrew currency in flying at less than 250 ft, as opposed to work-up training for specific Flag exercises in north America.

Mr. Neubert: I regret the information requested is not readily available and could not be provided without disproportionate effort.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the forthcoming survey of noise levels from low-flying military aircraft to be conducted; and at what location the survey will be held.

Mr. Neubert: A trial is currently being conducted at the Royal Aerospace Establishment West Freugh range to obtain further information on noise levels generated by military aircraft at low level and, weather permitting, will be completed during this month. Following evaluation of the data, the results of the study are expected to be available early next year.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the lateral radius, expressed in nautical miles, of the avoidance areas around noise-sensitive sites in tactical training areas.

Mr. Neubert: Avoidance criteria adopted in any case will depend on the site concerned.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what purposes RAF C-130 Hercules aircraft undertake low flying; and under what circumstances they receive clearance to fly between 100 and 250 feet.

Mr. Neubert: The tactical transport role of the RAF C-130 Hercules aircraft requires it to be capable of operating in a potentially hostile environment at low level. Aircraft may be cleared to fly at under 250 ft in the United Kingdom to undertake training in the three tactical training areas or to carry out free-drop training on designated drop zones in military danger areas.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many flights in the United Kingdom low-flying system were undertaken during the years 1987, 1988 and 1989 by *(a)* RAF C-130 Hercules, *(b)* USAF C-130 Hercules, *(c)* USAF C-141 Starlifter and *(d)* USAF C-5 Galaxy; and how many of these flights for each of those years were in areas 14, 14T, 14C, 16 and 20T of the low-flying system.

Mr. Neubert: The information requested is not readily available and could not be provided without disproportionate cost and effort.

Air Force Exercises

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what Royal Air Force participation is planned in exercises (1) Green Flag 90-4 and (2) Red Flag 90-5; how many and what types of RAF aircraft will take part; and how many work-up training sorties will be conducted in the United Kingdom in preparation for these exercises;

(2) what joint work-up training between French air force and Royal Air Force Jaguar units took place in Britain prior to the French participation in exercise Red Flag 90-3.

Mr. Neubert: None.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the planned dates and locations of the main United Kingdom air activity for exercises *(a)* Central Enterprise, *(b)* Mallet Blow, *(c)* OSEX, *(d)* Salty Hammer and *(e)* Elder Joust, during 1990.

Mr. Neubert: The information requested is as follows:

Exercise	*Dates*	*Locations*
(a) Central Enterprise	18-22 June 1990	No significant activity in the United Kingdom
(b) Mallet Blow	26-30 March and 30 July—3 August 1990.	North England and Borders
(c) OSEX	9-13 July 1990	Mid and North Wales, North Lancashire and South Cumbria
(d) Salty Hammer	22 May 1990	North England and South Scotland
(e) Elder Joust	2-3 October 1990	East Scotland and North and East England

There are some minor variations against the planned dates given to the hon. Member on 3 April (columns *595-98.*)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations have been made to the United States authorities *(a)* to relax the minimum height restrictions for sorties in the first two days of Red/Green Flag exercises in respect of Royal Air Force aircrew already qualified to fly at 100 ft and *(b)* to relax the regulation prohibiting offensive or defensive manoeuvring below 300 ft for Royal Air Force aircraft participating in Red or Green Flag exercises.

Mr. Neubert: None.

RAF Combat Training

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on future policy on realistic combat training for Royal Air Force strike/attack units following the recent NATO decision to abandon plans for a tactical fighter training centre.

Mr. Neubert: Following the decision by NATO Ministers not to pursue further the sites under consideration for a NATO tactical fighter centre, the EURO/NATO training group has been invited to consider alternative ways of meeting NATO training requirements in this area. Future United Kingdom training requirements will naturally need to take account of the outcome of our current examination of options for change.

Controlled Airspace (Unauthorised Penetrations)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the regulations concerning the requirements for aircrew to report incidences of unauthorised penetration of regulated or controlled airspace in the event of having to climb out of the United Kingdom low flying system unexpectedly; and how many such unauthorised penetrations were reported in each year since 1985.

Mr. Neubert: Aircrew are instructed to report any such unauthorised penetrations of regulated or controlled airspace, but very few occur and separate statistics for such incidents are not maintained.

Sea Harriers

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if any Royal Navy Sea Harrier pilots are currently qualified to fly overland at less than 250 ft; and what consideration has been given to requesting Sea Harrier participation in flag exercises in north America.

Mr. Neubert: It is not our policy to disclose the operational capabilities of Royal Navy pilots. I can say however that the Royal Navy does not participate in the flag exercises held in north America, as these are designed to train pilots in roles not normally assumed by the Royal Navy.

Aldermaston

Mr. Flannery: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the construction of the Aldermaston A90 building.

Mr. Neubert: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) on 18 May 1990, at column *578*.

Nuclear Testing

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if there has ever been a joint United Kingdom-United States nuclear warhead test in (i) Nevada, (ii) the Pacific islands or (iii) Australia.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All United Kingdom nuclear tests in Nevada have been joint United Kingdom-United States activities; the United Kingdom permitted the United States to use its Pacific (Christmas Island) test site for the Operation Dominic series of tests in 1962; all tests in Australia were United Kingdom national tests.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information in support of the United Kingdom nuclear weapons and warhead design and development has been made available by the United States under the 1958-59 as amended mutual defence agreement on atomic energy matters; and for what period this agreement will remain in force without requiring amendment.

Mr. Alan Clark: It has been the policy of successive British Governments not to disclose information exchanged under the terms of the 1958 United Kingdom/United States defence agreement. The agreement will remain extant until 31 December 1994, when article III is due for renewal.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what would be the financial savings made if the planned number of warheads for the Trident D5 programme were reduced by (i) 50 per cent. and (ii) 75 per cent.

Mr. Alan Clark: It has been the policy of successive Governments not to reveal details of this nature, for security reasons.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) of 15 May, *Official Report*, column 729, what matters with regard to nuclear non-proliferation were discussed at the NATO nuclear planning group in Kananaskis, Canada on 9-10 May.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The alliance's long-held position with regard to the proliferation of nuclear weapons remains unchanged. However, given the profound political changes in the countries of central and eastern Europe over recent months, the meeting of the NATO nuclear planning group, which took place in Canada on 9 to 10 May, concentrated its discussions on the implications of these developments for the alliance's nuclear policy. A copy of the final communiqué issued on completion of the NPG meeting is available in the Library.

Management Strategy

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress his Department has made towards introducing its new management strategy.

Mr. Neubert: Good progress has been made in preparing for the introduction of the new management strategy in April 1991.

SCOTLAND

Fisheries

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of any research commissioned or financed by him on square mesh panels as a means of conservation.

Mr. Lang: I refer to the reply given today to the hon. Member by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry), which sets out the various research work being carried out on square mesh panels throughout the UK, including the major contribution by the marine laboratory in Aberdeen.

Mental Health Programmes

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make more funds available to the Training Agency for people with mental health problems.

Mr. Rifkind: No. The Training Agency has sufficient resources to meet the demand for training places for young people and unemployed people with special needs including those with mental health problems.

HIV

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the first known sero-conversion to HIV took place in a person with haemophilia as a result of using Scottish factor concentrates.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available.

Bankruptcy

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce maximum hourly rates of remuneration for work carried out by trustees in terms of section 53(4) of the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985.

Mr. Redwood: I have been asked to reply.

An evaluation of the Scottish bankruptcy system is currently taking place and this will cover remuneration.

Water Supply

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide details of the progress of the programme of action required by the European Community water directive, to bring Scotland's water supply up to the European Community standard; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: All Scottish water authorities have now given undertakings, which my right hon. and learned Friend has accepted, to carry out improvement programmes to meet the standards set in the Water Supply (Water Quality) (Scotland) Regulations 1990. The regulations incorporate the quality requirements of the European Community drinking water directive.

The programmes mainly concern improvements to meet the standards for aluminium and for iron derived from unlined cast-iron pipes. Improvements in respect of aluminium are mostly due for completion by 1996, while those in respect of iron will be completed over a longer period. Improvements to disinfection will also be made, especially to rural supplies, to ensure that microbiological standards are met at all times. Much of this work will be completed within the next two years.

Programmes for meeting the European Community standard for lead should be complete by the end of this year except in two small supplies and three where major improvement works are in progress.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what are the Government's estimates of toxic waste imports to Scotland in each of the next five years;

(2) if he will list the quantity of imported waste destined for Scotland in each of the last five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Returns by district and islands councils indicate that the total amounts of waste imported into Scotland in 1987 and 1988 were as follows:

Year	*Amount (tonnes)*
1987	15
1988	453

Information is not available for earlier years; returns for 1989 are not yet complete.

Centrally, there are no estimates for the import of any wastes in future years.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps his Department is currently taking to monitor and investigate the incidence of illness and death among humans and animals in areas where there are incinerators and landfill sites; and if he will make a statement on safeguards to the general public in such areas.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 district or islands councils as waste disposal authorities have powers to reject any application for the use of land, plant or equipment for the disposal of controlled waste which the council believes will cause a danger to public health. Health boards and environmental health departments are responsible for investigating particular incidents.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to strengthen current legislation to protect public health and the environment in the specific area of landfill sites and incineration.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes. The Environmental Protection Bill will tighten controls both on air pollution, from incinerators and other sources, and on waste disposal to landfill sites.

Lead Contamination

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money his Department has spent on publicising the effects of lead in water in Scotland annually between 1979 and 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In 1983, £76,000 was spent on a publicity campaign in Scotland to inform the public about

the hazards of lead in the environment, including the effects of lead in water. A leaflet was sent to all households in Scotland and newspaper and radio advertisements were placed to publicise the distribution of the leaflet. There is now an adequate degree of public awareness of these hazards.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money has been allocated by his Department for the provision of lead replacement grants by local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Capital allocations to local authorities in 1990-91 on the non-housing revenue account block total £124·635 million, of which £22·250 million is earmarked to clear the backlog of pre-1984 repairs grant applications in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Within these allocations resources are not earmarked centrally for particular programmes such as lead replacement. It is the responsibility of each local authority in the light of local circumstances to decide on the priority which should be attached to particular programmes such as lead replacement within the block allocation made available.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide a breakdown of Scottish Office spending plans in the area of water and sewerage over the next three years; how much of this allocation will be spent on dealing with the problem of lead in water; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: For 1990-91, capital expenditure provision for authorities' water and sewerage programmes was set at £142 million. Provision for 1991-92 totals £170 million and for 1992-93, £190 million, a 50 per cent. increase over the comparable figure for 1989-90. Each regional and islands council determines priorities for expenditure within its capital allocation.

All but five of the 103 programmes of improvements required to meet the standard of lead set in the EC drinking water directive are due to be completed by the end of this year. It is estimated that remaining expenditure on treatment to meet the EC lead standard will amount to about £1·7 million in 1990-91 and about £1 million in 1991-92.

The Water Supply (Water Quality) (Scotland) Regulations 1990 set tighter standards for lead. To meet the new standards authorities are currently assessing the expenditure required, and this will be taken into account in determining allocations in future years.

Health Authority Revenue

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the annual budgets over the last five years up to and including 31 March, and the percentage they have been over or under Scottish health authorities revenue equalisation parity in each of these years, for *(a)* Greater Glasgow, *(b)* Highland, *(c)* Tayside, *(d)* Central and *(e)* Borders and Dumfries and Galloway health boards.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: On the assumption that the reference to Central health board should be to Forth Valley health board the information is as follows:

Board	*1985-86*		*1986-87*		*1987-88*		*1988-89*		*1989-90*	
	Gross allocation £ million	*Distance from parity Per cent.*	*Gross allocation £ million*	*Distance from parity Per cent.*	*Gross allocation £ million*	*Distance from parity Per cent.*	*Gross allocation £ million*	*Distance from parity Per cent.*	*Gross allocation £ million*	*Distance from parity Per cent.*
Greater Glasgow	360·607	+4·78	383·516	+4·16	411·541	+4·04	457·513	+3·95	484·025	+4·2
Highland	51·044	−2·13	55·520	−1·18	59·945	−0·70	66·684	−1·27	73·532	−1·35
Tayside	126·932	+7·17	135·633	+4·44	146·535	+2·27	162·924	+2·30	174·143	+0·68
Forth Valley	63·788	−2·74	68·391	−3·32	74·820	−1·70	82·441	−1·38	90·525	−1·26
Borders	20·211	−6·71	21·903	−4·85	24·648	−3·90	27·421	−3·32	30·521	−2·95
Dumfries and Galloway	35·535	−3·05	37·547	−1·46	40·898	−2·07	45·258	−1·62	50·229	−1·61

General Practitioners

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many budget-holding practice groups he envisages being in operation by April 1991.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Health boards are conducting discussions with the practices that have expressed an interest in the general practitioner funding scheme with a view to determining which of them are suitable for undertaking the necessary preparatory work. It is not possible to anticipate how many fund holders will be in place for April 1991.

Divorce

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many applications were made for legal aid in connection with actions for divorce in the latest year for which figures are available; in how many of these cases legal aid was granted; and what was the cost to the legal aid fund.

Mr. Rifkind: The information for 1988-89 is set out in the table:

Legal aid for actions of divorce: Scotland

	Number of applications made	*Number of applications granted*	*Cost*[1] *£*
Sheriff Court	11,182	8,610	5,330,902
Court of Session	217	143	2,223,971
TOTAL	11·399	8,753	7,554,873

[1] The cost shown represents expenditure in 1988-89, not expenditure on cases for which legal aid was granted in 1988-89.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many patients were detained in Scotland under section 26 of the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984 in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: In 1989 the number of episodes of emergency detention under section 24 of the Act which

were subsequently continued under section 26 was 1,211. This figure includes patients who were subject to these detention provisions on more than one occasion during the year.

Social Work

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was local authority expenditure on social work in Scotland for each of the last five years; and what is the expected figure for each of the next three years.

Mr. Rifkind: From information supplied by local authorities in Scotland net expenditure (cash) on social work was:

	£ million
1985-86	316·7
1986-87	334·8
1987-88	375·5
1988-89	421·6
1989-90	[1]473·4
1990-91	[2]552·1

[1] provisional outturn
[2] budget estimate
Notes: Figures up to 1989-90 are exclusive of central administration; those for 1990-91 are inclusive.

Expenditure in future years is a matter for local authorities to determine.

Fine Collection Officers

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many fine collection officers are now in post in Scotland; and in what sheriff courts they are based.

Mr. Rifkind: There are 15 fines officer posts. The sheriff courts at which they are based and the number at each court are as follows:

	Numbers
Aberdeen	1
Airdrie	1
Dundee	1
Dunfermline	1
Dumbarton	1
Edinburgh	2
Falkirk	1
Glasgow	[1]3
Hamilton	2
Kilmarnock	1
Paisley	1

[1] Includes one post presently vacant and in the process of being filled.

Offenders' Hostels

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many hostels there are in Scotland providing accommodation for offenders; how many bed places these contain; what the occupancy rate was in the latest year for which figures are available; and what percentage was taken up by occupants on bail.

Mr. Rifkind: Offender accommodation grant-aided by the Scottish Office under section 27B of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 takes a variety of forms. The number of bed places fluctuates but is currently around 90. Detailed information on the level and nature of bed occupancy is not available centrally. A recording system is, however, in the process of being introduced, and a preliminary assessment of some of the accommodation has indicated an occupancy rate of 80 per cent.

Security Firms

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many employees of his Department have been made redundant in the last five years in consequence of the employment of private security firms.

Mr. Rifkind: Three patrolmen at the marine laboratory, Aberdeen, were made redundant on 30 November 1986 as a result of security duties being taken over by a private security firm.

Legal Aid

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost of legal expenses incurred by the Scottish Legal Aid Board in connection with their recent application to the Court of Session to countermand the order for the chairman of the Scottish Legal Aid Board to appear before a sheriff to explain matters arising from the handling of an application for civil legal aid.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The last such application by the Scottish Legal Aid Board was made over two years ago, and the information requested is not readily available.

Seals

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many grey and common seals were shot in each of the past 10 years, under section 9 of the Conservation of Seals Act 1970, during *(a)* the close season and *(b)* the rest of the year and what steps he is taking to regulate this killing of seals under the terms of the Berne convention.

Mr. Lang: Information is not held centrally on the basis requested. No prior permit, or subsequent reporting of shooting of a seal, is required under the provisions of section 9 of the Conservation of Seals Act 1970.

My right hon. and learned Friend's obligations under the Berne convention in respect of seals in Scottish waters are met by the provisions and operation of the Conservation of Seals Act.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many licences have been issued for the shooting of seals under section 10 of the Conservation of Seals Act 1970 in the years, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 and so far in the current year.

Mr. Lang: The figures requested are as follows:

Year	*Licences Issued*
1983	[1]—
1984	4
1985	31
1986	34
1987	52
1988	34
1989	0
[2]1990	0

[1] No figures are available.
[2] to date.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current policy on the issuing of licences to shoot and kill grey and common seals for the prevention of damage to fisheries and fish stocks.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend is reviewing this matter in the light of a number of current applications for licences.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he has taken in order to assess *(a)* the scale of damage inflicted upon the stocks of fish farms by birds and seals and *(b)* the number of birds and seals killed in order to prevent predation at fish farms.

Mr. Lang: There is no general requirement for fish farmers to report damage by predators to their stocks or equipment. Applicants for licences to shoot seals under the provisions of section 10(1)(c) of the Conservation of Seals Act 1970, or to shoot protected birds under the provisions of section 16(1)(k) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are required to indicate the damage which shooting under licence is expected to prevent and to report the numbers of seals or birds which are shot in accordance with a licence.

Information on numbers of seals and seabirds shot under provisions other than licences is not available centrally.

Gourock Ropeworks

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received concerning the present circumstances and future of the Gourock ropeworks in Port Glasgow; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have received representations both for and against the retention of the Gourock Ropeworks building.

It is a category A listed building in private ownership for which I hope a suitable use can be found. Its demolition, alteration or extension would require listed building consent in terms of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972. I am not aware of any application for listed building consent to Inverclyde district council as planning authority.

Training

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how he intends to ensure that there is adequate training for those with special needs in Scotland; and whether the Training Agency will fund the programme of the Scottish Association for Mental Health at the level of 1989's net cost, plus an appropriate allowance for inflation.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The Government offer the guarantee of suitable training through youth training to all young persons aged between 16 and 18 years who want a training placement and through employment training to all persons who have been unemployed for over six months and who seek training. To ensure sufficient suitable placements are available to meet the needs of all trainees including those with special needs, the Training Agency contracts for training places with a wide range of training providers throughout Scotland. These include voluntary organisations, such as the Scottish Association for Mental Health, with particular interests in providing for specific special needs. The number of contracted places to meet particular special needs is determined by the potential demand for them from people eligible to join either youth training or employment training. The Training Agency does not fund a Scottish Association for Mental Health programme: it contracts with that body through employment training for the provision of training places.

Syringes (Cumbrae)

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his Department will co-ordinate efforts to establish the source of used syringes washed up on the shores of the Isle of Cumbrae over a period of several weeks; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* I am making inquiries locally and will write to the hon. Member.

Ardrossan-Saltcoats-Stevenston Bypass

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the timetabling of the proposed Ardrossan-Saltcoats-Stevenston bypass.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* All schemes in the trunk road programme are allocated scheme ready dates which indicate when the necessary preparatory work is expected to be completed. Thereafter, decisions on which schemes will proceed to construction in the following year are taken annually each March on the basis of the relative priorities of the schemes which are ready, and the financial resources available. Preparatory work for an Ardrossan-Saltcoats-Stevenston bypass is expected to be completed this year if outstanding objections to the scheme are satisfactorily resolved, but no decision has been taken on when a bypass might be constructed. Decisions on the priorities for funding in 1991-92 and beyond will be greatly assisted by the results of the major trunk and key principal road network review, which will by then be substantially complete.

Scottish Homes

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the capital programme for Scottish Homes for the financial years 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* Final accounts for 1989-90 are not yet available: Scottish Homes' gross capital programme expenditure is, however, expected to be £299 million. The gross capital programme for 1990-91 is £311 million and assumes that Scottish Homes achieves projected capital receipts of £110 million.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the new build projects undertaken by Scottish Homes in the financial year 1989-90, and the projected new build programme for Scottish Homes for the current financial year.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* When approving Scottish Homes' programme for any year my right hon. and learned Friend also agrees the

amounts which Scottish Homes proposes should be spent on particular functions. The allocation of funds to individual projects is then a matter for Scottish Homes.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

El Salvador

20. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will undertake to visit El Salvador to examine the human rights situation there.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no plans at present to visit El Salvador. We receive regular reports on the human rights situation from our embassy in San Salvador and take appropriate opportunities to register our concerns with the Salvadorean authorities.

Middle East

21. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on current initiatives to secure the release of United Kingdom hostages in Beirut.

40. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has been taking to gain the release of the British hostages currently held in Beirut; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The release of two American hostages in April shows that Iran and Syria can, if they wish, secure the release of hostages in Lebanon. We are persevering with our efforts to persuade them that the holding of hostages is in no one's interest.

39. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the measures he is taking to advance the peace process in the middle east and the release of British hostages held in the Lebanon.

Mr. Waldegrave: The recent visit of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the middle east has convinced us more than ever of the urgent need for direct dialogue between Palestinians and Israel. I can see no other starting point for a genuine peace process. We shall continue to work for this with our friends in the region and elsewhere. The grim alternative to dialogue is extremism and more killing.

The release of two American hostages in April shows that Iran and Syria can, if they wish, secure the release of hostages in Lebanon. We are persevering with our efforts to persuade them that the holding of hostages is in no one's interest.

41. **Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any further proposals for a peace settlement in the middle east; and if he will make a statement.

49. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Britain's contribution to finding a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict acceptable to the international community.

Mr. Waldegrave: The recent visit of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the middle east has convinced us more than ever of the urgent need for direct dialogue between Palestinians and Israel. I can see no other starting point for a genuine peace process. We shall continue to work for this with our friends in the region and elsewhere. The grim alternative to dialogue is extremism and more

44. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to visit Israel to discuss the middle east peace process.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs would hope to do so at some stage but has no firm plans at present. However, the Israeli Government are well aware of our views on the urgent need for direct dialogue with representative Palestinians.

45. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Israeli Government about the occupation of the west bank and Gaza strip.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Israelis are well aware of our view that they should withdraw from territories occupied in 1967 in the context of a comprehensive settlement of the Arab/Israel dispute; and that pending withdrawal they should administer the occupied territories in accordance with their obligations under international law.

49. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government about the continuing murders in the occupied territories; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Israeli Government are well aware of our deep concern about the continuing violence in the occupied territories and the numbers of Palestinians killed and wounded. We continue to take every opportunity to urge the Israeli authorities to administer the occupied territories in accordance with international law.

55. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Iraqi authorities regarding President Sadam Hussein's statement concerning Israel on 10 May at a meeting with Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are not aware of the statement to which the hon. Member refers. According to our information, President Saddam Hussein did not meet Mr. Arafat on 10 May.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he authorised British Airways officials on flight 657 from Tel Aviv to London on 23 May 1990 to detain the passport of Mr. John Richardson.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British citizens have been excluded from Israel for each year since 1985, giving the figures since December 1987 by month.

Mr. Waldegrave: No records of this kind of information are available to us.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the British embassy was involved in the exclusion of Mr. John Richardson from Tel Aviv airport on 23 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

South Africa

22. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the timetable for constitutional reform discussed at his most recent meeting with President de Klerk.

Mr. Waldegrave: During President de Klerk's recent visit, we encouraged him to maintain the momentum of constitutional reform in South Africa. We were impressed by his commitment to move forward as rapidly as possible.

Mr. Cabom: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what amount of British money has been made available to black political groups in South Africa; what groups have received this money and what amounts have been paid to them; what are the conditions laid down by the Government for the money to be granted; what procedures have to be adopted to make an application for the money; and who administers it.

Mr. Waldegrave: A scheme was established in March 1990, separate from our aid programme, to help those organisations previously excluded from the political process in South Africa prepare to enter negotiations. This scheme provides practical support, on a non-discriminatory basis, to those making the transition to normal political activity.

Since the scheme's inception, we have made £75,000 available and have given assistance to the following organisations: African National Congress (c £10,500), PAC (Internal) (£2,784) and Inkatha (£4,681).

In each case, the money has been provided in the form of practical material support, designed to help the organisation concerned function as a political party and thus to help towards achieving a negotiated transition to a multi-party democracy.

Any organisations seeking help under this scheme may apply direct to the British embassy in Cape Town/Pretoria, or to any of the three other British diplomatic offices in South Africa. The scheme is administered by Her Majesty's ambassador in South Africa.

Colombia

23. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the implications of the outcome of the recent Colombian elections on the international war against the drug barons.

Mr. Sainsbury: We congratulate Sr. Gaviria on his victory in the Colombian presidential election and look forward to working with his Government in the fight against international drugs trafficking. President-elect Gaviria has made clear that he intends to continue President Barco's policies directed against the drugs trade.

Romania

24. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations the Government have made to the Government of Romania.

Mr. Waldegrave: We made a number of representations before the recent elections urging the Romanian Government to ensure a free and fair campaign and poll. On 11 May we summoned the Romanian chargé d'affaires to register our concern on this point.

30. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations with Romania, following the elections which took place there on 20 May.

Mr. Waldegrave: We hope for warm and co-operative relations with Romania. This will depend in part on continued progress by the Romanian Government towards democracy.

Eastern Europe

25. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit eastern Europe to discuss political and economic co-operation.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs plans to visit Czechoslovakia in late July. We have regular discussions with east European leaders during high-level visits in either direction and in the margins of international gatherings. We are extending our co-operation with these countries ever more widely as they make progress in economic and political reform.

42. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to ensure that assistance to the countries of eastern Europe is conditional upon significant political and economic reform.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our policy remains that the type and degree of aid to the reforming eastern European countries should match the stage of political and economic reform they have each reached.

Dr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to lessen the cost of visa applications to managers in eastern Europe who wish to visit the United Kingdom to acquire management skills.

Mr. Sainsbury: Managers from eastern Europe visiting the United Kingdom through the know-how funds are issued visas gratis. Those coming under other auspices are eligible to apply for two-year multiple-entry visas, which are cheaper, pro rata, than single-entry visas.

German Unification

26. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's current policy on German unification.

35. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's current policy on German unification.

50. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's current policy on German unification.

Mr. Waldegrave: We warmly welcome the prospect of German unification. We are working with the Foreign Ministers of the United States, France, Soviet Union, the two Germanies and others concerned, to settle the external aspects of German unification as soon as possible.

51. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects of the reunification of Germany on the United Kingdom's position within the European Community.

Mr. Maude: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) on 22 May. We welcome German unification as a positive factor for Europe and the Community.

EC Inter-institutional Conference

27. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what were the main conclusions of the European Community inter-institutional conference, held in Strasbourg on 17 May.

Mr. Maude: There were no formal conclusions.

Council of Ministers

28. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the outcome of the last meeting of the European Community Council of Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) on 24 May.

36. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what subjects will be discussed at the next meeting of the European Community Council of Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

43. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what subjects he intends to raise at the next European Community Council of Ministers meeting.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters he will be raising at the next meeting of the European Community Council of Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The issues are likely to include preparations for the Dublin European Council, relations with EFTA, the GATT Uruguay round, and other EC external policies.

Libya

29. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will expect to visit Libya and discuss United Kingdom-Libyan relations.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has no plans to do so.

Short-range Nuclear Weapons

31. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to meet the United States Secretary of State to discuss short-range nuclear weapons.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met Mr. Baker and other NATO colleagues at the North Atlantic Council meeting held at Turnberry on 7 and 8 June. NATO agreed at that meeting that negotiations on United States and Soviet short-range nuclear weapons systems in Europe should begin shortly after a CFE agreement is concluded.

We shall continue to be in close touch with the United States on this subject in preparation for the NATO summit in London from 4 to 6 July.

EC Policies

32. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further proposals he intends to place before his European Community partners for the development of Community policies.

Mr. Maude: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 9 May. We shall continue to play a constructive role in Community discussions.

CSCE Conference, Copenhagen

33. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement of Her Majesty's Government's aims at the current CSCE conference on the human dimension in Copenhagen.

Mr. Waldegrave: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said when he addressed the conference on 5 June, we want the Copenhagen CDH meeting to extend CSCE human rights undertakings, specifically on free and fair elections, the rule of law, and freedom of expression, of association and peaceful assembly, and of movement. We shall also play a full part in the detailed review of participating states' implementation of their CSCE human rights commitments.

Guyana

34. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet the President of Guyana.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend has no present plans to meet the President of Guyana.

Czech and Slovak Federal Republic

37. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on United Kingdom relations with the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic since the elections held on 8 June.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the elections in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic on 8 June.

Mr. Waldegrave: We warmly welcome these free and peaceful elections. The exceptionally high turnout shows the enthusiasm with which the Czechoslovak people have greeted the restoration of democracy in their country. Our relations with Czechoslovakia are excellent.

We look forward to the formation of a new Government. They can rely on our help and support in meeting the challenges ahead.

Cambodia

39. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will review his policy regarding the Cambodian seat at the United Nations.

Mr. Sainsbury: With our EC partners we are reviewing our policy towards Cambodia's representation at the United Nations. In doing so we shall be taking into account the efforts of a range of countries, notably the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to achieve a comprehensive political settlement.

British Colonies

46. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning democratic arrangements for residents of small British colonies.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have received no such representations in respect of our Caribbean, Atlantic or Pacific dependent territories.

India

47. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to meet the Indian Foreign Minister.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs looks forward to meeting the Indian Foreign Minister again as soon as both their programmes allow this.

Antarctica

52. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning proposals to make Antarctica a world park.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have received representations from many hon. Members and members of the public. We fully support and comply with the relevant obligations under the Antarctic treaty system and the Antarctic minerals convention, which offer the best possible means of protecting the Antarctic environment.

Chile

53. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the support which Her Majesty's Government are giving to the democratic Government of Chile.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have increased our contribution to the World University Service to enable it to help with the repatriation of exiled Chileans. We have also doubled our bilateral technical assistance programme.

European Community Foreign Ministers

54. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Foreign Ministers of the other European Community countries; and whether he discussed the importance attached by the European Community to the implementation of measures agreed by the Twelve.

Mr. Maude: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs raised the subject of implementation of European Community legislation at the informal meeting of European Community Foreign Ministers on 19 and 20 May.

Nuclear Arms

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment he has made of how proposals to extend the competence of the European Economic Community into matters of non-proliferation would affect the United Kingdom's obligations under the non-proliferation treaty;

(2) what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards extending the competence of the European Economic Community into matters of non-proliferation.

Mr. Waldegrave: There are no proposals for such extension of European Community competence.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the British Government's preparations for the non-proliferation treaty fourth review conference in Geneva in August-September.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have played a full and constructive role in the preparations for the fourth review conference of the non-proliferation treaty. The third preparatory committee successfully concluded procedural matters and the allocation of administrative posts.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his proposals to extend and develop the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my reply of 15 December 1989 to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas).

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals Her Majesty's Government intend to put forward at the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in regard to developing energy aid via provisions of articles III and IV of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: We do not intend to put forward any proposals in this regard. We do, however, already provide assistance to a number of developing countries, via the "Footnote A" projects, under the International Atomic Energy Agency's technical assistance programme, for the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent to which the development of the British Trident system is compatible with the Government's obligations under article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: Negotiations on the reduction of strategic weapons are being conducted by the United States and Soviet Union. We welcome the prospect of a START agreement this year. Our position with regard to the British strategic deterrent is that, if United States and Soviet strategic arsenals were further reduced very substantially and there had been no significant improvements in defensive capabilities, we would consider how best we might contribute to the arms control process in the light of the changed circumstances.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the composition of the British delegation to the fourth review conference of the non-proliferation treaty in Geneva in August-September.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which United Kingdom-based non-governmental organisations have been granted observer status for the fourth non-proliferation treaty review conference; how non-governmental organisations obtain such status; and what financial assistance is Her Majesty's Government giving to United Kingdom non-governmental organisations to attend the conference.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to my answer of 11 June to the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook).

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has prepared an educational video on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty for use in schools and colleges.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. However, the arms control and disarmament research unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office publishes notes on arms control on an approximately monthly basis and a quarterly review. Both publications regularly include information on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the fourth review conference and are available on request.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what actions Her Majesty's Government have taken to fulfil their obligations under article IV of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; and what initiatives the Government are considering to expand the provisions of article IV to include other energy sources.

Mr. Waldegrave: We contribute annually to the "Footnote A" projects, under the International Atomic Energy Agency's technical assistance programme, and there is a considerable amount of trade and co-operation in the nuclear area involving British companies. We are not considering any initiatives to expand the provisions of article IV.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what actions Her Majesty's Government have taken to encourage Albania to become a party to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: None. In common with the other depository powers of the NPT, we do not have diplomatic relations with Albania.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those meetings concerning nuclear weapons proliferation and non-proliferation measures at which his Department will be represented between now and the fourth quinquennial review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: The three preparatory committees for the NPT review conference have been concluded. No further multilateral meetings devoted specifically to this subject are planned before the review conference, although the subject will be on the agenda of a number of bilateral meetings.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives are being considered by Her Majesty's Government to expand the terms of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty so that source or special fissionable material or equipment or material specially designed or prepared for the processing, use or production of special fissionable material, can no longer be transferred from states party to the treaty to non-nuclear weapons states for non-peaceful purposes without the application of treaty safeguards.

Mr. Waldegrave: None. In accordance with article III of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the nuclear suppliers guidelines to which all major nuclear suppliers subscribe, source or special fissionable material or equipment or material especially designed or prepared for the processing, use or production of special fissionable material may be transferred to non-nuclear weapon states only for peaceful purposes and only if the source or special fissionable material is subject to safeguards.

Afghanistan

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will now re-open the British embassy in Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have no plans at present to re-open our embassy in Kabul.

Drugs

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of the interdiction of drug trafficking in the Caribbean basin.

Mr. Sainsbury: Local Governments and aid donors have taken steps to combat the flow of drugs through the Caribbean, but trafficking remains a major problem. We recognise the seriousness of this threat and are committed to helping Caribbean nations fight it. We have provided over £3 million of anti-drugs assistance to the region since 1987 and will provide a further £1·2 million to help our Caribbean dependent territories in their efforts. We co-operate fully with other anti-drugs agencies in the region.

Lithuania

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current situation in Lithuania; and what Her Majesty's Government are doing to assist its economic recovery.

Mr. Waldegrave: Unfortunately, talks between Vilnius and Moscow have still not been launched, despite the readiness of the Lithuanians to suspend the legislation adopted since the declaration of independence. The economic measures imposed by Moscow continue.

We have no programme of assistance specifically for Lithuania. But Lithuania is able to participate in our wider programme of exchange and co-operation with the Soviet Union.

Open Skies Conference

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the open skies conference in Budapest which closed on 13 May.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are disappointed that it was not possible to reach agreement on an open skies regime at the last round of negotiations in Budapest. We remain determined to pursue an open skies agreement, which could make a significant contribution to confidence building. We hope for an early indication that the Soviet Union is willing to negotiate constructively on the outstanding issues.

EMPLOYMENT

Mentally Ill People

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what action he proposes to take to avert staff redundancies and unfilled training places in the programmes run by the providers of training for those with mental health problems.

Mr. Nicholls: Contracts with providers are negotiated for the number of places considered appropriate to meet local needs and in particular those who have special training needs. Training providers are responsible for running their programmes in accordance with their contract. Thus they are responsible for their own staff, including staff redundancies should they occur.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the total sum of money allocated to training and enterprise councils; what percentage of this sum has been taken up; and what percentage of training and enterprise council funding is provided from European Community sources.

Mr. Eggar: The total budget allocated to training and enterprise councils in 1990-91 will be dependent on when individual training and enterprise councils become operational. To date the combined budget for the first 13 training and enterprise councils that have signed operational contracts is £215 million.

The extent to which training and enterprise councils will receive funding from the European Community through the European social fund cannot be determined fully until individual projects are considered by my Department.

National Insurance Credits

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether a person who has been disallowed national insurance credits for not being available for or not actively seeking work has the right to appeal against the decision; what other procedures are open to them if they wish to dispute the disallowance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Lady.

Employment Exchanges

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give full details of the consultative process to be undertaken by his Department before he considers closing any local part-time employment exchange.

Mr. Eggar: When the employment service plans to close a part-time local office it follows the established practice of ensuring that the hon. Member in whose constituency the part-time office is located is informed of the reason for the planned closure.

Repetitive Strain Injury

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy on *(a)* research, *(b)* prevention and *(c)* compensation for repetitive strain injuries.

Mr. Nicholls: Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places general duties on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees; and in particular the provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health. These general duties apply to the prevention of repetitive strain injury and are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authorities.

The HSE intends to publish later this year new guidance on work-related upper limb disorders which will give authoritative advice to employers on ways to prevent them. HSE funds an extramural biomedical research programme which includes support for research into repetitive strain injury. A report from the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM), "Clinical Epidemiological Study of Relations between Upper Limb Soft Tissue Disorders and Repetitive Movements at Work", has recently been published.

The HSE has also funded research projects at the IOM and the university of Birmingham which investigate the relationship between work routines and activities and specific upper limb disorders. Reports on these studies are still awaited.

State compensation for industrial injuries is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fisheries

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give details of any research commissioned or financed by him on square mesh panels as a means of conservation.

Mr. Curry: We are currently spending about £1·25 million a year on research related to fishing gear. Square mesh panels are one of the several options presently under investigation in our work to develop more selective fishing gear which will improve conservation by reducing the take of undersized fish. The marine laboratory of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland at Aberdeen has already undertaken, in addition to basic research on square mesh netting, a study on the behaviour of fish in codends with a square mesh panel and a further study on the process of capture in a seine net with various codends including one with a square mesh panel. This summer a study, in conjunction with the Shetland islands council, will investigate as part of a wider project the comparative catches of a codend with a square mesh panel and a conventional codend in a twin trawl. Depending upon the results further studies may then be made.

Further, the Government work with and fund work by the Sea Fish Industry Authority. In 1989-90 a trial was undertaken comparing the catches of a conventional 90mm trawl and one fitted with an 80mm square mesh panel and a further trial mainly looking at codend circumference and extension length also did some work on a square mesh panel. Further trials are taking place this summer in both trawl and seine nets and directed at haddock and cod as trials so far have focused on whiting. The effect of factors such as gear shape and towing on the openness of square mesh will also be studied. We also authorised an industry-led and funded trial to use 80mm square mesh panel rather than the minimum legal size of 90mm.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will estimate losses to farmers and dealers in the United Kingdom as a result of bans on imports by European Community governments in the light of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: At any time there are many factors affecting markets and no meaningful estimate can be made of the specific impact of the prohibitions on trade recently applied by several member states. In the wake of increased support to the market under the CAP regime for beef and the agreement reached last week in the Agriculture Council, I am pleased to note that market prices have improved significantly.

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will support a unified European Community research programme to study the causes and treatments of BSE.

Mr. Maclean: Yes. The Council of Ministers agreed on 7 June to ask the European Commission to implement a Community-wide programme of research into BSE.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of beef herds affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy on a county-by-county basis.

Mr. Maclean: Bovine spongiform encephalopathy is not a disease affecting cattle herds but rather one which affects individual animals within a herd.

The information requested for Great Britain up to 11 June 1990 is as follows:

County	*Confirmed cases*	*Per cent. of total beef herds in county*
Scilly Isles	0	0·00
Cleveland	0	0·00
Durham	9	0·96
Tyne and Wear	0	0·00
Northumberland	12	1·06
Cumbria	15	0·56
Yorkshire North	22	0·97
Yorkshire South	1	0·31
Yorkshire West	2	0·24
Humberside	12	2·42
Lancashire	6	0·63
Merseyside	0	0·00
Manchester	0	0·00
Derbyshire	5	0·49
Leicestershire	5	0·78
Nottinghamshire	3	0·97
Cheshire	0	0·00
Shropshire	7	0·52
Staffordshire	7	0·67
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	23	1·41
Warwickshire	5	1·00
West Midlands	1	0·97
Lincolnshire	5	0·65
Norfolk	18	2·65
Suffolk	9	2·37
Bedfordshire	3	2·17
Cambridgeshire	6	2·12
Northamptonshire	5	1·44
Essex	5	1·66
Hertfordshire	6	3·16
London	1	2·08
Berkshire	3	1·67
Buckinghamshire	2	0·51
Oxfordshire	6	1·45
Hampshire	12	2·32
Isle of Wight	1	0·93
Surrey	9	3·14
Sussex West	9	3·07
Kent	11	1·96
Sussex East	10	2·22
Gloucestershire	7	0·97
Avon	8	2·00
Wiltshire	20	3·78
Dorset	12	2·02
Somerset	27	2·01
Devonshire	37	1·10
Cornwall	42	2·01
Gwynedd	7	0·37
Clwyd	8	0·68
Powys	63	2·08
Dyfed	25	0·72
Glamorgan South	1	0·81
Glamorgan Mid	1	0·25
Glamorgan West	1	0·30
Gwent	11	1·54
Highland	13	0·73
Grampian	35	1·85
Tayside	16	2·04
Strathclyde	10	0·47
Central	4	1·14
Fife	6	2·76
Lothian	2	0·92
Borders	6	0·87

County	*Confirmed cases*	*Per cent. of total beef herds in county*
Dumfries	13	0·93
Western Isles	0	0·00
Orkney	4	0·48
Shetland	0	0·00

Agricultural Improvements

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to publish his review of standard costs for agricultural improvements; and what aspects he will be taking into account in determining the uprating factor.

Mr. Curry: The Department is currently reviewing labour and material costs relevant to the setting of standard costs for agricultural grants. The question of any announcement must await the outcome of this review.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he is aware of any recently produced reports by the French nuclear authorities indicating the potential dangers posed to agriculture in France and the United Kingdom arising from an accident at nuclear power stations located on the channel coast in northern France.

Mr. Curry: I understand that an annual report produced recently by the head of Electricité de France's general inspectorate for nuclear safety presented an overview of nuclear safety within the company as at the end of 1989. I am not aware that it indicates any new or increased threat to agriculture in France and the United Kingdom.

Under an existing bilateral agreement, signed in July 1983, we would be notified immediately of a serious incident involving the release of radioactivity in France. We would also be informed under the terms of both the International Atomic Energy Agency convention on early notification and decision 87/600/Euratom of the European Community Council of Ministers.

Prompt notification of a nuclear incident in France would enable the Department to initiate precautionary monitoring and other action to protect the food chain. We would do this within the framework of the new national response plan established by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, which encompasses the radioactive incident monitoring network (RIMNET).

Scrapie

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the percentage of the British sheep flock which had scrapie in 1984.

Mr. Maclean: Accurate information about its incidence is not available since scrapie is not a notifiable disease but it is currently estimated to affect about 10 per cent. of British sheep flocks.

Poultry

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has with regard to the chemicals used on Spanish poultry post slaughter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: We have no information about the use of chemicals on Spanish poultry post slaughter.

The rules for the production of poultry meat for intra-Community trade are laid down in EC directive 71/118. All consignments of poultry meat imported from other EC member states for human consumption must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate confirming that they have been produced in accordance with the directive and passed as fit for human consumption.

Slaughterhouse Standards

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food following the report by his veterinary officers on slaughterhouse standards, what percentage of premises visited had satisfactory health standards in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The reports by the veterinary officers are made to the local authorities (district councils) which are responsible for the enforcement of hygiene legislation. The information provided is for the local authority to act upon.

Contaminated Feed

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 15 May, *Official Report*, column *395*, if he will make a further statement about animals, other than pigs, having been affected by contaminated feed.

Mr. Maclean: We have now received a report that some of the contaminated feed was fed to breeding geese and mallard on a Derbyshire farm in March. A sample of feed has been analysed by the Ministry and traces of isofenphos have been detected in it but at very much lower levels than those found earlier in contaminated pig feed.

Set-aside Land

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to permit the grazing of set-aside land by farm livestock.

Mr. Curry: One of a number of options for the better management of set-aside land which I have been considering is a limited form of grazed fallow. I shall shortly be inviting applications for the third year of the scheme and will announce then any changes to the conditions which I decide to introduce.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 14 June 1990

PRIME MINISTER

Bradford

Q26. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to Bradford.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Methyl Chloroform

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make it her policy that the time horizon of between 10 and 15 years for the 100 per cent. phase-out of methyl chloroform be used by Her Majesty's Government as a base starting point for agreement at the Montreal protocol meetings due to take place in London later this month.

The Prime Minister: It is the Government's policy ultimately to phase out all ozone-depleting substances. However, it is impossible at this stage to predict whether safe substitutes for all uses of methyl chloroform will be found within the next 10 or 15 years.

Advisers

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer, *Official Report,* 24 May, column *286,* if she has any plans to make funds available from the Cabinet Office vote for political advisers to the leaders of all political parties with parliamentary representation.

The Prime Minister: No. I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave on 5 June at column *397.*

Correspondence

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will take steps to ensure that departmental Ministers have sufficient staff to reply to hon. Members' lettes within an acceptable span of time; and whether it is in accordance with her policy that a letter to the Secretary of State for Health dated 27 February should be answered on 6 June.

The Prime Minister: Long delays in replying to correspondence from Members of Parliament can rarely be justified. The Department of Health has introduced major changes in the national health service which have generated a great deal of public interest. Revised procedures have now been implemented to help in dealing with the large increase in correspondence. My hon. Friend will recall that I announced on 29 March a review of the handling of correspondence across all Departments.

Engagements

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 14 June.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be hosting a dinner at Downing street in honour of Sir Sonny Ramphal, Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

Official Visits

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list those countries to which she has paid an official visit in each of the last 11 years, indicating in each case whether the visit was followed by an oral statement to the House.

The Prime Minister: I have paid an official visit to the following countries in the past 11 years:

	Country
1979	
June	France
June-July	Australia
October	Italy, Luxembourg, West Germany
December	United States
1980	
May	Yugoslavia
September	France, Greece, Yugoslavia
November	Italy, West Germany
December	Irish Republic
1981	
February	Netherlands, United States
April	India, Saudi Arabia
September	Bahrain, Kuwait
October	United Arab Emirate, Oman, Qatar, Pakistan, Mexico
November	West Germany
1982	
July	Italy
September	China, Hong Kong India, Japan
October	West Germany
November	France
1983	
January	Falkland Islands
September	Netherlands, Canada, United States
November	West Germany, India
December	Greece (twice)
1984	
January	France, Italy
February	Hungary, Soviet Union
March	Belgium
April	Portugal
May	France
June	France
November	India, France
December	Irish Republic, China, Hong Kong, United States
1985	
February	United States
March	Soviet Union, Belgium
April	Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Saudi Arabia
May	West Germany
June	Italy
July	United States

	Country
September	Egypt, Jordan
October	Bahamas, United States
November	Belgium
December	Luxembourg
1986	
January	France
March	Italy
May	South Korea, Japan, Israel
June	Netherlands
July	Canada
September	Norway, West Germany
November	United States, France
December	France
1987	
March	Soviet Union
June	Italy, Belgium
July	United States, Jamaica, France
September	West Germany
October	Canada
November	France
December	Denmark
1988	
January	Kenya, Nigeria
February	Belgium (twice)
April	Turkey
June	France, Canada, West Germany
August	Bahrain, Oman, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, UAE (stopover)
October	Italy
November	Poland, United States, France
1989	
Februrary	West Germany, France
March	Morocco, Nigeria (stopover), Zimbabwe, Malawi
April	West Germany, Namibia
May	Luxembourg, Belgium
June	Spain
July	France
September	Japan, Soviet Union
October	Malaysia, Qatar (stopover)
November	United States, France
December	Belgium, France
1990	
January	France
April	Bermuda, Turkey, Irish Republic
June	Soviet Union

Oral statements to the House are made whenever appropriate.

HEALTH

Blood Products

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which pharmaceutical companies are presently importing factor VIII concentrates into the United Kingdom; and if he will list each company's share of the market.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: For reasons of confidentiality, the information held by the Medicines Licensing Authority about pharmaceutical companies importing Factor VIII concentrate cannot be divulged.

Plutonium Contamination

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans or studies have been made by his Department to assess what measures would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident on board a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans or studies have been made by his Department to assess what measures would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident on board a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mr. Dorrell: I refer the hon. Members to the reply my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces gave the hon. Members for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 8 June at column *724*. The contingency plans referred to cover action necessary by all relevant Government Departments and public bodies, including this Department and health authorities.

Sex Offenders

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements for access to information and expertise his Department has with the Gracewell clinic for rehabilitating sexual offenders; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We are aware of the work undertaken by the Gracewell clinic; officials have recently visited the organisation.

Child Sex Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has of the percentage of children who are sexually abused.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information is not available centrally in the form requested. The information collected centrally relates to the number of children who are on the child protection registers who have been categorised as "sexually abused". The latest information available relates to the year ending 31 March 1989 and is published in the provisional feedback "Children and Young Persons on Child Protection Registers England 1989". Copies are available in the Library.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what contact his Department has with Governments in America, Australia and the EEC regarding their experience in the creation and running of national institutes for research into child sexual abuse.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department does not have direct contact with overseas Governments concerning their research programmes into child sexual abuse. Professional staff within the Department keep in touch with research abroad as appropriate and researchers from departmentally funded programmes and units have contact from time to time with overseas counterparts.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the amount of money being spent by

Government Departments on research into the sexual abuse of children *(a)* at May 1989 and *(b)* currently; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The following amounts were allocated by Government Departments for research into child sexual abuse.

	1989-90 £	*1990-91* £
Department of Health	92,000	125,000
Home Office	72,000	32,000
Social Work Services Group (Scottish Office)	17,000	52,000
Total	181,000	209,000

In addition, the Department of Health funds a number of projects covering both sexual and physical abuse of children. The cost of these projects in 1990-91 is £221,000 which brings the total to £430,000.

Medical Accidents

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what review has been made of the gathering of information on medical accidents; if he will regularly publish statistics about the incidence of claims and settlements or awards achieved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: No review has been made of the gathering of information on medical accidents. When the health authority indemnity for medical negligence was introduced on 1 January 1990, the Department asked health authorities for an annual return of the number of claims of medical negligence, the number of such cases settled, and the total cost of the settlements reached or awards made. The returns for the period to 31 March 1990 are now being received. No decision has been taken on publishing any statistics.

Complaints Procedure

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how he intends to monitor and assess hospital complaints, family practitioner committee complaints, and the procedures at the General Medical Council and other related professional bodies.

Mr. Dorrell: Complaints made about the services provided in NHS hospitals are monitored by health authorities as required in directions made under section 17 of the National Health Service Act 1977; Family practitioner committees are obliged by regulations to forward reports to the Secretary of State. In addition, the Health Service Commissioner provides an independent assessment of the handling of complaints by health authorities and publishes his report annually.

The General Medical Council is an independent statutory body whose procedures are governed by the Medical Act 1983. The council publishes annually a summary of cases considered by its disciplinary Committees. The Department is not routinely informed by professional bodies of complaints which they receive.

Sheppey General Hospital

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in the assessment made as to the closure of the Sheppey general hospital, what regard was paid to questions of *(a)* population influx in the summer months, *(b)* future housing development, *(c)* the nature of access to the island and *(d)* the availability of an ambulance service.

Mr. Dorrell: Medway health authority has no plans to close Sheppey general hospital.

Mr. Joseph Watts

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the report of the inquiry into the circumstances leading to the death of Mr. Joseph Watts, a patient at Broadmoor hospital.

Mr. Dorrell: Further to the reply of my hon. Friend, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health to the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) on 25 April 1990 at column *219*, I welcome the intention of the Special Hospitals Service Authority to make the report widely available. I have arranged for copies of the report, with the authority's response, to be placed in the Library.

The authority shares many of the concerns of the inquiry team and has ensured that action on the report's recommendations is well in hand. The inquiry team produced an authoritative, comprehensive and constructive report. I am grateful to its chairman and members for the thorough way in which they approached their work.

Ophthalmic Clinics

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new attendances at ophthalmic clinics were recorded in each quarter of 1988-89 and 1989-90 in each district health authority area in England.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information about consultant out-patient activity is not available centrally on a quarterly basis. Details of the numbers of new referral attendances for all consultant out-patient clinics are published annually and copies of these summaries for 1987-88 and 1988-89 will be placed in the Library.

Medical and Dental Schools

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the special increment for teaching paid to each medical and dental school in England; and what that sum represents per student.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The service increment for teaching—SIFT—is allocated to regional health Authorities to compensate hospitals for the additional service costs incurred through providing clinical facilities for undergraduate medical and dental education and research. In 1990-91, SIFT amounted to £343 million in total. It is allocated to RHAs according to numbers of undergraduate medical and dental students, at rates of £32,017 per medical student and £12,764 per dental student in 1990-91. For students in London, these figures attract a 9 per cent. weighting.

RHAs should distribute SIFT to specific hospitals according to a range of factors, taking advice from universities, and other research interests as appropriate. Information on sub-regional distribution is not collected centrally.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will instruct regional health authorities to commission an opinion poll survey of the local population in each area where there is a proposal to establish a self-governing trust, in order to determine their views about such a proposal.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. Successive Governments have never thought it sensible for changes in management of NHS services to be subject to opinion polls. When formal applications for NHS trust status are made, following parliamentary approval of the necessary legislation, regions will seek the views of the local community, community health councils and other parties with an interest, on individual proposals before any decisions are made.

Sight Tests

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the total cost to his Department of commissioning the NOP survey on sight tests.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The cost of the survey is a commercial matter between the Department of Health and NOP.

Drug Side-effects

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions have taken place between his officials and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry about setting up a drug damage compensation scheme for victims of drug side-effects which have become apparent some years after a drug was first prescribed.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No such discussions have taken place.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, further to his answer of 31 January, *Official Report*, column *231*, what progress has been made by the research project reviewing the possible connections between BSE and Creutzfeld-Jakob disease; and what information he has on the common properties of the two diseases.

Mr. Dorrell: After detailed planning the Department of Health has recently commissioned the neuropathology component of the study which my hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State announced in a reply to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) on 31 January at column *231*. The two diseases Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease, a spongiform encephalopathy in humans, and bovine spongiform encephalopathy are both fatal, progressive, neurological disorders and have a large number of common properties.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Vietnam

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received seeking further aid to Vietnam; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) on 17 May about the provision of aid support for NGO activities in Vietnam. Since then I have received no representations seeking further aid for Vietnam.

Ethiopia

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of the population at risk from famine in Ethiopia he estimates can be reached by the southern supply route of the joint relief partnership.

Mrs. Chalker: From the start of the southern line operation on 20 March up to 3 June, 16,030 tonnes of food were delivered to northern Wello and Tigray. As damaged roads are repaired and additional transport capacity becomes available—in both of which areas Britain is providing assistance—the joint relief partnership hopes to build up deliveries towards its monthly target figure of 14,500 tonnes. This should be sufficient to feed just over 1 million people or perhaps a quarter of the total number at risk in northern Ethiopia.

Irrigation

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many new irrigation projects he is currently supporting in the third world; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: We are currently funding 11 major irrigation projects, of which seven are in Pakistan and one in each of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sudan and Zimbabwe. The total value of our support for these products over their duration is just under 100 million. We are also funding irrigation research with a total value of 3 million. Some of our wider programmes also include an irrigation component, but it would be disproportionately costly to collate this information.

Environmental Programmes

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the Government's plans to help developing countries with their environmental programmes.

Mrs. Chalker: To promote sustainable economic growth and meet developing countries' diverse needs, our help covers a wide range including population programmes, energy efficiency, conserving biodiversity, natural resource management and the promotion of environmental awareness among other subjects.

Our policies are set out in a new booklet, "The Environment and the British Aid Programme", a copy of which has been placed in the Library. I have arranged for a copy to be sent to my hon. Friend.

International Service for National Agricultural Research

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all United Kingdom contributions to the international service for national agricultural research made since 1980.

Mrs. Chalker: Our contributions to the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) since 1980 have been as follows:

Financial year	*Contribution £*
1979-80	15,000
1980-81	50,000
1981-82	50,000
1982-83	100,000
1983-84	120,000
1984-85	120,000
1985-86	120,000
1986-87	130,000
1987-88	135,000
1988-89	142,000
1989-90	140,000
[1]1990-91	140,000

[1] Planned.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Nuclear Accident, Greenwich

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans or studies have been made by his Department to assess measures that would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich with regard to children at schools in the area.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 11 June 1990, *Official Report*, column *22*.

Mr. Peter Hunt

Sir John Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the hon. Member for Ravensbourne may expect an answer to his letters of 2 April, 4 April and 4 June and his telephone calls of 10 May, 16 May and 22 May relating to the case of Mr. Peter Hunt; and what are the reasons for the delays in his Department's handling of this case.

Mrs. Rumbold: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 12 June apologising for the delay in replying to his letter of 2 April. In considering Mr. Hunt's case it was necessary for the Department to make inquiries of Bromley local education authority. The facts of the case were then given very careful consideration within the Department.

The final decision was communicated as soon as possible.

University Staff (Pay Offer)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the reasons for the delay in his Department's approving, via committee B of the universities' negotiating machinery, the vice-chancellors' offer of a 9 per cent. pay increase, accepted by university academic and related staff on 11 May; and what steps he is taking to expedite the process of ratification.

Mr. Jackson: There has been no unnecessary delay. The Government are giving careful consideration to the salary increases for university non-clinical academic and related staff proposed in the 25th report of committee A of the universities academic salaries committees.

Academic Awards

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he proposes to publish his Department's policy review of the Council for National Academic Awards.

Mr. MacGregor: The review has now been completed and I am publishing the report today. Copies have been placed in the Library. The report contains a number of important recommendations, on which I am seeking the views of interested parties. These have been requested by 14 September. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales will be arranging parallel consultations in Scotland and Wales. I shall announce the Government's response to the report in due course after these consultations.

Meningitis

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* in tabular form, details of all research into meningitis being supported by the Medical Research Council, indicating *(a)* the location of the research work, *(b)* the precise nature of the research project and *(c)* its tenure.

Mr. Jackson *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The Medical Research Council, which receives a grant in aid from this Department, is supporting the following research projects on meningitis:

Direct Support—through MRC establishments

(A) MRC Clinical Research Centre Middlesex.

(B) *Project Title:*

1. Pathogenesis and immunobiology of meningococcal infection.
2. Isoenzyme analysis for differentiation of neisseria meningitidis infection.

Indirect Support—Grants

(A) Professor E. R. Moxon, Oxford University.
(B) Project Title: Molecular basis of Haemophilius influenzae pathogenicity.
(C) Tenure: 1 April 1985 to 31 March 1995.

(A) Dr. G. J. Boulnois, Leicester University
(B) Project Title: Genetic Engineering of Polysaccharides
(C) Tenure: 18 July 1988 to 17 July 1991.

(A) Professor T. H. Pennington, Aberdeen University
(B) Project Title: Studies on the population genetics and typing of neisseria meningitidis.
(C) Tenure: 21 November 1988 to 20 November 1991.

(A) Dr. J. E. Heckels, Southampton University.
(B) Project Title: Immunobiology of meningococcal outer member proteins.
(C) Tenure: 1 September 1988 to 31 August 1991.

(A) Dr. D. M. Jones, London, Public Health Laboratory Service Board.
(B) Project Title: To investigate neisseria meningitidis surgace antigens for induction of protective antibody after disease/carriage.
(C) Tenure: 1 July 1988 to 30 June 1991.

(A) Dr. J. J. McFadden, University of Surrey.

(B) Project Title: DNA Probes to study epidemiology and virulence of neisseria meningitidis infection.
(C) Tenure: 31 January 1989 to 2 January 1992.

(A) Dr. B. G. Spratt, University of Sussex.
(B) Project Title: Molecular basis and molecular epidemiology of the emergence of penicillin resistance in neisseria meningitidis.
(C) Tenure: 1 May 1989 to 30 April 1992.

(A) Dr. A. Robinson, Porton, Centre for applied microbiology and research.
(B) Project Title: A preliminary investigation into mechanisms of meningoccal meningitis.
(C) Tenure: To be arranged.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fair Employment

Rev. William McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the firms in the Mid-Ulster area which are registered with the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Agency in Strabane district council, Omagh district council and Cookstown district council areas; and what are the number of employees in each and the Fair Employment Agency religious break-down of each.

Mr. Needham: The firms listed are those in the Strabane, Omagh and Cookstown district council areas which have been registered by the Fair Employment Commission. The total number of employees is shown alongside the name of the firm.

The Fair Employment Commission is not releasing information on community composition from individual monitoring returns at present.

Firms registered with FEC and number of employees in each case
Strabane District Council Area

	Numbers
Adria Limited Beechmount Avenue Strabane County Tyrone BT82 9BG	1,085
Ballantine A.S. Limited Aughafad Quarrry Donemana County Tyrone BT82 0SB	32
Leckpatrick Dairies Limited Artigarvan Strabane County Tyrone BT82 0HN	346
Linton and Robinson Limited Abercorn Square Strabane BT82 8DH	48
Melmount Community Care Limited 6 Ballycolman Avenue Strabane County Tyrone BT82 9AF	130
Millar L. J. 25 Seein Road Sion Mills Strabane County Tyrone	39
Porter H. G. & Company Limited Abercorn Factory Derry Road Strabane BT82 8DX	115
Strabane Community Project St. Josephs Centre Springhill Strabane BT82 8HT	42
Ardstraw Parish Community Scheme The Rectory 2 Bunderg Road Newtownstewart County Tyrone BT78 4NQ	29
Herdmans Limited 11 Mill Avenue Sion Mills County Tyrone BT82 9HE	760
Linian Knitwear Limited Spamount Mills Castlederg County Tyrone BT81 7NB	33
McGolgan Brothers Ltd. Dublin Road Industrial Estate Strabane BT82 9CA	55
Melmount Foods Ltd. Unit F965 Dublin Road Industrial Estate Strabane County Tyrone	35
Octopus Sportswear Ballycolman Avenue Strabane BT82 9AF	53
Roulston & McLaughlin NI Ltd. 2 Drumquin Road Castlederg County Tyrone BT81 7PX	49
Barrett Electrical 9 Gortrush Industrial Estate Derry Road Omagh BT78 5EJ	50
Coolaness Private Nursing Home Kesh Road Irvinestown County Fermanagh	38
Eakin James & Sons Ltd. Dublin Road Omagh County Tyrone BT78 1ET	30
Knock Na Moe Hotel Ltd. 59 Old Mountfield Road Omagh County Tyrone	40

	Numbers
McAleer & Teague Dromore County Tyrone BT78 3AU	45
Naturelle Consumer Products Ltd. Mountjoy Road Omagh County Tyrone BT79 7EQ	52
Omagh & District Advice Centres and Projects 9 Holmview Terrace Omagh BT79 0AH	71
Bradley & McElhatton 25 and 31 Main Street Mountfield Omagh BT79 7PY	26
Duncan & Griffin Company Limited Silverbirch Hotel 5 Gortin Road Omagh County Tyrone	30
Finlay Hydrascreens Limited Drumquin Road Omagh County Tyrone BT78 5PN	145
Master Meat Packers Limited 52 Doogary Road Omagh County Tyrone BT79 0BQ	85
Moffatts (Drumquin) Limited 61 Drumscra Road Drumquin Omagh	61
Nestle Company Limited 46 Beltany Road Omagh County Tyrone BT78 3NF	173
North West of Ireland Printing & Publishing Company Limited John Street Omagh County Tyrone BT78 1DT	44
Omaglass Limited Gortrush Industrial Estate Derry Road Omagh BT78	66
Scott T. W. & Sons (Fuels Limited) 51 Curr Road Beragh Omagh BT79 0UW	34

Omagh District Council Area

	Numbers
Shergrim Limited Gortrush Industrial Estate Derry Road Omagh County Tyrone BT78 5EJ	26
Royal Arms Hotel 51-53 High Street Omagh BT78 1BA	41
St. Vincent De Paul Ace Scheme 11 Holmview Terrace Campsie Omagh	30
Alexander W. & Sons 39 William Street Cookstown BT80 8BD	32
Blue Circle Cement 29 Sandholes Road Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 9AP	182
Cookstown Community Renewal Projects Limited 16E Oldtown Street Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8EF	105
Drapersfield House 19 Drapersfield Road Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8PS	26
Tyrone Constitution 25-27 High Street Omagh BT78 1BD	34
Scott W.& C. Limited 9 Mountjoy Road Omagh County Tyrone BT79 7AD	43
Woodlock Joinery Limited 3 Killybrack Road Omagh County Tyrone BT79 7DG	75
Ardboe Manufacturing Co. Ltd. T/A Forbes Kitchens & Forbes Furniture Ardboe Coagh Stewartstown County Tyrone BT71 5AX	63
Cookstown Community Projects Ltd. Drum Road Cookstown County Tyrone	58
Fairfields Nursing Home Fairhill Road Cookstown BT80 8RB	35

	Numbers
Hilton Meats (Cookstown) Ltd. Derryloran Industrial Estate Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8UJ	46
Glenavon Hotel (1982) Ltd. 52 Drum Road Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 3JQ	43
MacMahon Mr. J. J. (Building Contractor) Ltd. 4 Loy Street Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8PE	47
Marina Private Nursing Home Shore Road Ballyronan Magherafelt BT45 6JA	30
Milton Thom Royal Hotel 64 Coagh Street Cookstown BT80 8NG	26
Mallon Brothers Unit 6 Derryloran Industrial Estate Sandholes Road Cookstown BT80 9LU	29
McAleer & Rushe Ltd. 24 Dungannon Road Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8TL	43
Orr W. G. (UK) Ltd. 45 Ruskey road Coagh Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 0AH	40

Cookstown District Council Area

	Numbers
O'Neill Engineering 48 Ballygittle Road Stewartstown County Tyrone	26
Viper International Orritor Road Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8BL	45
Unipork Limited 70 Molesworth Road Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8PJ	794
St. Vincent de Paul Ace Scheme 35 Loy Street Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 8PZ	50
Quinns of Cookstown Limited 7 Sandholes Road Cookstown County Tyrone BT80 9AR	51

Primary Schools

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what discussions have taken place about the proposed rationalisation of the primary school sector within the Southern education and library board;

(2) what consultations have been held with the school principals within the primary school sector in the controlled section about the proposals for rationalisation in the Southern education and library board.

Dr. Mawhinney: The proposed rationalisation of schools is a matter in the first instance for either the education and library board in the case of controlled schools or the school authority in the case of voluntary schools. I am not aware of any discussions within the Southern board or between the board and primary school principals on proposed rationalisation, but I understand that the board has established a sub-committee to examine current school places.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received about the proposed rationalisation of the primary school sector within the Southern education and library board.

Dr. Mawhinney: I have received one letter from the hon. Gentleman.

Fencing

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions have taken place about the introduction of financial assistance in respect of the provisions of fencing at agricultural holdings in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Grants are available for fencing on agricultural holdings under both the United Kingdom farm and conservation grant scheme and the Northern Ireland agricultural development programme.

Sheep and Lamb

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what further action will be taken to promote the Northern Ireland sheep industry and the sale of Northern Irish lamb.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Livestock Marketing Commission for Northern Ireland is mainly responsible for market promotion and is intensifying its efforts, particularly in relation to export markets.

The Department of Agriculture is supporting the development of a high-quality product through its promotional programmes and various schemes including breeding schemes and its education and advisory services.

Union Flag

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members there are on the Southern health and social services board; how many of these members selected by him are non-elected members; what arrangements he makes for flying the union flag at its various premises; and why it was not flown at Tower Hill hospital, Armagh, on 2 June.

Mr. Needham: There are currently 25 places on the Southern health and social services board, one of which is vacant.

Nine of the places on the board are filled after consultation with professional, academic and trade union interests. Nine people are appointed because of the individual contribution they can make to the conduct of the board affairs. Seven places are filled by district councillors.

The requirements to fly the union flag on those prescribed dates relevant to Northern Ireland applies only to central Government offices. There is no requirement therefore for it to be flown on Tower Hill hospital, Armagh.

Energy Consumption

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give the number of dedicated energy managers in his Department and the number of person-years devoted to energy management in the latest year.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* There is one dedicated energy manager in the Northern Ireland energy conservation unit for the Northern Ireland Government office estate. Three person-years were devoted to energy management in this estate by the unit in 1989-90.

ENERGY

Spent Magnox Fuel

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to require Magnox operators to backfit at site dry storage facilities for spent fuel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: No. This is a matter for the operators of the Magnox stations. Neither Nuclear Electric nor British Nuclear Fuels have any such plans.

Nuclear Technology

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy which countries, not being signatories of the non-proliferation treaty, have received nuclear technology from the United Kingdom since 1985.

Mr. Baldry: No export licence has been issued since 1985 for the export of nuclear technology to countries which are not signatories to the non-proliferation treaty. The guidelines for all United Kingdom nuclear exports remain as set out by the then Foreign Secretary now Lord Callaghan on 31 March 1976 at columns *514-16*, which has been reaffirmed by the Prime Minister. These guidelines ensure that our nuclear exports are fully consistent with our international non-proliferation obligations under the non-proliferation treaty.

Spent Fuel Processing

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey, *Official Report*, 23 May, column *207*, what amounts by weight and volume of *(a)* high-level waste, *(b)* intermediate-level waste, *(c)* low-level waste, *(d)* reusable plutonium and *(e)* reusable uranium he estimates will result from the reprocessing of (i) the Magnox fuel and (ii) the spent oxide fuel awaiting reprocessing at Sellafield at 31 March.

Mr. Baldry: Detailed information on the quantities of materials arising from reprocessing is a matter for British Nuclear Fuels plc.

Nuclear Reprocessing Contracts

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had with the chairman of Nuclear Electric concerning the review and revaluation of nuclear reprocessing contracts inherited from the Central Electricity Generating Board.

Mr. Baldry: My right hon. Friend meets the chairman of Nuclear Electric regularly to discuss aspects of the nuclear industry. Reprocessing contracts between Nuclear Electric and British Nuclear Fuels are a commercial matter for the parties concerned.

Nuclear Non-proliferation

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to bring forward proposals at the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in August-September, for a multilateral programme for the long-term management of spent nuclear fuel, vitrified high-level wastes and the decommissioning of nuclear facilities developed under bilateral or multilateral nuclear technology transfer under the provision of article IV of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Baldry: No.

Nuclear Materials

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has agreed the definition adopted for the detection time concerning the diversion of nuclear materials from intended peaceful uses, by the safeguards authorities of the International Atomic Energy Agency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The definition of detection time is given in paragraph 108 of the "IAEA Safeguards Glossary" 1987 edition—ref. IAEA/SG/INF/1 (Rev. 1)—a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. This definition is accepted by the member states of the International Atomic Energy Agency, including the United Kingdom.

Plutonium

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what developments have taken place since 1985 in safeguards to ensure that non-nuclear weapons states acquiring reprocessing facilities do not use plutonium for military purposes.

Mr. Baldry: We have full confidence in the safeguards arrangements which are currently applied by the International Atomic Energy Agency which has reported no evidence of diversion of civil nuclear material to non-peaceful use.

In recent years there has been a series of meetings to consider the application of safeguards techniques to large-scale commercial reprocessing plants, in which the United Kingdom has been involved; this programme is continuing. Furthermore, the United Kingdom has, since 1981, carried out a safeguards research and development programme, which is funded to the sum of approximately

£1 million annually, in support of the International Atomic Energy Agency. A substantial proportion of this programme is devoted to the development of techniques relevant to the safeguarding of reprocessing plants.

Hinkley Point C

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has received the inspector's report from the Hinkley Point C public inquiry; and when he intends to announce his decision on Nuclear Electric's application and to publish the report.

Mr. Wakeham: I have just received the inspector's report. I shall not be in a position to reach a decision on Nuclear Electric's application until I have thoroughly considered it, but I hope to reach this position by the late summer.

The normal procedure for planning inquiries is for the inspector's report to be published at the same time as my Decision. I intend to follow this procedure in the case of the Hinkley Point C inquiry.

Electricity Agreement (France)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the implications for the three-year agreement between the electricity supply industry and Electricité de France as part of the non-fossil fuel obligation as a result of current electricity output reductions in France; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The agreements between Electricité de France and the public electricity supply companies are not part of the non-fossil fuel obligation.

Loft Insulation

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what criteria were considered when fixing the limit of 30 mm for topping-up loft insulation within the home energy efficiency scheme.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The reference to 30 mm was in the consultation paper issued by the Energy Efficiency Office in February. The figure is that used previously for the homes insulation scheme. A number of representations concerning that level of insulation have been received as a result of the consultation process and are currently being considered.

Nuclear Power (Privatisation Fees)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he proposes to pay Kleinwort its full fees for the advice it gave on the privatisation of nuclear power.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Kleinwort Benson's fees for the relevant periods have been paid in full.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the price of shares in the electricity distribution companies.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will announce the price of the shares in the 12 regional electricity companies on impact day. It is expected that will be during November 1990.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when the television advertising campaign to sell the electricity distribution companies will commence.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Advertising to publicise the offer for sale of the 12 regional electricity companies will be undertaken to inform the public of the forthcoming flotations. It would be premature to set out provisional plans, which are subject to matters that will not be resolved until much nearer the time of flotations.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to have the estimated total of expenditure on advertising the sale of the electricity distribution companies.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have nothing further to add to the answers that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to the hon. Member on 1 May and 6 June 1990.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he anticipates the Energy Efficiency Office announcing plans to include cavity wall insulation, electrical appliances and hot water tank thermostats within the home energy efficiency scheme.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The possible inclusion of additional energy efficiency measures within the home energy efficiency scheme was an area on which a number of comments were received as a result of the recent consultation process. Those comments are currently being considered.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to implement a minimum standard of knowledge for the energy advisers to be operating under the home energy efficiency scheme.

Mr. Peter Morrison: A number of those responding to the recent consultation paper on the home energy efficiency scheme commented on the need for standards for the provision of energy advice. Those comments are currently being considered.

Nuclear Fuel (Reprocessing)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what further capital investment will be required by British Nuclear Fuels plc to meet its contractual obligations to the owners of foreign nuclear fuel to be reprocessed in Britain;

(2) what capital has been invested by British Nuclear Fuels plc to enable it to reprocess foreign nuclear fuel in Britain.

Mr. Wakeham: British Nuclear Fuels plc has reprocessing contracts for both Magnox fuel and thermal oxide fuel. Magnox fuel is reprocessed in facilities constructed for the United Kingdom's own Magnox reactors and no significant additional capital investment has been necessary to reprocess foreign fuel.

British Nuclear Fuels plc thermal oxide reprocessing plant is being constructed to store and reprocess both United Kingdom and foreign thermal oxide fuel. Several of the associated plants for the treatment of wastes arising from THORP reprocessing will also treat wastes from Magnox fuel. British Nuclear Fuels plc estimates that the

allocation of capital investment for the storage, reprocessing and waste management of foreign thermal oxide fuel to date is £1,100 million with £600 million still to be spent.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the estimated value of British Nuclear Fuels plc contracts to reprocess foreign nuclear fuel in Britain in the current year and each succeeding year up to 1995;

(2) what is the estimated total value of British Nuclear Fuels plc contracts to reprocess foreign nuclear fuel in Britain;

(3) what is the longest period of any contract entered into by British Nuclear Fuels Ltdplc to reprocess foreign nuclear fuel in Britain.

Mr. Wakeham: BNFL's estimated turnover relating to storage, reprocessing and waste treatment still to be performed on foreign nuclear fuel is around £4 billion, excluding £0·75 billion from the series of contracts which BNFL is currently completing with West German utilities. More detailed information on contracts is a matter for the company.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Police (Complaints)

102. **Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Attorney-General what is the average period of time taken by the Director of Public Prosecutions in processing complaints by prisoners against police officers in specific cases; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Records of the time taken to process such cases are not kept. However, all such cases are processed as swiftly as possible. The time taken for any particular case depends on the complexity and size of the case. Simple straightforward cases are normally processed within two weeks of receipt of the police investigation report, more complex cases within three months and the most complex and largest cases within six to 12 months.

High Court, Northern Ireland

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Attorney-General whether there is a separate family division at the High Court in Northern Ireland; how many judges at the High Court deal with the family problem of custody of children and access to children following separation or divorce; how many such applications await hearing in the High Court; and if he has any proposals to shorten the time required before such cases are heard in the High Court.

The Attorney-General: A separate family division of the High Court in Northern Ireland was created by the Judicature (Northern Ireland) Act 1978. The business of the family division is assigned to one of the judges of the High Court who is assisted by other judges of the Supreme Court as necessary. All 10 High Court judges hear petitions for divorce and judicial separation and deal with questions of custody of and access to children arising therefrom.

There are two custody applications awaiting hearing and one access application listed for hearing in the week beginning 11 June 1990.

Waiting times are in general considered to be satisfactory and there are therefore no proposals to shorten the time required before custody cases are heard by the court.

Court House, Armagh

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Attorney-General what are the arrangements for flying the union flag at the court house in Armagh city; and why it was not flown on 2 June.

The Attorney-General: An attempt was made by the office manager to fly the union flag at Armagh court house on 2 June 1990, but when being hoisted it caught on barbed wire and was torn to the extent that it was rendered unusable.

A new flag has been supplied and will be flown on all appropriate dates in accordance with standing instructions.

Evidence (Fax Machines)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Attorney-General whether there is any proposal to make provision, in relation to the Supreme Court for the admissibility of evidence from solicitors of documents in evidence via fax machines; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: There are currently no proposals to make provision in the Supreme Court, for the admissibility of evidence from solicitors of documents in evidence via fax machines.

Fax copies are unsuited for use as part of the permanent court record because of their tendency to fade. The question of filing court documents by fax will be kept under review, in particular whether technological advances will make fax copies suitable as permanent documents.

ENVIRONMENT

Toxic Waste Imports

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide details of the quantity of toxic waste imported into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Trippier: The latest figure for imports of hazardous waste into the United Kingdom under the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations for the calender year 1989, is 41,554 tonnes. This figure is an update of the one given in the written answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) on 21 March 1990, *Official Report* columns *684-85*, taking into account additional notifications received from disposers.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the Government's estimates of toxic waste imports to the United Kingdom in each of the next five years.

Mr. Trippier: The Government make no estimate of future imports of hazardous waste into the United Kingdom. However, it is expected that imports from other EC member states will reduce in future years following the Council of Environment Ministers' decision in Luxembourg on 7 June 1990 that member states must aim to be self-sufficient in waste disposal.

Drought

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will commission a study into the effects of prolonged drought on bird life that requires a diet of freshwater fish; and what information he has on the numbers of herons observed fishing in the sea along the south coast.

Mr. Trippier: There is no evidence that the risk to birds from the effects of drought is so significant as to justify commissioning a study. Populations of herons and other waterways birds are monitored annually. I have no information about the extent to which herons fish in the sea, but I understand that it is not unusual.

Sea Birds (Poisoning)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the research centre at Monkswood has within the last 12 months examined any sea birds for evidence of glycol poisoning; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology's Monkswood experimental station—part of the natural environment research council—has not examined any sea-birds for evidence of glycol poisoning in the past 12 months.

In 1988 the institute carried out analysis and post mortem studies on a number of birds found dead in the Bacton area of Norfolk. No single cause of death could be found at post mortem and none of the chemical or metal residues found in the birds could, taken singly, be considered to have caused death. Tests for glycol residues were inconclusive, although glycols are not generally considered to be especially toxic to vertebrates. No further incidents have been brought to the institute's attention.

Planning Appeals, Manchester

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the number of planning appeals made to his Department against decisions made by each local authority in Greater Manchester in *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1986, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1988 and *(e)* 1989, together with the number of appeals upheld in each year against each authority.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested is as follows:

Appeals 1985-86

Local authority	*Received*	*Decided*	*Allowed*
Greater Manchester	4	4	0
Bolton	58	51	22
Bury	20	9	3
Manchester	28	21	10
Oldham	31	31	10
Rochdale	20	15	6
Salford	29	21	9
Stockport	42	39	14
Tameside	29	29	12
Trafford	57	44	20
Wigan	49	22	8

Appeals 1986-87

Local authority	*Received*	*Decided*	*Allowed*
Greater Manchester	2	5	1
Bolton	53	53	27
Bury	28	23	9
Manchester	30	21	9
Oldham	34	31	11
Rochdale	21	16	3
Salford	30	28	9
Stockport	60	46	20
Tameside	44	30	15
Trafford	45	41	20
Wigan	38	39	13

Appeals 1987-88

Local authority	*Received*	*Decided*	*Allowed*
Greater Manchester	—	1	0
Bolton	60	60	26
Bury	28	31	11
Manchester	17	22	11
Oldham	22	24	10
Rochdale	30	30	16
Salford	25	20	11
Stockport	51	46	16
Tameside	53	50	20
Trafford	54	34	16
Wigan	51	44	18

Appeals 1988-89

Local authority	*Received*	*Decided*	*Allowed*
Greater Manchester	—	1	0
Bolton	53	47	19
Bury	26	23	9
Manchester	22	14	6
Oldham	29	23	5
Rochdale	36	24	13
Salford	26	19	13
Stockport	55	47	17
Tameside	53	55	32
Trafford	63	44	18
Wigan	49	52	18

Appeals 1989-90

Local authority	*Received*	*Decided*	*Allowed*
Greater Manchester	—	—	—
Bolton	63	47	22
Bury	33	24	11
Manchester	38	21	9
Oldham	41	32	10
Rochdale	41	36	15
Salford	33	22	11
Stockport	80	61	27
Tameside	61	43	24
Trafford	64	48	21
Wigan	51	29	9

Notes:
1. Appeals received do not equal those decided. Cases decided in any one year were not necessarily received in that year.
2. The Greater Manchester Metropolitan County Council was abolished in 1986.

Development Plans

Sir David Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many cases there have been in the last 12 months where developers have been found liable for costs after they have pursued appeals against refusals properly substantiated by policies in up-to-date development plans.

Mr. Michael Spicer: During the 12 months from 1 June 1989 to 31 May 1990, my right hon. Friend and planning inspectors awarded the planning authority's appeal costs against an appellant in 53 cases, where the appellant's

"unreasonable" behaviour, as interpreted in DOE circular 2/87, caused the planning authority to incur costs unnecessarily. These awards were justified by the circumstances in each case; and I regret that an analysis of cases in which the award was based solely on inconsistency with an up-to-date development plan could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Leaseholders

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to introduce legislation for the enfranchisement of leaseholders of flats.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have no immediate plans to do so. As the law stands, freehold tenure does not provide a sound basis for the ownership of flats. The concept of commonhold is being developed with a view to overcoming this problem, but a number of important issues remain to be resolved. I understand that my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor intends to make a statement on the subject in due course.

Climatic Change

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what support Her Majesty's Government are giving to proposals for a European Community centre of studies of climatic change; and if he will make a statement on the results of discussions held in Madrid for this purpose.

Mr. Trippier: There is at present no European Community proposal for a centre for climate change studies. The directors of western European meteorological services have recently established an ad-hoc working group, which first met in Madrid on 5 and 6 June to consider possible initiatives for co-ordinating their activities on climate change issues. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister opened the new Hadley centre for climate prediction and research on 25 May. This will build on the leading work of the United Kingdom Meteorological Office, and international co-operation will be an important part of its remit.

Industrial Rates

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the cost to the Treasury of industrial derating for manufacturing industries.

Mr. Chope: The aggregate rate liability of factories, mills, works and workshops in England and Wales in 1990-91, subject to transition, is around £2·1 billion.

Enterprise Zones

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what limit he can impose on the amounts that firms situated in enterprise zones may offset against any taxable benefit tied to that location in respect of other enterprises outside such zones making losses.

Mr. Moynihan: None. The circumstances in which tax relief available in enterprise zones can be utilised is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Ozone

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to ensure that information on low-level ozone build-up is released automatically to the press and public on a daily basis wherever it exceeds World Health Organisation air quality guidelines.

Mr. Trippier: Information on ozone levels is already automatically released through the Department's press office, as I said in the answer I gave on Tuesday 24 April 1990 to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey, (Mr. Hughes) at column *121*. So far this year, 27 daily summaries have been released and many requests for information have been received.

Housing Associations (Low-cost Houses)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made in implementation of the provisions for repurchase by housing associations of low-cost houses.

Mr. Chope: The Department is anxious to ensure that shared ownership housing association schemes on scarce sites in rural communities continue to benefit local people with modest means. We are now considering proposals from the Housing Corporation for a housing association rural repurchase scheme, which it is hoped to introduce shortly.

Student Nurses

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what progress has been made in reclassifying psychiatric student nurses as students for the purposes of the community charge;

(2) if he will now reconsider the definition or classification of student nurses for the purpose of the community charge.

Mr. Chope: The eligibility criteria for the student relief are set out in the Personal Community Charge (Students) Regulations 1989—S.I. 1989/443. They already provide that students on undergraduate nursing courses and those undertaking Project 2000 training will be eligible for the student relief. Over the next few years the Project 2000 scheme will be extended to cover all pre-registration nursing trainees at schools of nursing, including those training for psychiatric nursing.

Uniform Business Rate

Mr. Allen McKay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of percentage price increases in the cost of living each year for the next five years in Scotland, Wales, northern England, southern England and south-east England due to the uniform business rate.

Mr. Chope: In fixing the national non-domestic rate poundages for England and Wales for 1990-91 the Government have aimed to raise in real terms from private businesses and the nationalised industries broadly the same amount in rates as they paid in 1989-90. In future years, the poundage cannot, by law, rise by more than the level of inflation. The new system is therefore not

inflationary. There is no uniform business rate in Scotland, though my right hon. and learned Friend has taken powers to harmonise the local poundages there with the non-domestic rate poundage in England over a period of years.

Greenhouse Effect

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what response he proposes to make to the announcement by West Germany of a ban on the domestic use and production of chlorofluorocarbons by 1995, and the banning of the use of halogenated hydrocarbons in hand-held extinguishers and on the use of carbon tetrachloride and methyl chloroforms as solvents by 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Future international controls on ozone depleting substances will be decided at the meeting of the Montreal protocol parties in London at the end of this month. In the light of the results of that meeting, member states of the European Community will discuss what measures to impose within the Community, consistent with the operation of the single European market.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to introduce a Bill to implement the Montreal protocol proposals to cause a reduction in the use of chlorofluorocarbons and halons.

Mr. Trippier: The Montreal protocol is implemented on a Community wide basis by EC regulation 3322/88, which is directly applicable in United Kingdom law. The Commission has proposed a new regulation aimed at implementing the changes to the protocol which should be agreed at the end of this month. Member states will consider the draft regulation in the light of the changes which are actually agreed—we expect to complete the process by the end of 1990.

North Sea Conference

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the implementation, proposed to be drawn up within three months, of the North sea conference on 8 March.

Mr. Trippier: I hope to publish the Government's guidance note on implementation of the third North sea conference within the next month.

Disability Grants

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will delay implementation of the new scheme for means-tested grants for people with disabilities until local authorities have received full information on the scheme.

Mr. Chope: The new scheme will be introduced on 1 July by which time local authorities will have received full information by way of Departmental circulars.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from Hands of Calderdale as part of the consultation process on proposed procedures for means-testing home improvement grants for people with disabilities; and if he will be responding to their questions.

Mr. Chope: The Department received a letter from Hands of Calderdale in response to the consultation exercise on the test of resources for the new disabled facilities grants being introduced under part VIII of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Their comments were considered along with those of other consultees in finalising the test of resources regulations.

Housing

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table which, allowing for recent adjustments to the Housing Corporation's capital programme, shows for 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93 *(a)* the number of housing association new approvals and *(b)* the number of housing association completions.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The Housing Corporation is currently discussing with housing associations the implications of recent adjustments to the corporation's capital programme for the level of approvals and completions over the next three years. The Housing Corporation has already indicated that housing association completions in 1990-91 are expected to exceed earlier forecasts. Thereafter, massive expansion in the output of new homes is still expected.

Norman Shaw North (Water Supply)

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what pollutants have recently been found in the water supply to the Norman Shaw North parliamentary office building; and what action has been taken to remove them.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* Following a complaint about the quality of drinking water in the building, samples were tested by the laboratory of the Government chemist. Those taken from the supply to the Embankment side of the building were found to contain coli-aerogenes. Remedial action was taken. Further tests samples taken on 5 June 1990 contained no coli-aerogenes and the supply has now been reinstated.

Tyne and Wear Development Corporation

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest information he has as to how many new jobs in Sunderland have been created by the activities of the Tyne and Wear development corporation, from its inception.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* To date, 1,138 jobs have been created in Sunderland through the activities of the Tyne and Wear development corporation.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to test the accuracy of job creation forecasts given to his Department by Tyne and Wear Development Corporation.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* The corporation is well aware of the advice issued by the Department about job-creation figures and I have every confidence that the appropriate techniques are being applied.

Sunderland Enterprise Zone

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his current estimate of the cost to Her Majesty's Government of the Sunderland enterprise zone, broken down into *(a)* rate relief and *(b)* capital allowances.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* The initial estimate of the overall costs of the zone was given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 7 December 1988. The cost of rate relief and capital allowances in the zone will depend on the progress of reclamation and development and the decisions of individual firms.

Children (Sexual Abuse)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what facilities his Department offers to local government to spread the best practice in suspected cases of sexual abuse of children.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I have been asked to reply.

The Department routinely issues guidance to local authorities, and has recently hosted a national conference for chairmen of area child protection committees, the proceedings of which will be disseminated. In addition, several projects in the Department's central training initiative are concerned with child sexual abuse and as part of the training support programme (child care) a special development group has produced guidelines for local authority training officers to assist them with planning their staff training in this area. The Department's social services inspectorate also produce reports which highlight good practice.

Aquaguard

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to renew the product licence for Aquaguard.

Mr. Maclean: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Minister is hoping to make a statement shortly.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuna

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Lord President of the Council what steps he has taken to assure himself that the tuna fish served in the House is caught in a manner harmless to dolphins.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Refreshment Department purchases only canned tuna fish products which derive from skipjack tuna and, which it is understood, do not usually swim with dolphins. It is also keeping itself informed of developments in the marketing of "dolphin-safe" canned tuna fish. It is impracticable for the Department to purchase foodstuffs from other than a wholesaler.

Parliament (Organisation)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he will consider an approach from a management consultancy company to undertake a study on the organisation of the House.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am always interested in suggestions which may lead to improvements in the organisation of the House and the services provided for hon. and right hon. Members. However, a separate study by management consultants would not seem appropriate at present in the light of the review of management, decision-taking and financial responsibilities which was announced by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), on behalf of the House of Commons Commission, on 23 May, *Official Report*, column *179*.

Motions

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Lord President of the Council on how many days since 1 July 1987 the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) has tabled notices of motion relating to each of *(a)* a Select Committee on Legal Affairs, *(b)* the reform of the House of Commons procedure, *(c)* sittings of the House and *(d)* Members' facilities; and what estimate he has made of the total cost to public funds and the volume of newsprint that have been involved in the printing of these motions.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The total cost to public funds of printing and publishing notices of motions relating to (a) a Select Committee on Legal Affairs, (b) the reform of the House of Commons procedure, (c) sittings of the House and (d) Members facilities, tabled by the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) since Sessions 1987-88, 1988-89 with 1989-90 up to and including 7 June 1990, is estimated as £55,000. The volume of paper consumed was about 300,000 sheets of A4 paper.

The number of days on which the notices of motions were tabled in each Session are as follows:

Motion	*Number of days*			
	Session 1987-88	*Session 1988-89*	*Session 1989-90*[1]	*Total*
(a) Select Committee on Legal Affairs	—	71	92	163
(b) Procedure	69	122	92	283
(c) Sittings	69	123	92	284
(d) Facilities	—	115	92	207

[1] Up to and including 7 June 1990.

Secretarial Facilities

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Lord President of the Council what action he intends to take to improve the secretarial facilities for hon. Members.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In the context of planning for the new parliamentary buildings several initiatives have been taken to improve conditions for Members' secretaries. Further accommodation has been provided in Canon row; 100 new desk spaces are planned for phase 1; more will be included in phase 2; and, in the Services Committee's third report of this Session (HC 334) recommendations are made to establish basic minimum standards in respect of planning for future accommodation.

Any proposal to increase the secretarial allowance is a matter for the House to decide.

Pedestrian Access

Dr. Marek: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he has any proposals to improve pedestrian access across the road directly outside St. Stephen's entrance and Chancellor's Gate.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee has accepted the advice of the traffic authorities that all pedestrians crossing St. Margaret's street should be encouraged to use the existing facility. It is understood that the installation of any additional crossing would run counter to plans to improve the management and safety of pedestrians and traffic in that area.

Energy Consumption

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will give for each year from 1978 the energy consumption, broken down by fuel, of the buildings occupied by the Privy Council Office, expressing the figures in *(a)* cash terms, *(b)* 1978-79 money terms and *(c)* units of consumption for electricity in kilowatt hours, gas in therms, liquid fuel in litres and solid fuel in tonnes.

Sir Geoffrey Howe *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* The Privy Council Office, as the joint occupier of a building complex, pays a negotiated proportion of composite charges for gas, and for electricity. The office does not incur any costs in repect of liquid or solid fuels. The total units of consumption for gas and electricity in the financial year 1989-90 were given in my answer on 10 May 1990, but comparable figures for the previous decade could not be accurately calculated except at disproportionate cost. The annual costs to the Department in cash, and 1978-79 money, terms for gas and electricity for those years for which figures are available are as follows:

	Cash terms		*1978-79 money terms*	
	Gas £	*Electricity* £	*Gas* £	*Electricity* £
1983-84	1,350	6,150	793	3,611
1984-85	1,854	8,446	1,037	4,725
1985-86	2,160	9,840	1,146	5,224
1986-87	2,511	11,439	1,289	5,874
1987-88	1,782	8,118	868	3,956
1988-89	1,675	7,632	762	3,472
1989-90	1,920	10,923	820	4,666

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Departmental Advisers

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the advisers to his Department, and the area of work for which their advice was required, for the period since 1 January 1984.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are two special advisers at present, Mr. D. Lidington and Mr. M. Fraser. Their role is to consider the presentational and domestic political aspects of policy issues, including those for which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not have lead responsibility. Others who have held the post during the period since January 1984 are Mr. J. Houston, Mr. A. Teasdale and Mr. A. Fergusson.

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement outlining the courses of action available to Her Majesty's Government *(a)* in the prevention of the settlement of Russian emigrants in territories illegally occupied by Israel and *(b)* to persuade Israel to take part in a conference with a view to negotiating a settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Israelis are well aware of our view that the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories, including east Jerusalem, is both illegal and a serious obstacle to peace and should not be permitted. We are working closely with the United States and other interested parties to encourage Israel to open a dialogue with representative Palestinians as a first step towards a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute which will have to be negotiated at an international conference.

Mrs. Asmat Jan and Son

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when a decision is to be taken on the applications made to the post in Islamabad by Mrs. Asmat Jan and her son Atlas Khan, Refs: IMM/92511 and K22704, to enter the United Kingdom.

Mr. Sainsbury: In accordance with the guidelines on the handling of representations by Members of Parliament in immigration cases, issued to Members on 14 December 1988, I have referred the question to the correspondence unit of the migration and visa department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The hon. Member will receive a reply from the unit as soon as possible.

Defence Policy

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consideration has been given to the foreign policy implications of the options for change study.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has, of course, been consulting us and other colleagues on the work he has in hand. He will be reporting to the House on this in due course.

Naval Policy

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what international negotiations on *(a)* naval confidence-building measures and *(b)* naval disarmament the Government are currently involved.

Mr. Waldegrave: No negotiations are taking place on naval arms control involving the United Kingdom. The subject of naval disarmament does, however, feature on the agenda of the annual United Nations disarmament conference.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current assessment of the feasibility of opening negotiations on *(a)* naval confidence-building measures and *(b)* naval disarmament.

Mr. Waldegrave: The alliance's priority for conventional arms control remains land and air forces, because of the potential threat they can pose to stability. Naval forces are explicitly excluded from conventional arms control negotiations taking place in Vienna by their terms of reference.

Mr. Choudhry Mohammad Waheed

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he issued instructions to the post in Islamabad to issue entry clearance to Mr.

Choudhry Mohammad Waheed following his successful appeal against refusal to grant entry clearance, Ref. TH/7817, in August 1989; when they were received there; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

TRANSPORT

Rail Services

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider making grants to the British Rail Board towards the reopening of rail lines or the reinstatement of rail services where such services will relieve traffic congestion or enhance travel opportunities to the benefit of the community.

Mr. Freeman: Grants may be made under section 56 of the Transport Act 1968 towards the cost of investments which are not financially viable but which can be justified on wider social and economic grounds. The availability of such grants to British Rail was noted by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in his letter of 19 December 1989 to the chairman of the British Rail reported in the *Official Report* on 19 December, at columns *227-32*.

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the extent to which bus substitution provides an acceptable alternative to existing rail services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: It is for British Rail to make any such assessment in the first instance in the light of the objectives set by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in his letter of 19 December 1989 to the chairman of the British Railways Board.

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider increasing the public service obligation grant to British Rail in respect of the Provincial Services Network in line with inflation each year; and what account he takes of the need to reduce overcrowding and congestion and increase reliability of services when considering increases to the public service obligation grant.

Mr. Freeman: The size of the grant needs to reflect progress made by British Rail in increasing revenue and reducing costs. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has set quality targets for reliability, punctuality and load factors, which were taken into account when the current financial targets were set in his letter of 19 December 1989 to the chairman of the board.

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish guidelines to Network SouthEast and the Provincial Services Network of British Rail concerning the level of services supported by public services obligation grant he expects them to provide.

Mr. Freeman: The British Railways Board was directed on 30 March 1988 to provide a public service generally comparable with that provided at the date the direction was made. The direction is published each year in the board's annual report and accounts. Quality of service standards were among the objectives set by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in his letter of 19 December 1989 to the chairman of the board.

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mr. Atkins: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. I have nothing to add to the replies given to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 30 March 1990 and to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 15 March 1990.

Smoking on Trains

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to seek to reintroduce section 20 of the Regulation of Railways Act 1868, repealed in 1959.

Mr. Freeman: The provision of smoking accommodation on trains is now a matter for the management of British Rail and other railway undertakings to decide.

Dangerous Substances

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give consideration to transferring to local authorities the enforcement of the Dangerous Substances (Conveyance by Road in Road Tankers and Tank Containers) Regulations 1981.

Mr. Atkins: The regulations are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. I have no plans to change this.

Aircraft Pollution

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies are being carried out into the influence of water vapour created by aircraft on the atmosphere, and on the stratosphere in particular, over and above naturally occuring water vapour levels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: In the troposphere, water vapour is known to be an important natural contributor to the greenhouse effect, although the contribution made by aircraft is negligible. Whether the amounts emitted by aircraft directly into the lower reaches of the stratosphere are significant is a matter on which I am seeking advice from Professor Hoskins, the Department's scientific adviser on global environment.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals exist for scienific studies into the effect on stratospheric ozone in relation to proposals for a post-Concorde fleet of supersonic transport aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: In the United States of America the National Aeronautical and Space Administration is undertaking a major programme of research into this issue in view of the recent revival of interest in supersonic transport aircraft. In addition to determining the potential impact of an supersonic transport aircraft fleet on the protective ozone layer, NASA is also seeking to establish technologies and operational procedures that would

ensure that future supersonic transport operations would not result in significant ozone depletion. At home, Warren Spring laboratory has been asked to consider what effect aircraft operations in the stratosphere might have on the ozone layer.

Rail Safety

Mr. John P. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will call for a report from the railway inspectorate on the safety implications of allowing locomotive number 86238 to travel from Norwich Crown Point to Manningtree on 7 June without a qualified driver.

Mr. Freeman: I understand that the locomotive was used in conjunction with one of the driving trailers which are to be introduced on Liverpool Street to Norwich InterCity services later in the year. The train was driven by a traction inspector who was fully qualified to drive both the locomotive and driving trailer. Two other, similarly qualified inspectors were also on board. Had a driver been present he would only have assisted with route knowledge and all three traction inspectors were fully competent in that respect. The railway inspectorate assures me that safety was not compromised.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money he estimates to have been saved by compulsory competitive tendering in road and other transport schemes in each of the last five years.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* Competitive tendering has been the long-term policy for the construction of the Department's motorway and trunk road schemes. Fee competition for consultants responsible for the preparation, design and supervision of construction of these schemes was introduced in January 1985. This has resulted in projected savings of about 25 per cent. on the total whole life costs of commissions placed in the first five years.

Local authority highway works have been increasingly exposed to compulsory competitive tendering since 1981 but information on which to base estimates of savings is not available. The Audit Commission has begun a study of effects of. the 1987 and 1988 regulatory changes, which require all highway works over £25,000 and 60 per cent. of work at or below that threshold to be subjected to compulsory competitive tender.

Marine Pollution

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give full details of the ships, aircraft and other pollution control equipment available to the marine pollution control unit; where these ships and aircraft are based; and what plans he has to augment the unit's equipment.

Mr. McLoughlin *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The list of directly owned or contracted counter-pollution resources available to the marine pollution control unit is extensive; copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

In addition, the unit can also hire equipment from commercial sources in the United Kingdom and can call on assistance from other North sea states under the terms of the Bonn agreement for co-operation in dealing with oil spillages.

A full review of United Kingdom preparedness to deal with an oil spill at sea was completed last year after the Exxon Valdez incident in Alaska. I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 6 March 1990, *Official Report*, columns *551-52.*

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has supplied to the European Commission on arrangements concerning the transport of nuclear fuel and waste through the channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: When Eurotunnel puts forward proposals covering the movement of dangerous goods and radioactive materials, they will be considered by the intergovernmental commission established by the channel tunnel treaty to oversee safety, and any necessary advice sought.

The European Commission does not at present have any direct influence in this field.

THE ARTS

European Audiovisual Industry

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the European Commission's proposals to encourage the production of more European-made programmes for television.

Mr. Luce: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon West (Miss Nicholson) on 6 June, *Official Report*, column *607*, on Her Majesty's Government's support for the Commission's proposed 250 million ecu budget to promote the European audiovisual industry.

EMPLOYMENT

Special Needs Training

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy that the cost of funding special needs training will continue to be underwritten by the Government.

Mr. Eggar: The Government will continue to ensure that all eligible people with special training needs who join youth training or employment training have access to suitable training programmes. The cost of such training will in part be met by the contributions of scheme sponsors and employers, and in some cases by training and enterprise councils out of their own self-generated funds. The Government contribute funds, totalling more than £2 billion, for youth training and employment training in 1990-91, to ensure that its declared guarantees and aims for youth and adult training are fully met.

Genetic Manipulation

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list any prosecutions, enforcement notices or improvement notices issued under the Genetic Manipulation Regulations 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: Since the Health and Safety (Genetic Manipulation) Regulations 1989 came into force on 1 November 1989 a total of five improvement notices have been served by the Health and Safety Executive to enforce the requirements of these regulations.

Three of the notices were served on the City and Hackney health authorities at St. Bartholomew's hospital, London and a further two were served on a department head at the hospital.

Employment Exchanges

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will give full consideration to the social value of a local part-time employment exchange before considering any proposal for its closure;

(2) if he will ensure that the local authorities covering any part of the area served by a part-time local employment exchange are fully consulted and that full weight is given to their response before considering any proposal to close any such office; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will list any part-time local employment exchanges in Wales which his Department is currently considering closing;

(4) if he will undertake a full process of public consultation with any community served by a local part-time employment exchange before considering any proposal for its closure.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave him on 13 June.

In considering the closure of a part-time local office, full consideration is given as to how best to provide the most effective service to ES clients. Larger full-time offices offer a comprehensive range of services and are better able to help unemployed people back to work.

The following part-time local offices in Wales are scheduled for closure by the end of July:

Bethesda
Brynamman
Clydach
Cwm
Hirwaun
Merthyr Vale (Aberfan)
New Tredegar
Pembroke
Senghenydd.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Industry Council

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the European Economic Community Industry Council meeting of 28 May.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Industry Council on 28 May discussed the involvement of small and medium sized enterprises in public procurement and EC R&D programmes, and the implications for such firms of the business environment. The Council considered the subject of semiconductors and held a first debate on the Commission's proposal for a seventh directive on aid to the shipbuilding industry. The Commission also presented its views of prospects for the EC steel industry over the next five years. The business was both uncontroversial and routine in character.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether Britain was represented at ministerial level at the recent meeting of the European Community Industry Council at which steel was discussed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The United Kingdom was represented by the United Kingdom permanent representative to the Community, Sir David Hannay, supported by senior DTI officials.

Steel Industry

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the proposed closure of the strip mill at Ravenscraig.

Mr. Ridley: I last met Sir Robert Scholey on 5 June when we had a confidential discussion.

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of the British Steel Corporation to discuss the future of the steel industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: I last met Sir Robert Scholey on 5 June when we had a confidential discussion.

Financial Services Act

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has received any representations about the working of the Financial Services Act.

Mr. Redwood: I receive a considerable number of representations on a variety of topics relating to the regulation of financial services.

Chartered Accountants

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has for fresh legislation to cover the chartered accountants profession; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: We have no plans to legislate in respect of chartered accountants in particular or the accountancy profession in general. However, the implementation of part II of the Companies Act 1989 and of Directive 89/48/EEC on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications will affect parts of the accountancy profession, including chartered accountants.

Greenhouse Effect

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information his Department collects on the production of chemicals which may have a harmful effect on the ozone layer; if he will break down this information by manufacturer for the most recent 12-month period available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: There are only two United Kingdom manufacturers of chlorofluorocarbons, one of which also manufactures halons. They are obliged, under EC Regulation 3322/88, to report their production of these substances to the European Commission at six-monthly intervals. They do so on a commercially confidential basis, and copy the data to my Department and to the Department of the Environment.

There are no reporting arrangements for the production of other ozone-depleting substances.

British Steel

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the date of his last meeting with the chairman of British Steel; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* I last met Sir Robert Scholey on 5 June when we had a confidential discussion.

National Consumer Council

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much is paid from public funds to the National Consumer Council; for what purpose those funds are paid; and who are the members of the council.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* For the financial year 1990-91 the total grant-in-aid to the National Consumer Council will be £2·178 million. This amount includes the grants-in-aid to the Scottish Consumer Council, Welsh Consumer Council and Consumers in the European Community Group which are paid via the National Consumer Council.

The grant is paid to the National Consumer Council to enable it to carry out the functions described in its memorandum of association, that is to promote action for furthering and safeguarding the interests of consumers, to ensure that those who take decisions which will affect the consumer can have a balanced and authoritative view of the interests of consumers before them and to insist that the interests of all consumers, including the inarticulate and disadvantaged, are taken into account.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are taken by his Department to ensure that the National Consumer Council reflects the views of consumers.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* On many subjects there may be no one consumer view. However, I am satisfied that in so far as it is possible to do so, the National Consumer Council reflects the views of consumers.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are taken by his Department to check claims made by the National Consumer Council before those claims are made public knowledge.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The Department does not check the claims made by the National Consumer Council (NCC) before they are made public knowledge, nor does it believe that it would be appropriate for it to do so.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to increase the accountability of the National Consumer Council to consumers.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* No. I am satisfied that the National Consumer Council adequately takes account of the views of consumers.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to phase out the funding of the National Consumer Council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* No.

Export Licences

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many licences have been granted under the powers given to him by the Import, Export and Customs Powers (Defence) Act 1939 to firms seeking to export equipment to *(a)* Jordan, *(b)* Syria, *(c)* Libya, *(d)* India, *(e)* Pakistan, *(f)* Israel, *(g)* Saudi Arabia, *(h)* Egypt and *(i)* Argentina in the last 10 years.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* This information is not readily available and could be provided only at extremely disproportionate cost.

Trade Licences

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many licences have been granted under the powers given to him by the Import, Export and Custom Powers (Defence) Act 1939 to *(a)* Matrix Churchill Ltd., *(b)* TMG Engineering Ltd., *(c)* Technology and Trade Development Group Ltd. and *(d)* Canira Technical Corp. Ltd., in the last 10 years.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* It is not the practice to publish such information.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Crime Statistics

10. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the chief constable of Warwickshire to discuss crime figures.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend meets chief officers of police on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policing matters, but he has no present plans for a meeting with the chief constable of Warwickshire to discuss crime figures in particular.

17. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the Chief Constable of Cumbria to discuss crime figures.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend meets chief officers of police on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policing matters, but he has no present plans for a meeting with the chief constable of Cumbria to discuss crime figures in particular.

20. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the chief constable of Gwent to discuss crime figures.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend meets chief officers of police on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policing matters, but he has no present plans for a meeting with the chief constable of Gwent to discuss crime figures in particular.

24. **Mrs. Golding:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the chief constable of Staffordshire to discuss crime figures.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend meets chief officers of police on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policing matters, but he has no present plans for a meeting with the chief constable of Staffordshire to discuss crime figures in particular.

28. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the chief constable of Leicestershire to discuss crime figures.

42. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the Chief Constable of Wiltshire to discuss crime figures.

49. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the Chief Constable of Surrey to discuss crime figures.

73. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the Chief Constable of Sussex to discuss crime figures.

80. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the Chief Constable of Derbyshire to discuss crime figures.

95. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester to discuss crime figures.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend meets chief officers of police on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policing matters, but he has no present plans for meetings to discuss crime figures in particular.

37. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what comparable figures he has on international levels of crime and on the level of crime in England and Wales.

46. **Mr. Lawrence:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the level of crime in England and Wales, in each member country of the European Community and in the United States of America.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friend and my hon. and learned Friend to the reply given earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine).

British Summer Time

13. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further representations he has received in respect of proposed changes to British summer time.

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further representations he has received in respect of proposed changes to British summer time.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier to the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones).

Car Security

14. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with motor manufacturers in the last year on improving the quality of car security.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend has had no discussions with motor manufacturers in the last year but he has written recently to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders to invite them to discuss what more can be done by motor manufacturers to improve the quality of car security. I have also written to the Consumers Association to invite it to meet me to consider how consumer demand for improved car security can be encouraged.

59. **Sir David Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received about the quality of car security.

76. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the quality of car security.

86. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received about the quality of car security.

Mr. John Patten: So far this year, we have answered two parliamentary questions, four letters from Members of Parliament and three letters from members of the public about car security. The parliamentary questions and one letter from a Member were concerned about the action taken by the motor manufacturers to improve the quality of car security.

Crime Prevention

15. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will next meet the chief constable of West Yorkshire to discuss crime prevention initiatives.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend has, at present, no plans to meet the chief constable of West Yorkshire, but officials maintain regular contact with the West Yorkshire police to discuss crime prevention issues.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

16. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will reconsider the remaining scientific evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case, in the light of the statements to the May inquiry that forensic evidence in the Maguire case can no longer be considered reliable.

33. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will reconsider the remaining scientific evidence in the Birmingham pub bombing case, in the light of the statements to the May inquiry that forensic evidence in the Maguire case can no longer be considered reliable.

44. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will reconsider the remaining scientific evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case, in the light of the statements to the May inquiry that forensic evidence in the Maguire case can no longer be considered reliable.

Mr. Waddington: I have said on many occasions that I will consider any new evidence which appears to call into question the safety of the convictions of the Birmingham Six. I will of course take into account any evidence presented to the May inquiry which may be relevant to those convictions.

19. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to have the results of the Devon and Cornwall police investigation into aspects of the Birmingham pub bombings case.

39. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to have the results of the Devon and Cornwall police investigation into aspects of the Birmingham pub bombings case.

62. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to have the results of the Devon and Cornwall police investigation into aspects of the Birmingham pub bombings case.

96. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to have the results of the Devon and Cornwall police investigations into aspects of the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. Waddington: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given earlier to the question from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short).

23. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to ensure that material in police or other official archives relating to the Birmingham pub bombings case will not be destroyed.

56. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to ensure that material in police or other official archives relating to the Birmingham pub bombings case will not be destroyed.

65. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to ensure that material in police and other official archives relating to the Birmingham pub bombings case will not be destroyed.

79. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to ensure that material in police or other official archives relating to the Birmingham pub bombings case will not be destroyed.

Mr. Waddington: As I made clear in response to a question from the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 26 April, I understand that the West Midlands police and the Devon and Cornwall constabulary have made arrangements to ensure that all material in their possession relating to the Birmingham pub bombings case is stored in secure conditions pending the outcome of further inquiries into the safety of the convictions of the Birmingham Six. Relevant papers in the possession of the Home Office will also be preserved.

38. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to recover the 2,000 or so non-material statements which were not made available to solicitors acting for the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks).

53. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received about the Birmingham six; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Since the beginning of this year, we have received representations from Members of both Houses of Parliament, representatives of the clergy and members of the public, both here and abroad, expressing concern about the safety of the convictions of the Birmingham Six.

Careful consideration is given to all representations received about the safety of convictions. My right hon. and learned Friend has asked the chief constable of the West Midlands police for a report on a number of points arising out of representations made to him about the safety of the convictions of the Birmingham Six. These matters are now the subject of inquiries by the Devon and Cornwall constabulary, and my right hon. and learned Friend will take full account of the report of the outcome of those inquiries, together with any other relevant information, before deciding whether his further intervention in the case would be justified.

55. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to recover the playing cards which were an exhibit in the Birmingham pub bombings case but which have since disappeared.

98. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to recover the playing cards which were an exhibit in the Birmingham pub bombings case but which have since disappeared.

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to recover the playing cards which were an exhibit in the Birmingham pub bombings case but which have since disappeared.

Mr. John Patten: The cards, which were mentioned in the evidence for the defence, were not an exhibit at the trial. It was, of course, open to the defence to bring them before the court if they had wished to do so, but they did not. However, the police are making inquiries to trace the present location of the playing cards said to have been used by various members of the Birmingham Six on the train journey from Birmingham to Heysham.

Police Allowances

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement on his discussions with the Police Federation regarding allowances and the community charge.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Regulations to modify police rent allowance were laid on 9 March. These regulations took account of representations made be my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) and representatives of the staff side of the police negotiating board, including the Police Federation. The discussions resulted in a number of important changes to the original proposals.

Immigration

21. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals have been made under the 1992 programme to facilitate the greater access of residents in European Economic Community nations to the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: These matters remain under discussion between member states. My right hon. and

learned Friend will in the usual way report to the House the conclusions of the current meeting of Immigration Ministers in Dublin.

Concessionary Television Licences

22. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received from pensioners' representatives about free television licences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Since 1 January we have received 103 letters from people representing pensioners about free or reduced price television licences for pensioners. Ninety-seven were from hon. Members and six from organisations. We have no plans to change the present concessionary arrangements.

Strangeways Prison

25. **Mr. Barry Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated cost of the damage caused to Strangeways prision, Manchester, caused by the recent disturbances.

Mr. Franks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated total cost of damage to Strangeways prison, Manchester, caused by the recent disturbances.

Mr. Mellor: I announced on 17 May at columns *489-90* plans for the refurbishment of Strangeways prison to provide a range of new and improved facilities, including integral sanitation at a cost of £60 million. This work will also include repair of the damage done during the recent disturbances, which amounts to about £30 million.

The Greater Manchester police authority advises that the additional cost of policing as a result of the disturbances was £580,000.

Mr. Aitken: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to refurbish Strangeways prison to enable it to be brought back into use as soon as possible.

64. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to refurbish Strangeways prison to enable it to be brought back into use as soon as possible.

Mr. [illegible]o: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress of his plans to refurbish Strangeways prison.

84. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to refurbish Strangeways prison to enable it to be brought back into use as soon as possible.

Mr. Mellor: As I announced on 17 May at columns *489-90* the refurbishment of HM prison Manchester should be completed in about three years' time. One of the remand wings—K wing—should, however, be back in use by October of this year, and the remaining accommodation in the remand wings should be available in about a year's time.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Robert Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward legislation in the light of recent judgments on Sunday trading cases by the courts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress he has made on the question of Sunday trading.

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if it remains the Government's intention to reform the Shops Act 1950.

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress he has made on the question of Sunday trading.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy on reform of the Shops Act 1950.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn, Hatfield (Mr. Evans).

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many written representations in favour of and against Sunday trading he has received since 3 May.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Since 3 May 1990 we have received 10 written representations broadly in favour of Sunday trading and three against.

Police Houses

29. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the pay and conditions of police officers living in police houses.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: We have recently received a large number of representations from police officers, from hon. Members on behalf of police officers and from police representative organisations. These refer, in particular, to the Police (Amendment) Regulations 1990 and a proportion concern the position of officers living in provided accommodation. In response we have explained the reasons for setting aside certain aspects of the police negotiating board agreement on rent allowance. My right hon. and learned Friend has also made a number of important changes to the original proposals to meet points which were raised.

Prison Boards of Visitors

30. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the uprating of car mileage allowances payable to members of prison boards of visitors to the same level as that payable to prison staff and members of other prison committees.

Mr. Mellor: The co-ordinating committee made representations to the prison department in May 1988 to request that rates for boards of visitors travelling, subsistence and loss of earnings should be linked to the civil service rates rather than those applicable to justices of the peace.

Violent Crime

31. **Mr. Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of who are the most likely victims of violent crime.

68. **Mr. Norris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of who are the most likely victims of violent crime.

77. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of who are the most likely victims of violent crime.

Mr. John Patten: Recent research shows that in England and Wales young people aged 16 to 24 remain most at risk of becoming victims of assaults, and young men are by far at the greatest risk. People in England and Wales are less likely to be victims of violent crime (robbery, assaults and sexual assaults) than in most western European countries, the United States of America, Australia and Canada.

Prison Conditions

32. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to accelerate the ending of slopping out in prisons.

89. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to speed up action to provide access to sanitation in prisons to enable the procedure of slopping out in British prisons to be phased out by the year 2000.

94. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to accelerate the ending of slopping out in prisons.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) on 3 May 1990 at column *659*.

35. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what submissions he has received recently about the state of prisons in England.

Mr. Mellor: The Home Office receives numerous communications about the state of prisons. These vary considerably in content from an individual's problem to more general concerns.

82. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will next meet the chairman of the Prison Officers Association to discuss prison regimes.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at this stage to meet the chairman of the Prison Officers Association to discuss prison regimes, but should a request be made he will give the matter urgent consideration.

Football Matches

34. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce legislation to enable chief constables to veto the holding of Football Association and league football matches.

75. **Sir Marcus Fox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what machinery now exists for the exercise of a police veto on a football fixture.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: On 8 May when my right hon. and learned Friend met representatives of the Football League they agreed to work out urgently with the Association of Chief Police Officers effective arrangements for obtaining police advice about the scheduling of fixtures and to act upon it on all occasions. We shall keep these arrangements under review, but at present we have no plans to introduce legislation on this matter.

Drugs

36. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a further statement on any new Government initiatives to deal with the drugs problem.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) on 29 January at column *19* in which I listed recent initiatives for combating the misuse of and traffic in drugs.

Further developments include:

the announcement of plans for a United Kingdom task force to advise other countries on ways of reducing the demand for drugs;

the setting up of a joint police/customs task force, to target cocaine and crack;

plans for the first seven Home Office drug prevention teams to be located in the London boroughs of Hackney, Lewisham, Newham and Southwark and in Birmingham, Brighton and Liverpool;

a further tranche of drug-related assistance to Colombia, amounting to some £4·5 million;

the unanimous adoption of a detailed 35-point political declaration at the conclusion of the world ministerial drugs summit in April giving a commitment to a range of practical measures to reduce the demand for drugs and combat the cocaine threat.

Police Manpower, Warwickshire

40. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current level of police manpower in Warwickshire; and what it was three years ago.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The position at 31 March is set out in the table:

1987—965 (2 vacancies)
1990—975 (45 vacancies)

Trevi Group

45. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next intends to meet other members of the Trevi group to discuss the implications of open frontiers on levels of drug smuggling and terrorist activity.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend is attending meetings of Trevi Ministers in Dublin today and tomorrow at which progress is strengthening police co-operation with a view to the implementation of the single European market will be reviewed. The Government are strongly committed to such co-operation, while believing that checks at United Kingdom ports and airports will continue to play a necessary part in combatting terrorism, drug trafficking and other crimes.

Public Order Laws

47. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is considering any amendments to the public order legislation currently in force.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: In reply to a question from my hon. Friend, my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd), the then Home Secretary, announced on 26 October 1989 at column *620* that an evaluation of section 39 of the Public Order Act 1986 was to be undertaken to obtain a clearer picture of the consistency and effectiveness of its application. We are now considering the representations received.

My right hon. and learned Friend is also considering the recommendations in Lord Justice Taylor's final report on the Hillsborough stadium disaster for the creation of some new offences and penalties in connection with behaviour at sports grounds.

Prison Officers

98. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next expects to meet the Prison Officers Association to discuss pay and conditions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to meet the Prison Officers Association to discuss pay and conditions of service. Discussions concerning the annual pay award are currently taking place between officials of the Treasury, the Home Office and the appropriate trades unions, including the Prison Officers Association.

Videos

50. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the enforcement of the Video Recordings Act 1984 which restricts retailers from hiring 18 videos to children under the age of 18 years.

61. **Dame Jill Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he is making of the effectiveness of the law prohibiting the sale of 18 classification videos to minors; and what steps he is taking to make enforcement more effective.

Mr. Mellor: The Criminal Justice Act 1988 provides powers for local authority trading standards officers to enforce the provisions of the Video Recordings Act 1984 and the manner in which they discharge these duties is a matter for each local authority to decide. The Video Standards Council has recently drawn up a code of practice for the industry and we shall be monitoring its effectiveness closely. However, we have not ruled out the possibility of fresh legislation if such self-regulation proves inadequate.

Prison Population

51. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current prison population; what it was one year ago; and what are the equivalent figures for young offenders.

87. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current *(a)* adult and *(b)* young prisoner prison population; and what it was one year ago.

72. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current prison population; what it was one year ago; and what are the equivalent figures for young offenders.

Mr. Mellor: On Friday 8 June the total prison population, including those held in police cells, was 45,630. The corresponding figure for 9 June 1989 was 48,604. The latest information available in the form requested is for 31 March, when the total number of prisoners held in prison service establishments was 46,888: 37,224 were adult prisoners; 9,664 were prisoners aged under 21, of whom 6,655 were sentenced young offenders. The corresponding figures for 31 March 1989 were 49,180, 38,597, 10,583 and 7,395 respectively.

Metropolitan Police

52. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the Metropolitan Police Commissioner; and if he discussed traffic problems.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the Commissioner on 5 June. Although traffic problems were not on the agenda on that occasion, regular contact is maintained with the Metropolitan police on traffic issues.

66. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to discuss police manpower.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend last discussed police manpower with the commissioner on 21 December, when he met him to discuss his strategy statement for 1990, which was published on 11 January.

Mid-Glamorgan Fire Service

54. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will next meet the chairman of the Mid-Glamorgan fire service to discuss emergency planning procedures.

Mr. John Patten: I have no plans for such a meeting.

Prisons, Isle of Wight

57. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to increase the current levels of security at Her Majesty's prisons on the Isle of Wight.

Mr. Mellor: A number of improvements to the physical security of the three prisons on the Isle of Wight are currently in hand, planned or under consideration.

Football Hooligans

58. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the statutory provisions relating to the imposition of restriction orders and exclusion orders on football hooligans.

60. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers there are to allow courts to impose restriction orders and exclusion orders on football hooligans.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Since August 1987 part IV of the Public Order Act 1986 has empowered courts to impose exclusion orders on those convicted of football-related offences as defined in that Act to prevent them from attending designated matches in England and Wales. Since

24 April 1990 the courts have been empowered by part II of the Football Spectators Act 1989 to impose restriction orders on those convicted of football-related offences as defined in that Act to prevent them from attending key matches outside England and Wales. From 1 June 1990 magistrates courts have had the power under the 1989 Act to impose restriction orders on those convicted of corresponding offences in Scotland or Italy.

Expatriates (Voting Rights)

63. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many United Kingdom expatriates have registered for voting purposes to date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There are 1,237 overseas electors on the United Kingdom electoral register for 1990-91. Corresponding information for the 1991-92 register, which will include those registered under the new provisions introduced by the Representation of the People Act 1989, will not become available until the draft register is published on or before 28 November of this year.

Firearms

69. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to review the effects of the Firearms (Amendment) Act and its implementation by different police forces.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Under section 22 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 it is the function of the firearms consultative committee to review the provisions of the Firearms Acts 1968 to 1988 and to make to the Home Secretary such recommendations for improving their working as the committee thinks necessary. The Home Office also keeps the operation of the Act under general review. Administration of firearms controls is a matter for individual chief officers of police.

Political Asylum

70. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to amend the procedure for considering claims for asylum in the United Kingdom.

93. **Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to amend the procedure for considering claims for asylum in the United Kingdom.

97. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to amend the procedure for considering claims for asylum in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Procedures are kept under review. We have no present plans for fundamental change.

South Yorkshire Fire Authority

71. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to receive the results of the review that is being currently carried out by the South Yorkshire fire authority of its own operations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that the chief fire officer of South Yorkshire fire service is reviewing the fire risk categorisation and standards of fire cover throughout the South Yorkshire area. When the review has been completed, the chief fire officer will submit his report and findings to the South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority. I understand that the review is still at a very early stage and it would be inappropriate for my right hon. and learned friend to speculate on when the results of the review will be available.

War Crimes

78. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress being made in the setting up of a war crimes investigation unit.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary indicated in the Second Reading debate on the War Crimes Bill on 19 March that the unit would not be set up before the Bill received Royal Assent. On 14 June another place declined to give the Bill a Second Reading. The Government now intend to reflect on all aspects of the issue before taking any decision on further action.

Right of Silence

81. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to amend the law relating to the right of silence of suspects in police custody; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) on 7 March at column *639*.

Domestic Violence

83. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has recently revised his guidance to police officers about dealing with domestic violence.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Work on a new set of guidelines is at an advanced stage and my right hon. and learned Friend hopes to issue them within the next few weeks. The new guidelines will represent an important step in ensuring that the victims of domestic violence receive the full protection of the law to which they are entitled.

Immigration (Airlines Liability)

88. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals relating to the operation of the Immigration (Carriers Liability) Act 1987 as it affects airlines.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) on 21 May at column *8*.

Police Manpower, Northumbria

90. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next expects to meet the chief constable of Northumbria police to discuss manpower levels.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to do so. My right hon. and noble Friend the Minister of State met the chief constable and the police authority on 3 April when police manpower was discussed.

Remand Prisoners

91. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current number of remand prisoners held in police cells; and what it was one year ago.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Edmonton (Dr. Twinn).

92. **Mr. Cecil Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated total cost of damage to Strangeways prison, Manchester, caused by the recent disturbances.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter).

Ticket Touts

99. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he plans to take to curb the activities of ticket touts.

Mr. John Patten: We have no general plans to introduce legislation in this area. We are currently considering the recommendation by Lord Justice Taylor for control of ticket touting at football matches.

Radio Broadcasting

100. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next intends to meet the Director General of the BBC to discuss radio broadcasting.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend met the BBC board of governors yesterday, together with the director general and board of management, and discussed a wide range of broadcasting matters, including radio.

Sentencing

101. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will next meet the chairman of the National Association of Probation Officers to discuss sentencing policy.

Mr. John Patten: There are no plans at present for the Home Secretary to meet the chairman of the National Association of Probation Officers, but we maintain regular contact with the association.

Women Prisoners

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women in open prisons requested home leave to visit their children during 1989 or during the most recent available period.

Mr. Mellor: There were 212 recorded applications for home leave for this purpose during the period 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women in open prisons were granted home leave to visit their children during 1989 or during the most recent convenient period; and how many periods of home leave they were granted on average during this time.

Mr. Mellor: During the period 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990, 152 women from the three open establishments were granted at least one period of home leave to visit their children. Details of the average number of periods of home leave granted to individual prisoners are not readily available.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the criteria for granting home leave to women in open prison; and at what level the decision was made.

Mr. Mellor: All applications for home leave are considered by the establishment's home leave board and must be approved by the governor. The criteria for considering applications are laid down in circular instructions 9/1988 and 12/1988. For prisoners in open establishments, these will include the length of the prisoner's sentence, her behaviour in prison, whether the prisoner can be trusted not to commit any further offence during the leave and to return on time and the suitability of the accommodation where the home leave is to be spent.

Drinking in Public Places

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will review the request by Bolton metropolitan borough council to introduce a byelaw to prohibit drinking in public places; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The byelaw is being tested on an experimental basis in seven areas. A decision on whether the byelaw will be made widely available will depend on the results of these experiments.

BBC Report (Chinese Nationals)

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department made any representations to the British Broadcasting Corporation regarding its report at 1 pm on Friday 18 May, regarding 33 Chinese nationals.

Mr. Mellor: No. After the 1 pm report, the BBC asked for, and was given, the views of the Home Office.

Criminal Records

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set up an agency independent of the police charged with maintaining criminal records and meeting vetting requests.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Arrangements are being made for an early scrutiny of the issues involved and the implications of establishing such an agency.

Football Licensing Authority

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give details of the location of the offices for the Football Licensing Authority and the number of staff to be employed.

Mr. John Patten: No final decision has yet been taken on the location of the offices of the Football Licensing Authority. We envisage that the authority will have a small headquarters staff headed by a chief executive, and a team of inspectors some of whom will probably be located in different parts of the country.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to announce the chairman and members of the Football Licensing Authority.

Mr. John Patten: As soon as possible.

Nuclear Accident, Greenwich

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans or studies have been undertaken to assess the measures that would have to be taken in the event of widespread contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces to a question from the hon. Members for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 8 June at column *724*.

Evidence (Fax Machines)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of his Department's parole unit in relation to the admissibility of evidence from solicitors of documents in evidence via fax machines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The parole unit will accept documents by fax subject, where appropriate, to confirmation later of their provenance.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are to be taken to improve the effectiveness of policing the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 by the Scientific Procedures Inspectorate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: This country is unique in having a full-time inspectorate consisting only of qualified medical practitioners and veterinary surgeons. The present controls are highly effective and my right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to change them.

Boundary Changes, Northampton

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out the timetable of any prospective changes in ward or constituency boundaries within any part of the Northampton, North constituency or concerning Northampton, North.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has agreed to carry out a review of the electoral arrangements for the borough of Northampton. This is likely to commence as soon as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has reached a decision in respect of a recent review of parishes in the borough of Northampton. The review is expected to be completed in good time for the next local elections to the borough council in 1995.

The Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England will commence its next general review of all constituency boundaries in England, including those of the Northampton, North constituency, in 1991. The commissions report must be submitted between 1993 and 1998.

Mother-and-Baby Units

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the cost per week of keeping a mother and her baby in the units at *(a)* Holloway, *(b)* Askham Grange and *(c)* Styal.

Mr. Mellor: In 1988-89, the average net operating costs per inmate per week for Her Majesty's prison, Holloway, Her Majesty's prison and young offender institution, Styal and Her Majesty's prison, Askham Grange were, respectively, £491, £340 and £314. Operating costs of the mother and baby units are not separately identified.

Correspondence

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many letters per month are being received by his Department from hon. Members; and what proportion of them are being answered within five, 10, 20 and 40 working days, respectively.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information requested is laid out in the table:

Number of inquiries received by the Home Office from members of parliament for the months of January to April 1990.

Answered within	*January*	*February*	*March*	*April*
10 days	687	554	374	249
11-20 days	567	786	874	536
21-30 days	646	680	585	823
31-40 days	263	189	336	268
Total number of inquiries	2,551	2,875	2,904	2,534

Police Disciplinary Proceedings

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, following the outcome of recent police disciplinary proceedings relating to the investigation into the murder of PC Keith Blakelock, he will now review the convictions of Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Eugin Raghip.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* The disciplinary charges against Detective Chief Superintendent Melvin concerned Mr. Jason Hill, not the convictions of Mr. Braithwaite, Mr. Raghip or Mr. Silcott. My right hon. and learned Friend is always ready to consider cases in which it is suggested there might be new evidence which might call the safety of the convictions into question. We are considering whether the recent television programme contained any new evidence or other consideration of substance.

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will meet Lord Justice Lane to discuss the safety of the convictions of Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Eugin Raghip for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* No.

DEFENCE

Tanks and Helicopters

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department is making concerning the proper balance between tanks and helicopters for the British Army.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The balance between tanks and helicopters is kept under constant review.

Nuclear Warheads

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if insensitive high explosives are used on the nuclear warheads fitted to United States air force SRAM-A missiles based in Britain.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are no United States air force SRAM-A missiles based in Britain.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if any nuclear warheads of British manufacture use insensitive high explosive.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It would not be in the national interest to reveal such details of nuclear weapon design.

Harrier GR7

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the first Harrier GR7s to enter Royal Air Force service.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Ministry of Defence took delivery of the first Harrier GR7 on 5 June this year. It will be in Royal Air Force service within the next few months.

Low Flying

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-flying movements were authorised in the Borders tactical training area at less than 250 ft in the periods (1) 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1987, (2) 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988 and (3) 1 July 1988 to 30 June 1989; and if he will provide a breakdown of the 1988-89 figure into movements in the Borders tactical training area (west) and the Borders tactical training area (east).

Mr. Neubert: The information requested regarding aircraft movements authorised in the Borders tactical training area at less than 250 ft is given in the table. It should be noted that the movements figures for the Borders tactical training area have, since 1988, been recorded on a different basis following the extension to the Borders training area, and the number of movements quoted for this area from July 1988 onwards is not directly comparable with earlier movement figures which predate the extension of the area. I regret that central records do not separately identify movements in the Borders tactical training area west and the Borders tactical training area east over the period for which information is requested.

Operational low-flying movements in Borders tactical training area

Period	*Number*
1 July 1986 to 30 July 1987	873
1 July 1987 to 30 July 1988	558
1 July 1988 to 30 July 1989	1,865

French Defence Minister

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his French counterpart; and whether he discussed European security.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had a bilateral meeting with Mr. Chevènement at the Anglo-French summit in London on 4 May, when a wide range of defence questions was discussed, including future European security.

Army Regiments

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the regiments of the British Army and *(a)* the location and value of the property associated with each and *(b)* the location and value of the property associated with each which has been sold in the past 10 years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The regular regiments and corps of the British Army are listed below:

Regular Regiments and Corps of the British Army

1. Household Cavalry
   - The Life Guards
   - The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons)

2. Royal Armoured Corps
   - 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards
   - The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys)
   - 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards
   - 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards
   - The Queen's Own Hussars
   - The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars
   - 9th/12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's)
   - The Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own)
   - 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own)
   - 14th/20th King's Hussars
   - 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars
   - 16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers
   - 17th/21st Lancers
   - Regiments of the Royal Tank Regiment

3. The Royal Regiment of Artillery

4. Corps of Royal Engineers

5. Royal Corps of Signals

6. Infantry
   - (a) The Guards Division
     - Grenadier Guards
     - Coldstream Guards
     - Scots Guards
     - Irish Guards
     - Welsh Guards
   - (b) The Scottish Division
     - The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)
     - The Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment)
     - The King's Own Scottish Borderers
     - The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)
     - Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons)
     - The Gordon Highlanders
     - The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's)
   - (c) The Queen's Division
     - The Queen's Regiment
     - The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
     - The Royal Anglian Regiment
   - (d) The King's Division
     - The King's Own Royal Border Regiment
     - The King's Regiment
     - The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire
     - The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment)
     - The Royal Irish Rangers (27th (Inniskilling) 83rd and 87th)
     - The Queen's Lancashire Regiment
     - The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding)
   - (e) The Prince of Wales's Division
     - The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment
     - The Cheshire Regiment
     - The Royal Welch Fusiliers

The Royal Regiment of Wales (24/41st Foot)
The Gloucestershire Regiment
The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment (29th/45th Foot)
The Royal Hampshire Regiment
The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's)
The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire)

(f) The Light Division
The Light Infantry
The Royal Green Jackets

(g) The Brigade of Gurkhas
2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Simoor Rifles)
6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles
7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles
10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles

(h) The Parachute Regiment

(i) Special Air Service Regiment

(j) Other Corps
Army Air Corps
Royal Army Chaplains' Department
Royal Corps of Transport
Royal Army Medical Corps
Royal Army Ordnance Corps
Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
Corps of Royal Military Police
Royal Army Pay Corps
Royal Army Veterinary Corps
Small Arms School Corps
Military Provost Staff Corps
Royal Army Educational Corps
Royal Army Dental Corps
Royal Pioneer Corps
Intelligence Corps
Army Physical Training Corps
Army Catering Corps
Army Legal Corps
General Service Corps
Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps
Women's Royal Army Corps

The data requested concerning location and value of property could not be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British Army regiments existed in 1979 and currently; and if he will name those which *(a)* have been amalgamated or abolished and *(b)* it is proposed to amalgamate or abolish.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Details of numbers of combat arm regiments and infantry battalions are given annually in volume 1 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates.

Of these, the only regiments or battalions that have been amalgamated or disbanded since 1979 are 2nd battalion, 7th Gurkha Rifles, which was raised in 1981 and disbanded in 1986; 2 Regiment and 9 Regiment Army Air Corps, which were disbanded in 1983 and 1982 respectively; the Composite Infantry Demonstration Battalion, which was disbanded in 1982; and 25 Regiment, Royal Artillery, which was disbanded in 1984.

As for future amalgamations or disbandments, this will depend on the circumstances at the time. However, we recognise that the changing circumstances in Europe will have implications for the deployment and structure of our forces and that we are therefore examining the options for change.

Army Property

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the outside management consultants used by his Department to rationalise the property assets of the British Army since 1979.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence—and, before 1988, the Property Services Agency—has employed a great many outside management consultants to assist with the rationalisation of property assets across all three services and the procurement executive. No central record is maintained of the use made of consultants, however, and it is not possible to provide this information retrospectively.

Territorial Army

Mr Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spends on the Territorial Army at the present time; and what the figure was in 1979 at constant prices.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: In 1990-91, expenditure on the Territorial Army will total £345 million compared with £271 million in 1979-80. Both figures are at 1989-90 prices.

Defence Policy

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will initiate a review of Britain's defence policy, following the recent summit conference between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We are already examining options for change in the structure and deployment of our armed forces in light of the changing international circumstances.

United States Navy Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the visits of United States navy nuclear submarines to Bangor since 1979.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are no records of any port visits to Bangor, Wales, or Bangor, Northern Ireland by United States navy nuclear-powered submarines.

Stoney Castle Ranges

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about unauthorised access across his Department's land at Stoney Castle ranges, Pirbright, for the illegal tipping of waste; and what steps he is taking to prevent this.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence has received representations from the Pirbright parish and Surrey county councils and a number of local residents about access across Ministry of Defence land at Stoney Castle ranges, Pirbright, Surrey, for the illegal tipping of waste.

Action is in hand to establish the status of access. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to my hon. Friend.

Atomic Weapons Establishments

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the management structure for atomic weapons establishment sites after contractorisation.

Mr. Neubert: No decisions have yet been made on the details of the future interim management structure of AWE. It will be open to the contractor in discussion with MOD to recommend organisational changes or additional management posts to facilitate efficient operation of the establishment as a whole.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce his choice of contractor for the atomic weapons establishment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: We expect to let an interim management contract at AWE in the autumn of this year.

Maguire Case

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what instructions he has given to RARDE regarding the making available to Sir John May's inquiry of papers relating to the Maguire case; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: My officials have been instructed to be as helpful as possible in the inquiry.

Arms Exports, Middle East

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the role of British exports of military equipment in spreading sophisicated weapons and military technology to the middle east.

Mr. Alan Clark: The United Kingdom has won orders for a range of military equipment to some middle east countries, but these have been allowed only after very careful consideration of each export to ensure that it is consistent with our national interests and international obligations. The factors considered always include assessments of political, strategic and technology transfer aspects.

Police Review

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure has been incurred to date on the study of options for change.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The work is being done by personnel in the office of management and budget and the defence staff in addition to their normal duties. We have not sought to attribute their time and related costs between this and their other tasks.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what communications have taken place with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies about the study of the options for change.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has informed our NATO allies that work on options for change is taking place and he is in close touch with them about international developments and the evolution of alliance policy, which are important elements in that work.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when the options for change study will be completed;

(2) whether the results of the study of the options for change will be published.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Parliament will be informed once the Government have reached a view on the appropriate way forward on the options for change exercise.

Nuclear Accident, Greenwich

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans or studies have been made by his Department to assess measures that would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave to the hon. Members for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 8 June, *Official Report*, column *724*.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Low Incomes

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of the poorest one tenth of the population in the period 1981 to 1985 he estimates had an income rise of (i) minus 5 per cent, or less, (ii) 0 to minus 5 per cent., (iii) 0 to plus 5 per cent. and (iv) plus 5 per cent. or more.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The households below average income analysis is derived from data on incomes contained in the family expenditure survey which is a continual annual survey of a sample of private households in the United Kingdom. The households below average income analysis enables comparisons to be made between the position of decile groups over time, but, because the sample consists of different families each year, it is not possible to draw similar comparisons between individual families. The information requested is therefore not available.

Income Support

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether, if claimants in receipt of unemployment benefit income support have their fortnightly benefit payment suspended for not actively seeking employment on three successive occasions, and they then satisfy the condition, they have to make a fresh claim for benefit and complete a new B1 or whether their fortnightly payment is automatically reinstated; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No fresh claim for income support is required if hardship payments are made when benefit has been suspended on account of failing to actively seek employment. However, if hardship payments have not been made and income support has been suspended for longer than a fortnight, a fresh claim on a new form B1 will be required.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether a non-householder income support claimant without dependants whose income support is suspended for not actively seeking work or being available for work can be paid on income support hardship payment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Yes. The adjudication officer has to be satisfied that, unless income support is paid, the claimant will suffer hardship. No distinction is made between householders and non-householders.

Personal Pension Plans

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling on 21 December, *Official Report*, column 405, he has completed his review of the disclosure requirements for occupational and personal pension schemes, including unit-linked personal pension plans; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The disclosure of information regulations will need amendment as a result of the provisions on occupational pensions in the Social Security Bill and of other recommendations in the Occupational Pensions Board report "Protecting Pensions" which we have accepted. A number of interested bodies have been asked for their views on the existing regulations, and responses are due very soon. In the light of these comments, we hope to bring forward our proposals as soon as possible.

Family Credit and Income Support

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people are currently receiving family credit or income support in each county in England and in each district council area in England.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information on the number of recipients of family credit or income support by county and district council area is not available.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security by how much public expenditure has been reduced as a result of policy changes to housing benefit each year since 1982, both at current prices and at 1990-91 prices; and what has been the cumulative total of savings.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information is not available in the detail requested because, over time, the financial effects of successive policy changes overlap with other changes such as uprating of benefit levels, movements in housing costs, changes in unemployment, and movements in income levels. In cash terms, housing benefit expenditure was £1·6 billion in 1982-83, including help with rates, and the forecast for the current year is £7 billion, including community charge benefit. This represents a substantial real terms increase since 1982-83.

Community Charge Benefit

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the cost to public funds in the current financial year, and with retrospective effect to 6 April of *(a)* raising from £3,000 to £6,000 the savings disregarded for community charge rebate, while leaving the £16,000 figure unchanged and *(b)* assuming that each £500 of savings produces £1 a week of income.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 23 May 1990]:* The estimated benefit cost of increasing, for community charge benefit, the lower capital limit from £3,000 to £6,000 and changing the tariff rate to £1 of every £500 over £6,000, allowing for retrospection to 6 April 1990, would be £100 million in 1990-91. (Source: Modelled using data drawn from the 1985-86-87 family expenditure survey).

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the cost to public funds in the current financial year and with retrospective effect to 6 April, of entitling all non-employed spouses of persons who are paying income tax only at the standard rate to a community charge rebate of 80 per cent.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 23 May 1990]:* I regret that it is not possible to make an estimate of this. Any estimate of the total benefit cost requires such a wide range of assumptions, for example, the allocation of community charge benefit children's allowances to the employed spouse, and the allocation of savings between the partners, as to make any estimate both arbitrary and uncertain.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

BSE

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on how many occasions compensation has been refused in respect of confirmed BSE cattle since January 1989; under what circumstances such applications are refused; what advice he offers to farmers to avoid such refusal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The Ministry is required by the Animal Health Act 1981 to pay compensation in respect of all cattle slaughtered as BSE suspects.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress has been made towards being able to identify the presence of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy infective agent in cattle prior to the onset of clinical symptoms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) on 21 May at column *86*.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer of 22 March, *Official Report*, column *734*, to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond), what recent research is being undertaken to establish whether the infective agent responsible for bovine spongiform encephalopathy can be transmitted to *(a)* pigs, *(b)* poultry and *(c)* dogs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 12 June at column *135*.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what contingency plans he has to cover the event of BSE being found to be vertically transmissible.

Mr. Maclean: There is no evidence to suggest that BSE is vertically transmissible. However, measures are in hand to require cattle owners to maintain herd breeding records, including the identity of each calf and its dam, and to retain these and the existing movement records for 10 years. These measures will assist the tracing of calves born

to dams in which BSE is subsequently confirmed, should further animal health measures be necessary to facilitate the elimination of the disease.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the average cost to his Department of each case of BSE; and what is the breakdown of such cost into its components of compensation, carcase disposal, laboratory test and other.

Mr. Maclean: The average expenditure between August 1988 and April 1990 is estimated to be as follows:

Item	*Average cost* £
Compensation	422
Carcass disposal and miscellaneous expenditure	216
Laboratory costs	166
Veterinary field service	251
Total	1,055

Colorado Beetle

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on how many occasions Colorado beetle has been found in the United Kingdom in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Thirty seven live and nine dead Colorado beetles were found on produce imported into the United Kingdom in the 12-month period ending 31 May 1990. No breeding colonies have been identified here.

The Colorado beetle presents a serious threat to our potato crops and the Government remain determined to prevent its introduction and spread in the United Kingdom. We maintain careful surveillance of imports and continuing public awareness campaigns to ensure that our crops remain free from this pest.

Marine Turtles

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the Southern sea fisheries committee has distributed information to Isle of Wight fishermen on marine turtles; and if he will make this information available to hon. Members.

Mr. Curry: The activities of sea fisheries committees are, of course, a matter for the committees themselves as constituent bodies of local councils. I understand that the Southern Sea Fisheries Committee has neither sought nor distributed any information on marine turtles to fishermen within its district.

Animal Health Inspectors

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many animal health inspectors are now in post; what qualfications were required for recruitment; what training provision was undergone by recruits; and what arrangements have been made for reviewing the effectiveness of training and the working of the scheme as a whole.

Mr. Maclean: There are currently 547 state veterinary service (SVS) staff appointed as inspectors by the Minister for the purposes of the Animal Health Act 1981. All veterinary offices are qualified on entry to the SVS to be appointed as veterinary inspectors for the purposes of the Act, without further training. The technical support staff (animal health officers) receive training on entry to the SVS over at least two years, on the provisions of the Act and its associated orders, the service of statutory notices and the duties of an inspector under the Act. The performance of all inspectors is constantly monitored as part of the routine staff appraisal process, and appointments can be withdrawn if duties are not effectively carried out.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what rules exist in respect of the voltage levels and use of cattle goads; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what steps he is taking to minimise offences in respect of the use of goads under the Protection of Animals Act 1911 and the Transit of Animals (Road and Rail) Order; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: There are no specific statutory controls on the energy output of cattle goads. Their use is, however, subject to the general provisions of the Protection of Animals Act 1911, the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968 and orders made under the Animal Health Act 1981. We are planning to introduce statutory welfare measures in markets and slaughterhouses which would prohibit the use of electric goads on all animals, other than adult cattle and adult pigs under certain conditions.

Fishing Investment

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much British finance is committed to EC structural policy 4028/86 on fishing; how much money comes back to this country in return; and what is his estimate of the net benefit/loss to the United Kingdom for 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: This information is not readily available.

Fishing Vessels

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give his estimate of the amount spent on decommissioning grants for fishing vessels of its national Governments by the Commission in *(a)* France, *(b)* Denmark, *(c)* Holland, *(d)* Belgium and *(e)* Spain in the latest available year.

Mr. Curry: The latest available figures of European Community reimbursements in 1989 for decommissioning grants are as follows:

	£ million
France	Nil
Denmark	1·64
Holland	1·87
Belgium	Nil
Spain	Nil

Meat Tenderising Enzymes

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his assessment of the extent of the usage of meat tenderising enzymes administered pre-slaughter.

Mr. Maclean: I understand that about 2 per cent. of cattle are treated with the enzyme Papain before slaughter.

The Government have announced that they will not be seeking provision for the continued use of this pre-slaughter treatment under the rules to be adopted for the single market.

Hill Livestock

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when delays in payment of hill livestock compensatory agreement premiums will be resolved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: Hill livestock compensatory allowances are paid as quickly as possible following receipt of claims, once the necessary administrative checks have been completed.

Beef

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of beef produced in the United Kingdom is from *(a)* steers and *(b)* bulls under the age of 14 months.

Mr. Gummer: No information is available on the age of slaughtered stock. However, in 1989 steers accounted for 46 per cent. of United Kingdom beef production by carcase weight and young bulls for 8 per cent.

ADAS (General Charging)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give for each complete financial year since the introduction of general charging by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, the income and the number of customers.

Mr. Curry: Charging for ADAS services on a general scale was introduced in April 1987. Income for the financial years since then is as follows:

	£ million
1987-88	16·7
1988-89	21·1
1989-90	25·8

Almost 85,000 customers have purchased ADAS services since April 1987. Customer figures by year are not available.

Marine Environment

Mr. Fishburn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action his Department is taking to improve the quality of the marine environment.

Mr. Curry *[pursuant to his reply, 19 April 1990, c.971]:* The Government are determined that the unpleasant practice of dumping colliery minestone on beaches in the north-east of England should stop as soon as practicable. As a result of a great deal of study carried out at the Government's direction various options have been considered for disposal of the waste on land. However, before any disposal on land can begin, British Coal must get planning permission.

I am therefore now requiring British Coal to seek all necessary permissions for a land-based means of disposal of their minestone.

It is important to set a deadline for this process. The Government consider that five years is a tight, but not unreasonable, timescale for British Coal to prepare an application, have it properly assessed through the planning system, and to construct the necessary arrangements for dealing with these large quantities of stone on land. I am therefore making clear to British Coal that the Ministry envisages that the licences which permit British Coal to dump minestone on the beaches should end in five years. The only reason for extending the licences beyond that date would be if the outcome of pursuing a planning application were that no practical means of disposing of the stone on land is in fact available to British Coal.

I shall similarly be requiring British Coal to seek permissions for disposing on land the minestone that they currently dump out at sea from Wearmouth and Westoe collieries. For these licences, a seven-year deadline will be set.

Dietary Survey

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to publish the results of the dietary and nutritional survey of British adults.

Mr. Maclean: The first detailed results of this major survey of the diet and health of more than 2,000 adults throughout Great Britain are published today. I have placed a copy of the report in the library of the House.

The survey was conducted by the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of Health. In addition, MAFF and the Department of Health provided the dietary, nutritional and health expertise needed to conduct and interpret such a complex survey.

My noble Friend Baroness Hooper, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, and I welcome this excellent report, which will provide a sound base for future food and health policy. The detailed findings provide an invaluable source of reference for those outside as well as within Government, and are a benchmark against which future developments can be measured.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Customs and Excise (Devon)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current level of staffing in Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in Torbay; what was the level of staffing in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The current and previous three years staffing levels of Customs and Excise officers engaged in Customs work in Torquay is as follows.

	Numbers
1987	5
1988	5
1989	4
1990	2

The reductions in 1989 and 1990 were the result of transferring Customs posts to the Brixham office. There are currently a further 14 VAT staff and one excise officer also located in Torquay.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current level of staffing in Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in Brixham; what was the level of staffing in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The current and previous three years staffing levels of Customs and Excise in Brixham is as follows. All staff are engaged on customs work.

	Numbers
1987	2
1988	2
1989	4
1990	6

The increases in 1989 and 1990 were the result of transferring customs posts from the nearby Dartmouth and Torquay offices.

Pensions

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the percentage increases over the past 10 years in *(a)* the state retirement pension, *(b)* the armed forces pensions and *(c)* police pensions.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

The percentages used to increase the state retirement pension, the armed forces pensions and police pensions in each of the last 10 years are in the table.

	per cent
1980	16·5
1981	9·0
1982	11·0
1983	3·7
1984	5·1
1985	7·0
1986	1·1
1987	2·1
1988	4·2
1989	5·9
1990	7·6

WALES

Silage

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has received any scientific advice concerning possible dangers to sheep from eating silage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: Listeria organisms can be found in silage and in some circumstances can cause death in sheep. The overall incidence of this disease is low; fewer than 80 deaths were diagnosed in Wales last year by the veterinary investigation service. ADAS advisory leaflets on the production and feeding of silage to sheep are available to farmers on request. Advice is also available from ADAS nutrition chemists and the veterinary investigation service.

Acid Rain

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what initiatives have been taken by his Department to try to secure an improvement in the acid rain problem facing Wales.

Mr. Grist: The Department has initiated a programme of research which has been designed to assess the impact of acid rain on Wales and seek practical steps to reduce its impact.

In addition, the Welsh Office has supported the Department of the Environment in funding a major research project in the Llyn Brianne area to assess the relative contribution which air pollution, afforestation, land type, and land use and practice make to the acidification of Welsh water.

Limitation of the effects of acid rain on Wales is dependent, of course, upon a reduction of emissions throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. Using 1980 as a base line, the United Kingdom is committed to reducing emissions of sulphur dioxide by 20 per cent. and oxides of nitrogen by 15 per cent. from existing large combustion plants by 1993 as the first stage of directive 88/609/EEC, "The Limitation of Emissions of Certain Pollutants Into the Air From Large Combustion Plants".

Mental Handicap Nurses

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress has been made on an all-Wales level with regard to the future role of mental handicap nurses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: In the context of the development of community-based services for people with a mental handicap, under the all-Wales strategy, mental handicap nurses have a valuable and important role in the provision of the range of services required in support of those people living in, or resettled into, the community and who require nursing care.

The four chief nursing officers in the United Kingdom have established a working group to review the needs of people with a mental handicap, and identify the future requirement for skilled nursing care arising from the changes outlined in the White Paper "Caring for People". Their report, which will address the issues that require resolution at the all-Wales level, will be ready in the autumn.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest figures for the number of confirmed cases of BSE in cattle in *(a)* Carmarthen, *(b)* Dyfed, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Britain.

Mr. David Hunt: The information is as follows:

Total number of confirmed cases as at 1 June 1990

	Number
(a) Old County of Carmarthen	162
(b) Dyfed	493
(c) Wales	967

Lactofol

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what investigations have been undertaken by his agricultural department of the Welsh Office into Lactofol, in relation to its potential as a fertiliser and as an agent to counteract acid rain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The analytical facilities of the Government's Agricultural Development and Advisory Service are available to the private sector on a contractual basis. The details of such contracts are a matter of commercial confidentiality.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many planning applications were submitted in each of the Welsh national parks in the last two years for which figures are available; how many were determined; and how many of those determined, in numbers and as proportions, were successful.

Mr. Roberts: The information on planning applications in the calendar years 1988 and 1989 for Brecon Beacons national park and the Pembrokeshire coast national park is set out in the following table. No statistical returns were received from Snowdonia national park.

	Year	*Submitted*	*Decided*	*Granted*	
				Number	*Per Cent.*
Brecon Beacons NP	1988	812	650	463	(71)
	1989	907	819	558	(68)
Pembrokeshire Coast NP	1988	727	600	489	(82)
	1989	787	704	526	(75)

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of children aged under 16 years received free eye tests in Wales *(a)* in each quarter of 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter of 1989-90.

Mr. Grist: The data requested were not collected centrally before 1 April 1989, since when it has been collected on a six-monthly basis.

The available information is given in the following table:

Estimated[1] percentage of relevant population who received eye tests in the six months ending

	30 September 1989	*31 March 1990*
Children aged under 16	6	7

[1] Estimates based upon a 2 per cent. sample of all such sight tests paid for by family practitioner committees and expressed as a percentage of the estimated number of children aged under 16 (as at 30 June 1988).

Beef

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he proposes to assist the beef-rearing industry in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: The beef-rearing industry is assisted by a number of measures, directly by the suckler cow premium and indirectly by market support measures. My agriculture colleagues and I are considering the suckler cow premium rate for 1990-91 and will make an announcement in due course.

Heart Operations

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimate of the number of heart patients who were sent for surgery from Wales to England for each of the years 1984 to the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Information is not available in the form requested.

However, an indication of the number of cases of Welsh residents treated in the 14 regional health authorities of England whose speciality on discharge was cardiothoracic surgery is as follows:

	Numbers
1984	511
1985	462
1986	446
[1]1987-88	408
[1]1988-89	405

[1] 1 April to 31 March

Notes:

1. These estimates are based on the best available information supplied by the English regional health authorities.
2. The estimates relate to the specialty of cardiothoracic surgery as figures for cardiac surgery cannot be separately identified.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in Wales are awaiting heart surgery; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Information on the number of people in Wales awaiting heart surgery is not available centrally, but the number waiting for in-patient treatment in hospitals in Wales in the specialty of cardiac surgery at 31 December 1989 was 242.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he has any proposals to eliminate waiting lists for investigating heart problems;

(2) what proposals he has to increase facilities in Wales for heart surgery; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Proposals for major developments in the investigation and treatment of patients with heart disease in Wales are well under way following a review by the cardiology committee of the Royal College of Physicians. A centre of excellence capable of providing 800 open heart operations yearly for adults with appropriate cardiology is to be developed at University hospital of Wales (UHW), Cardiff. Funds have already been provided to upgrade the cardiac catheter laboratories and are to be made available this year to enhance intensive and coronary care facilities at the hospital. Consideration is also being given to the development of a second adult cardiac unit in South Wales. In the interim, funds have been made available to secure additional cardiological procedures and cardiac surgery from other specialist centres in England.

A new paediatric cardiac unit at UHW is on schedule for completion in autumn this year.

In North Wales, additional funds have been made available to improve access to cardiology and cardiac surgery for patients in Clwyd, and Gwynedd health authority has been asked to assess its requirements and present detailed proposals to the department.

Local Authorities (Devolution)

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to devolve more powers during the next five years to Welsh local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I have no plans for changes in the responsibilities of local authorities in Wales.

Schools (Opting Out)

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many schools in Wales have formally expressed interest in opting out; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: To date four schools in Wales have balloted parents on making application for grant-maintained status. Two of these have voted against and two in favour of making an application.

Hospital Trusts

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications he has received from hospital trusts in Wales.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend has not yet received any applications from hospitals for trust status.

NHS Pay Awards

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales in what ways he proposes to help the area health authorities of Wales meet pay awards and national health service medical inflation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Health authorities in Wales have already benefited from supplementary provision of £11·125 million towards the excess cost of pay awards to staff covered by the review bodies' machinery over and above the allowance for inflation already provided in allocations for 1990-91.

When taken together these extra funds represent a cash increase averaging 7·8 per cent. over last year. This increase, together with the resources which authorities are expected to unlock by cash improvement programmes and income-generation schemes, should be sufficient to meet anticipated inflation and provide for further service developments.

The excess cost of other pay awards which are negotiated through the Whitley machinery have not in the past been met from Exchequer funds. Authorities are represented on Whitley councils and it is therefore appropriate that they should be expected to meet the consequences of settlements to which they are party.

Myodil

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, further to his replies of 27 March, *Official Report*, column *134*, 28 March, *Official Report*, column *186* and 29 March, *Official Report*, column *271* and his letter dated 27 April, what information he now has on the number of patients who have come forward to complain of after-effects and side-effects of the drug Myodil; and if he will now agree to instigate a thorough and independent investigation into the incidence of such cases in Wales.

Mr. Grist: Representations have been received on behalf of 12 patients in Wales who may have been affected adversely by the use of Myodil. That point aside, there is nothing I can add to my letter of 27 April.

Atomic Weapons Establishment, Cardiff

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) when he anticipates issuing a revised letter of agreement on the radioactive site licence for atomic weapons establishment, Cardiff, pursuant to the Radioactive Substances Act 1960, section 13;

(2) what consultations have taken place with the Environmental Health department of Cardiff city council, the South Glamorgan county fire service and the National Rivers Authority regarding revision of the letter of agreement issued by his Department to the Ministry of Defence under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960, section 13, regarding the atomic weapons establishment, Cardiff;

(3) if he will revise and publish the letters of agreement issued to the Ministry of Defence in respect of the atomic weapons establishment, Cardiff under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960, section 13, before contractorisation takes place.

Mr. David Hunt: The revision of the agreement is currently being considered and it is expected that it will be completed before the atomic weapons establishment site at Cardiff becomes contractor operated.

Although no consultations with the organisations mentioned are required under the terms of section 14 of the Radioactive Substances Act 1960, my Department will be informing the local authorities of the proposed revision at an appropriate stage. The Department will also be copying to them the revised letter of agreement for their records.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the actions of the French and German Governments concerning BSE and the export of beef from Wales.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* As my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food indicated in his statement to the House on 7 June, the illegal ban on British beef exports imposed by France, Germany and Italy was dealt with at a meeting of the Agriculture Council on 6 and 7 June. The Council was able to consider the latest advice from the Commission's scientific veterinary committee, which confirmed that the existing Community rules in respect of bovine spongiform encephalopathy provided full protection for public health. However, after prolonged discussions the Council agreed

to amend Community rules to provide certain additional guarantees. The unilateral bans imposed by certain member states were immediately lifted.

SCOTLAND

Mental Health Programmes

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he proposes to take to avert staff redundancies and unfilled training places in the programmes run by the providers of training for those with mental health problems.

Mr. Rifkind: It is the duty of the Training Agency to enter into contracts with training providers to provide for the delivery of sufficient places to meet likely demand from potential trainees including those with mental health problems and other special needs groups. It is the responsibility of training providers to maintain their staffing at levels commensurate with the efficient and cost-effective delivery of their training commitment in terms of such contracts.

Steel Industry

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he or any agency responsible to him has commissioned a business plan for an independent Scottish steel industry.

Mr. Lang: No, nor would it be appropriate for my right hon. and learned Friend to do so.

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has formally asked British Steel if it is prepared to sell its Scottish assets to enable them to form the basis of an independent Scottish steel industry.

Mr. Lang: The chairman of British Steel has assured my right hon. and learned Friend and me that if the company should wish at some stage to close its steelmaking facilities at Ravenscraig, it would consider on a commercial basis, any wholly private sector offer for those facilities as an alternative to closure.

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps the Scottish Development Agency or any of his departments has taken to assess the viability of an independent Scottish steel industry.

Mr. Lang: It would be for any business parties interested in establishing or acquiring steelmaking facilities in Scotland to consider whether such an entity —however defined—might be viable.

Nursery Education

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will publish a table showing the number of nursery school or other pre-five facilities places available in each regional council area in each of the past 12 years;

(2) what is his estimate of the number of children in the current year who are unlikely to be accommodated in pre-five facilities.

Mr. Lang: The table gives for each regional and islands council the total of the following:

pupils attending local authority nursery schools,
places in local authority day nurseries,
places in local authority and registered pre school playgroups,
places for which local authority sponsored and private childminders are registered.

Figures for numbers of pupils attending nursery schools have been used because there are no reliable figures for the number of places and because many children attend nursery school part time. It should also be noted that some children may make use of more than one of type of provision.

There were in addition 1,392 children in September 1989 below the age of five attending independent schools, 351 children below the age of five attending special schools at September 1988 and an estimated 1,500 places in registered day nurseries. Information for 1977-78 is not available on a consistent basis and that on private nursery schools is not collected centally. At June 1988 there were an estimated 322,989 children under five and 126,079 children in the population aged three and four years, the range which is the relevant age group for nursery education.

Provision for under 5s in Scotland (pupils or places)

	1978-79	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Borders	1,728	1,416	1,321	1,422	1,952	2,020	2,077	2,130	2,239	2,431	2,282
Central	4,182	4,142	4,383	4,647	4,808	5,055	5,089	5,321	5,628	6,008	6,373
Dumfries and Galloway	1,492	1,548	1,571	1,673	1,951	2,060	2,265	2,127	2,278	2,428	2,695
Fife	6,676	5,804	5,817	5,729	7,214	6,627	7,073	7,231	7,499	7,921	8,370
Grampian	7,955	7,748	7,981	8,211	8,134	8,230	8,741	8,490	8,764	8,915	9,617
Highland	2,923	3,060	3,230	3,426	3,729	3,339	3,572	4,140	4,010	4,229	4,727
Lothian	14,665	13,727	14,152	14,018	13,859	14,524	15,356	14,947	16,109	16,406	18,217
Strathclyde	36,278	34,646	36,925	35,662	37,915	39,881	40,113	39,343	40,301	44,767	41,557
Tayside	5,998	6,269	5,920	5,620	6,145	6,232	6,244	5,760	6,486	6,858	7,636
Orkney	472	558	543	506	548	553	643	522	700	729	811
Shetland	518	622	630	671	677	578	575	649	665	699	708
Western Isles	431	498	538	479	589	679	1,274	1,587	1,680	1,503	968
Scotland	83,318	80,040	83,643	82,056	86,821	89,748	93,022	92,247	96,359	102,894	103,961

Ravenscraig

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when British Steel was informed of the House's view on the closure of the Ravenscraig hot strip mill, as set out in the *Official Report*, of 21 May, column 75.

Mr. Lang: No doubt British Steel took note of the House's view, as set out in the *Official Report*, and which was widely reported in the media following the debate on 21 May.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the names of companies and identification of proposed site locations in Scotland for toxic waste incinerators.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the constituencies in which there are proposals to site new licensed toxic waste incinerators; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Applications for planning consent or for waste disposal licensing are in the first instance matters for district and islands councils. There is no statutory requirement for information to be held centrally.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the Government's policy on an increase in the numbers of licensed incinerators in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to limit the numbers of licensed incinerators in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government regard incineration as a sound means of waste disposal, provided that the appropriate statutory conditions for operation are fully met. We have no policy to increase or to limit the existing number of incinerators in Scotland.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he intends to bring forward proposals to charge members of the public for the right of appeal against the siting of incinerators or dumps.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The right of appeal exists only for those who have been refused planning permission. Members of the public may object both to their local planning authorities during the consideration of an application and to my right hon. and learned Friend during any subsequent appeal. There are no proposals to charge members of the public for submitting such objections.

Sheep

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by region *(a)* how many sheep and *(b)* how many farms, still have restrictions in force because of the Chernobyl explosion.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information for each of the Regions in Scotland where restrictions are in force is set out in the table:

Region	*Number of sheep*	*Number of farms*
Central	46,000	19
Dumfries and Galloway	22,000	17
Strathclyde	56,000	38
Total	124,000	74

Public Houses

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many prosecutions were mounted for offences in connection with under-age drinking; and how many convictions resulted in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information is set out in the table.

Under age drinking offences, Scotland 1988

Offence	*Persons proceeded against*	*Persons with a charge proved*
Sale of drink to persons under 18	270	106
Person under 18 buying alcoholic liquor or consuming alcoholic liquor in a bar	190	189
Purchasing alcoholic liquor for consumption by person under 18	96	87

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many applications for late licences for public houses were granted under section 64 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 in the last year for which figures are available;

(2) how many public house licences were in operation in 1976 in Scotland and at the latest available date; and, in each case, how many public houses per thousand of the population this represents;

(3) how many licences for the sale of liquor were in operation in Scotland in 1976 and at the latest available date; and, in each case, how many licences per thousand of the population this represents.

Mr. Rifkind: Five thousand six hundred and four extensions of permitted hours were granted in 1980 in respect of licensed premises in Scotland. Separate figures in respect of public houses and afternoon or evening extensions are not available. I refer the hon. Member to table 4.4 of civil judicial statistics Scotland 1980 (Cmnd. 8710).

In 1976 there were 4,132 public house licences in force in Scotland, which represented 0·79 public houses per 1,000 of the Scottish population at that time. In 1980, the latest year for which official figures are available, there were 4,472 public house licences in operation, representing 0·86 public houses per 1,000 of the population.

In 1976 there were 14,781 liquor licences in force in Scotland, representing 2·83 licences per 1,000 of the Scottish population at that time. In 1980, the latest year for which official figures are available, there were 16,412 liquor licences in operation, which represented 3·16 licences per 1,000 of the population.

The collection and publication of liquor licensing statistics in Scotland was discontinued after 1980, following consultation with the police and local authorities on the use being made of the statistics. Information on licensing statistics up to 1980 was contained in the annual civil judicial statistics Scotland; and unofficial estimates for later years are contained in the annual Brewers Society statistical handbook. Copies of these publications are available in the Library.

Charities

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what bodies he proposes to treat as a Scottish charity as the phrase is used in clause 1(6) of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Mr. Rifkind: Clause 1(6) will entitle any Scottish body recognised by the Inland Revenue as charitable to describe itself as "a Scottish charity". There may be 15,000 such bodies.

Fine Defaulters

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of admissions to prisons in Scotland of persons for non-payment of fines of *(a)* up to £25 and *(b)* between £25 and £50, at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information is for value of fine outstanding rather than fine imposed at court and for receptions rather than persons admitted to prison. One reception is counted if one or more warrants arrive for the same person for the same court on the same day. Some receptions relate to warrants arriving at establishments for people already held in custody.

In 1989, the number of receptions where the fine outstanding was *(a)* up to and including £25 was 387, and *(b)* greater than £25 and up to and including £50 was 1,420.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were admitted to Scottish prisons as a result of non-payment of fines in the last year for which figures are available; what percentage this was of total admissions and what was the average length of stay in prison before release.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information is for receptions rather than persons admitted to prison. One reception is counted if one or more warrants arrive for the same person from the same court on the same day. Some receptions relate to warrants arriving at establishments for people already held in custody.

In 1989, there were 9,154 receptions into penal establishments in Scotland for non-payment of fines, 47 per cent. of all receptions. The average period spent in custody by fine defaulters was 11 days.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the daily prison population in Scotland was made up of inmates in prison because of non-payment of fines, excluding remand prisoners.

Mr. Rifkind: In 1989, 6 per cent. of the average daily population in penal establishments, excluding those held on remand, were there for non-payment of fines.

Public Trusts

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many applications have been made to the Court of Session for the reorganisation or amalgamation of public trusts whose objectives are obsolete or have otherwise been fulfilled in each of the last five years.

Mr. Rifkind: This information is not available in the form requested.

Divorce

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many decrees of divorce were granted in Scotland in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will break this figure down on the basis of the grounds of divorce used to establish the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

Mr. Rifkind: The numbers of decrees of divorce granted in Scotland for 1988, the latest year for which figures are available, broken down by grounds are set out in the table.

	1988
Adultery	1,309
Behaviour	3,559
Desertion	83
Non-cohabitation for 2 years with consent	4,879
Non-cohabitation for 5 years	1,626
Cases with more than one ground	12
TOTAL	11,468

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate, using current divorce statistics, of the percentage of marriages now contracted in Scotland which will end in divorce.

Mr. Rifkind: A paper on "Trends in Marriage and Divorce in Scotland 1951-1987", published by the Registrar General for Scotland with the vital statistics return for the week 17-20 June 1989, estimated that approximately one quarter of recent Scottish marriages would end in divorce.

Government Buildings (Security)

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library the management report prepared for his Department by David Stevenson dealing with the use of private security firms to oversee his Department's premises.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) on 11 June, Vol. 174, c. *50*.

Marriages

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of marriages contracted in Scotland in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: The provisional figure for 1989 is 35,325.

Conveyancing

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his Department has carried out any research into the legal fees charged in conveyancing transactions in Scotland since the abolition of scale fees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 19 January *Official Report*, Vol. 165 col. *418*. Of the projects referred to there, the report on the first has just reached my Department, while the report on the second is expected early next year.

Water Supply

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide figures for the separate costs of liming and orthophosphate treatment in the water supply in Scotland in each year between 1979 and 1990, inclusive, and for the projected annual cost of these treatments from 1990 to 1998; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This is an operational matter for each regional and islands council and such costs, which will vary considerably between individual treatment works, may not be separately identified. Costs incurred by authoriies for particular treatments to meet individual water quality standards are not recorded on a national basis.

Scotland-Ireland Bridge

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will initiate a survey and report into the possibility of a bridge between the Mull of Kintyre and Torr Head, Co. Antrim; and if he will seek the co-operation of the Commission of the European Community for this research.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The right hon. Member will not be surprised to learn that my right hon. and learned Friend has no intention of initiating a study into the feasibility of a bridge between Mull of Kintyre and Toor Head, Co Antrim.

Adult Education

Ms. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list his office's priorities and objectives for the expansion of community-based adult education in Scotland; and what guidance he has issued to Scottish education authorities on the matter;

(2) if he will list his office's priorities and objectives for the expansion of English as a second language provision in Scotland *(a)* on a community-based adult education programme and *(b)* as a school-based provision; and what guidance he has issued to Scottish education authorities on this matter.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave on 7 June to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell).

As to school-based provision of English as a second language, this remains the responsibility of education authorities to determine in the light of other first language usage. Circular 1178, issued by the Scottish Education Department in January 1989, commends to authorities the practice of using another language in primary schools as a bridge to proficiency in English.

"Step up the Wordpower"

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total level of expenditure allocated by his Department for the provision of support to the BBC "Step up the Wordpower" basic skills campaign in the current financial year.

Mr. Lang: The BBC initiative "Step up the Wordpower" took place in 1989-90. The Scottish Education Department contributed £16,500 in that year in direct support, and further contributions were made by the Scottish Community Education Council, which received a total grant of £528,000 from the Department, and by the Training Agency.

A BBC numeracy initiative is due to commence in the current financial year, and £10,500 has already been made available by the Department towards the costs of this initiative.

Family Planning (Lothian Region)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much it costs per case for Lothian health board to provide family planning advice through *(a)* community clinics, *(b)* the general practitioner service and *(c)* the Brook Advisory Centre.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not held centrally.

Medical and Dental Schools

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total additional cost for teaching paid to each medical and dental school in Scotland; and how much that represents per student.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The additional cost of undergraduate medical and dental education and research in hospitals which support teaching is reflected in the allocation of resources for recurrent expenditure made to the four teaching health boards. The amount made available for this purpose for the financial year 1990-91 is set out in the table:

Teaching Health Board	*£ million*
Greater Glasgow	32·076
Lothian	22·671
Grampian	14·215
Tayside	14·797

This represents a cost of £36,450 per medical student and £9,110 per dental student.

Piper Alpha (Pollution)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what monitoring is being undertaken to establish the effects on the marine environment, including fish stocks and sea mammals, of the loss of polychlorinated biphenyls from the Piper Alpha platform; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 24 May 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply which was given to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) on 25 January (Vol. 165, columns *839-40*.

Officials have since discussed with representatives of the fishing industry and the Nature Conservancy Council the results of the surveys carried out under the abandonment programme approved by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. My right hon. Friend is considering what further monitoring may be needed under the abandonment programme.

DAFS will continue to monitor the area round Piper Alpha as part of its general monitoring of the contaminant levels in sea water and in fish stocks in sea waters around Scotland.

Research on contaminants in seals and other sea mammals in Great Britain's coastal waters has been commissioned by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. The sea mammal research unit in co-operation with the DAFS marine laboratory, Aberdeen is at present examining the relationship between contaminant burdens in seals and their feeding sites by studying a group of breeding female grey seals over a number of years. Results are expected soon.

Disabled People

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many employment training places have been taken up by people who have disabilities in Scotland by Training Agency area over the last two years.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* In the period September 1988 to March 1990, 2,822 people with disabilities have taken up employment training places in Scotland. This information is not available by Training Agency area.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 15 June 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

School Closures

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools were closed in each of the last five years within the Norfolk local education authority area.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The number of schools which were closed in each of the past five years in the Norfolk local education authority area is as follows:

	Number
1989	12
1988	15
1987	11
1986	14
1985	25

Examinations

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children took the GCE O-level and CSE examinations in Lancashire in 1989; and what results were achieved.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information for 1989 is not yet available. Of the 17,500 maintained school leavers in Lancashire in 1988 who had attempted at least one GCSE, O-level or CSE examination, 5,610 achieved five or more results at grade A to C[1] at GCSE (or equivalent), 5,020 achieved between one and four results at grade A to C and 6,760 achieved at least one result at another grade.

[1] Including O-level grade A to C and CSE grade 1.

Ms. Katharine Sharkey

Sir Barney Hayhoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress being made in dealing with the appeal under section 8(6) of the Education Act 1981 in respect of Katharine Sharkey; and when he expects the appeal to be decided.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Hounslow local education authority is currently considering a further letter from the parents of Katharine Sharkey in support of their appeal. My right hon. Friend expects to make a decision when he has received the authority's response to that letter.

Pupils (Ethnic Minorities)

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science in how many schools the pupil population is in excess of 90 per cent. of any one ethnic minority *(a)* in the public sector and *(b)* in the private sector; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information requested is not available centrally, but my right hon. Friend has announced in circular No. 16/89 that ethnic statistics will be collected by local education authorities from schools maintained by them as from September 1990. Aggregated local education authority returns will be submitted to the Department annually from June 1991.

National Curriculum

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the means by which the national curriculum is to be monitored in private sector schools.

Mr. Alan Howarth: It is for independent schools to decide whether to adopt the national curriculum. Her Majesty's inspectors, in the course of their normal programme of inspecting independent schools, are monitoring the schools' intentions with regard to adopting this and the extent to which they are implementing it. My right hon. Friend is pleased that many are choosing to do so.

Computing Equipment

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many applications were received by the Science and Engineering Research Council in respect of its initiative of March to provide computing equipment to universities and polytechnics incorporating parallel and novel architectures;

(2) how many of those applications received by the Science and Engineering Research Council in respect of its initiative of March to provide computing equipment to universities and polytechnics incorporating parallel and novel architectures were alpha-rated;

(3) how many of those applications received by the Science and Engineering Research Council in respect of its initiative of March to provide computing equipment to universities and polytechnics incorporating parallel and novel architectures were funded.

Mr. Jackson: There were 75 applications of which 47 were alpha-rated. The number of applications to be funded has not yet been determined.

Foreign Students

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the number of foreign students studying in London this summer without accommodation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: This information is not available centrally. The accommodation needs of students from abroad, as of home students, are a matter for the institutions they are attending.

TRANSPORT

Public Inquiries

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the venues south of the River Thames which his Department considered as alternatives to Stratford old town hall for the preliminary meeting of the inquiry into the east London river crossing and London City airport on 9 May; and if he will give the reason why each venue was unsuitable.

Mr. Atkins: The information is as follows:

Venue and reason for rejection

Woolwich Town Hall—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Greenwich Borough Hall—Unsuitable supporting accommodation.
West Greenwich House—Inadequate capacity.
Thames Polytechnic—Restricted availability.
Charlton House—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Shewsbury House—Inadequate capacity.
Clockhouse Community Centre—Inadequate capacity.
Crayford Town Hall—No supporting accommodation.
Blackheath Concert Halls—In need of refurbishment.
Royal Military Academy—Inadequate capacity.
Welling Bingo Hall—Not available.
Woolwich Waterfront Leisure Centre—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Danson Road Sports Centre—Not available.
Thamesmead Lakeside Restaurant—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Plumstead Sports Centre—Not available.
Bexleyheath Council Chamber—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Greenwich Royal Naval College—Not available.
Westwood Masonic Hall, Welling—Inadequate capacity.
Maritime Museum, Geenwich—Not available.
Falconwood Community Centre—Inadequate capacity.
Crest Hotel, Bexley—Not available.
Orchard Theatre, Dartford—Not available.
Flamingo Club, Woolwich—Not available.
Bromley Court Hotel—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Edge Parkinson Memorial Hall—Inadequate capacity.
St. John's Church Hall, Catford—Inadequate capacity.
Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Honor Oak Community Centre—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Civic Suite, Catford—Inadequate capacity.
W. G. Grace Community Centre, Nottingham—Not available.
St. Mary's Centre, Ladywell—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
St. Peter's Centre, Brockley—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Crofton Leisure Centre—Not available
Lewisham Theatre—Not available.
St. Lawrence Church Hall, Catford—Not available.
St. Margaret's Church Hall, Lewisham—Restricted availability.
Azelia Hall, Beckenham—Not available
Clockhouse Methodist—Inadequate capacity.
Church Hall, Beckenham—Not available.
Holy Trinity Church Hall, Penge—Not available.
St. Andrews Church Hall, Mottingham—Inadequate capacity.
St. Andrews Church Hall, Bromley—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
St. Barnabas Church Hall, Beckenham—Inadequate capacity.
United Reformed Church Hall, Beckenham—Not available.
Robert Whyte Memorial Hall, Bromley—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
Beckenham Leisure Centre—Inadequate supporting accommodation.
United Reformed Church Hall, Bromley—Not available.
Methodist Church Hall, Bromley—Not available.
Anerley Methodist Church Hall, Penge—Restricted availability.
Council Chamber, Bromley—Inadequate capacity.

Manchester Airport

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the current negotiations on access for United States carriers to Manchester airport to be concluded; and if he will make a statement on the progress of the negotiations.

Mr. McLoughlin: The current negotiations are being carried forward as speedily as possible, but no timetable has been set for their completion. It would not be appropriate for any further statement to be made now.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Development Assistance

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of gross national product was allocated to net official development assistance in 1989.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley), of 2 April, *Official Report*, column *412*, if he will announce the figure for the percentage of gross national product spent on official development assistance in 1989.

Mrs. Chalker: Net official development assistance in 1989 as a percentage of GNP is provisionally estimated at 0·31 per cent.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of gross national product was spent on official development assistance in 1988.

Mrs. Chalker: The percentage of gross national product spent on official development assistance in 1988 was 0·32 per cent.

ENVIRONMENT

Protection of Birds

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he plans to designate further sites to protect birds under the special protection areas scheme or the Ramsar convention; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The Government's aim is to designate those sites which are necessary to meet the conservation objectives of the convention and the directive.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, with whom rests responsibility for the designation of sites in Scotland, recently announced the designation of four special protection areas, one Ramsar site and three sites with dual designation, bringing the Great Britain totals to 40 special protection areas and 43 Ramsar sites.

A number of proposals are currently being considered and the next designation will take place as soon as the necessary consultations have been satisfactorily completed.

Desalination

Sir Neil Macfarlane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies his Department has made of methods of desalination both for overseas markets and for the United Kingdom; what research funds have been made available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: A study was made by the Water Resources Board and published as "Desalination 1976". This concluded that desalination was not economical in the United Kingdom when other sources could be exploited. My Department has made no further studies and none is planned.

Sir Neil Macfarlane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will review the possible need for desalination units in the United Kingdom with the water companies and other interested organisations.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No. It is for the private water companies and interested organisations to determine the potential for desalination units.

Metal Detectors

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will bring forward proposals to regulate further the use of metal detectors to discover items of historical or archaeological interest; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State announced on 13 December 1989, in another place, the Government's intention to amend at a suitable opportunity the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 so as to make it an offence to remove, without consent, any item of historical or archaeological interest from the site of a scheduled ancient monument, and to consider less formal measures relating to finds made on unscheduled sites. The unauthorised use of metal detectors is already prohibited on scheduled sites. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no plans to further regulate the use of metal detectors.

Foxes

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make a statement concerning the disposal of captured urban foxes;

(2) if he will seek to make it a criminal offence to release foxes captured in urban areas into the countryside; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will give an estimate of the number of foxes captured in urban areas each year and released into the countryside;

(4) if he will make it his policy to introduce stiff penalties for persons releasing foxes captured in urban areas into the countryside.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. and learned Member.

Homelessness

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement concerning his proposals to combat homelessness in the Greater London area.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on 8 May at column 15.

Management and Computer Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much his Department expects to spend on management and computer consultancy contracts in 1990-91.

Mr. Chris Patten *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* My Department's current budget (including Property Services Agency services) for management and computer consultancies in 1990-91 is £27·3 million.

Nuclear Accident, Greenwich

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans or studies have been made or commissioned by his Department to assess measures that would have to be taken in the event of contamination by airborne plutonium resulting from a nuclear weapons accident aboard a Royal Navy ship docked at Greenwich.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* This is a matter for the Ministry of Defence and I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces on 12 June at column *142*.

Advertising Costs

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total cost of advertisements for the community charge; in which daily and Sunday newspapers have advertisements been placed; and if he will list papers and cost of advertisements placed in each newspaper.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* No advertisements for the community charge have been placed by the Department. We did, however, sponsor a campaign in January and February designed to inform people of the availability of community charge benefit and transitional relief. The total cost of the advertisements in this campaign in various media was just under £4 million. Of this the cost (excluding VAT) of placing advertisements in daily newspapers was just under £1·05 million, made up as follows:

Daily Mirror	338·3
The Sun	325·0
Daily Star	58·2
Daily Mail	61·5
Daily Express	40·0
Today	18·4
The Times	36·0
The Independent	33·7
The Guardian	36·6
The Daily Telegraph	99·0

In addition, design costs were incurred, but these are not easily separable from the design costs of the advertisements in other media. No advertisements were placed in Sunday newspapers.

The Department of Social Security has subsequently taken newspaper advertisements publishing the increased

savings limits for community charge benefit announced in the Budget, and reminding people of the time limit for making backdated claims for benefit and of the level of income likely to entitle people to benefit.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Immigration

Sir Bernard Braine: To ask the Attorney-General how many cases of Filipino wives of British subjects seeking admission to the United Kingdom whose applications were submitted to the Immigration Appellate Authorities up to the end of March are still outstanding; when the application of Mrs. Nancy Barrera Sanderson will be decided; what are the reasons for the delay in processing such applications; and whether he will take urgent steps to end the distress caused by the delays to lawfully married couples.

The Attorney-General: The information requested in the first part of the question is not available, as the Immigration Appellate Authorities (IAA) does not record information separately about appeals from Filipino citizens.

The IAA has now sent the case papers of Mrs. Nancy Barrera Sanderson's appeal to her representatives in the United Kingdom. When the representatives indicate to the IAA that they are ready to proceed to the hearing before the independent adjudicator, a hearing will be set down within four to six weeks.

Delays in processing appeals at the IAA have been caused by the unexpectedly high rise in the volume of appeals in 1988 and 1989. There was a 60 per cent. rise in 1988; a 30 per cent. rise in 1989; and a further 40 per cent. rise is expected over the next 18 months.

Significant additional resources were provided to the IAA last year, which resulted in a 50 per cent. rise in disposal rates. However, the increased workload has been so great that the backlog of appeals still remains high, but the situation is being kept under review.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will tabulate, in the *Official Report*, the amount of precept levied by the Metropolitan police on each of the local authorities within its area, distinguishing those wholly within the Greater London area, for the years 1989-90 and 1990-91 respectively, together with their respective adult populations for each year and the amount contributed per head for both years, together with the percentage increase or decrease in the two per capita contributions.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The funding arrangements for local authorities which came into operation this year mean that it is not meaningful to compare on a per capita basis the amounts levied by precept by the receiver for the Metropolitan police in 1989-90 and in 1990-91. This is because the precept in 1989-90 was not a per capita charge, but expressed as so many pence in the pound of rateable value; because it included rates on commercial properties in the area concerned, while moneys raised through the new uniform business rates are redistributed to local authorities on a national basis; and it did not include block grant, which is paid to the receiver directly, while revenue support grant which replaces block grant is paid into the collection funds on which the precept is levied.

Football Licensing Authority

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what stage has been reached in making appointments to the Football Licensing Authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Appointments to the Football Licensing Authority are still under consideration. My right hon. and noble Friend has already written to the hon. Member to tell him that the Government intend to appoint the authority as soon as possible. He has also written to the Football League to make clear the Government's view that it is not necessary for football clubs to wait for the authority to be set up before starting to make the improvements to football grounds which were recommended in Lord Justice Taylor's final report on the Hillsborough tragedy.

Prisoners (Police Cells)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were held in police cells in England and Wales on 4 June.

Mr. Mellor: On Monday 4 June there were 1,080 prisoners, all of them male, held in police stations in England and Wales.

Astley Bridge Police Station

Mr. David Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report on what factors were responsible for the escape of a category A prisoner, from Astley Bridge police station, Bolton.

Mr. Mellor: An investigation into the escape of Alan Lord, a category B prisoner, from Astley Bridge police station, Bolton, is being undertaken by Greater Manchester police. I will write to the hon. Member when the investigation is completed. Alan Lord was recaptured at around 11 o'clock last night in Liverpool.

Mr. David Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost of building Astley Bridge police station, Bolton.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The final cost is not yet available but is expected to be about £1,295,000.

Category A Prisoners

Mr. David Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many category A prisoners are held *(a)* in prisons and *(b)* in police stations; what instructions are given about the secure holding of prisoners held in police stations; and, if he has any plans for changes.

Mr. Mellor: At present 418 prisoners are confirmed as category A and all are held in prison accommodation.

Steps taken by the police to ensure the security of prisoners held in their custody are a matter for the chief

officer of police. Reciprocal arrangements exist between the prison service and the police for the exchange of information relevant to the custody of prisoners who are transferred from the one to the other. Such arrangements are subject to review in the light of particular incidents.

Advertising (Overseas Voters)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total cost of the newspaper and other advertising campaign about overseas voting registration *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in other countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The cost is £750,000 this year, of which £136,400 is being spent on advertising in the United Kingdom (including advertising in publications which also have some overseas circulation) and £510,700 on various forms of advertising or publicity overseas. The remaining £102,900 is for leaflets, posters and production costs, or has not yet been allocated.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Cat Skins

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has received any recent representations on the export of cat skins to West Germany; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: My Department has received a number of letters referring to the export of cat skins from the United Kingdom. Several of these letters have mentioned West Germany as a destination for these exports.

My Department is aware of a limited trade in cat skins from the United Kingdom which is legitimately carried out by a small number of companies. Cat skins are not subject to export controls, and, because of the limited level of trade, cat skin exports are not recorded under a separate heading in the Customs tariff.

The worrying issue of cat thefts is for the Home Office.

Debt Advice

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase spending on debt advice work.

Mr. Forth: None. My Department does not specifically fund debt advice much of which is provided by citizens advice bureaux, as part of their general service. DTI grant in aid to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and Citizens Advice Scotland, which provide the support services for individual citizens advice bureaux, will amount to more than £11 million in 1990-91, compared with some £10 million last year. Individual bureaux are funded mainly by local authorities.

Advice Agencies

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the implications of the poll tax on the workload of the citizens advice bureaux and other advice-giving agencies.

Mr. Forth: No such assessment has been made. Independent advice on matters related to the community charge will be given by local citizens advice bureaux which are primarily funded by local authorities. My Department provides funding to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) and Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS), which provide support services to individual citizens advice bureaux including training and information materials. The Department of the Environment has agreed to provide £36,000 to NACAB this year to help with the costs involved in providing training for bureaux workers on the community charge and the Scottish Office has given CAS £36,000 over the last two years for the same purpose.

Desalination

Sir Neil Macfarlane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funds his Department makes available for research into desalination both for *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* overseas markets.

Mr. Forth: I launched my Department's "Wealth from the Oceans" advanced technology programme in April 1989 with a budget of £9,000,000 to encourage firms to carry out more pre-competitive collaborative research into the ocean technologies, including desalination. Some £6,000,000 remains uncommitted and is available to match those sums advanced by industrial consortia whose proposals for longer-term research in this area satisfy the programme's rules.

Alternatively, firms wishing to collaborate with companies located in one or more of 18 other countries in Europe to investigate desalination can apply for EUREKA status and support, which is made available on a case-by-case basis.

Competition Act 1980

Mr. Irvine: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he intends to make a further reference of a public sector body to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission under section 11 of the Competition Act 1980.

Mr. Redwood: A reference has today been sent to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to investigate the efficiency and costs of, and the service provided by, Northern Ireland Railways Ltd. and its subsidiaries in providing passenger, freight and other services. A copy of the reference has been placed in the Library.

ENERGY

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mr. Wakeham: The information from 1985 onwards is as follows:

Management Consultants with Subject and Outcome

Stuart McKechnie Ltd—Management Training—Design of a training and development programme

TDA Consulting Group Ltd—Management Training—Design of a training and development programme

Information on contracts before 1985 could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The cost of individual contracts is commercially confidential.

Nuclear Research

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will list the major nuclear research projects being undertaken by the Atomic Energy Authority, together with the dates they commenced and the objectives of each project at the time they were originally initiated;

(2) if he will list the major nuclear research projects being paid for by his Department together with the dates they commenced and the objectives of each project at the time they were originally initiated.

Mr. Wakeham: The objectives of the nuclear R and D programmes currently funded by the Department and carried out by UKAEA are described in chapter 5 of the 1990 public expenditure White Paper (Cm 1005). Details of UKAEA's programmes are contained in its annual reports which are laid before Parliament.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give for each type of plant the assumed GW and TWh of generation in 1990, 2005 and 2020 in the central growth, low and high price scenarios set out in table 4.10 and 4.11 of his Department's "Evaluation of Energy Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions".

Mr. Wakeham: Capacity and generation for 1990, 2005 and 2020 underlying the central growth with low and high price scenarios of energy paper No. 58 are given in the table. The figures relate to purely illustrative scenarios which used IEA fuel price assumptions.

Scenarios of future United Kingdom generation by fuel type (TWh)

	1990		2005		2020	
	CL	CH	CL	CH	CL	CH
Coal	209	208	205	230	62	358
Oil	8	8	10	10	10	10
Gas	0	0	105	58	399	86
Nuclear	66	66	77	77	43	43
Hydro	3	3	3	3	3	3
Imports	13	13	4	13	4	13
Renewables	0	0	0	4	5	8
Total	299	298	405	397	525	520

Scenarios of future United Kingdom capacity by fuel type (GW)

	1990		2005		2020	
	CL	CH	CL	CH	CL	CH
Coal	43	43	37	37	12	55
Oil	14	14	16	16	9	9
Gas	0	0	21	19	82	38
Nuclear	12	12	13	13	7	7
Hydro	1	1	1	1	1	1
Imports	2	2	2	2	2	2
Renewables	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total	72	72	91	89	114	114

Notes: CL = Central growth, low price scenario.
CH = Central growth, high price scenario.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give for both coal-fired and nuclear plant, in GW, TWh and Mtoe, the assumed gross loss of old plant and the assumed gross gain in new plant, during both 1990 to 2005 and 2005 to 2020 assumed in tables 4.10 and 4.11 of his Department's "Evaluation of Energy Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions".

Mr. Wakeham: The gross gains and losses of coal and nuclear capacity underlying tables 4.10 and 4.11 in energy paper No. 58 are shown in the table. Comparisons are meaningful only on this GW basis. The figures relate to purely illustrative scenarios which used International Energy Agency fuel price assumptions.

Capacity retired and new capacity built (GW)

	1990 to 2005		2005 to 2020	
	CL	CH	CL	CH
Coal				
Capacity lost	6	6	28	46
New capacity	0	0	3	46
Net change	−6	−6	−25	+18
Nuclear				
Capacity lost	4	4	6	6
New capacity	5	5	0	0
Net change	+1	+1	−6	−6

CL = Central growth, low price scenario.
CH = Central growth, high price scenario.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy on what grounds the baseline scenarios in his Department's "Evaluation of Energy Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions", assume an annual rate of reduction in the energy ratio of between 0·5 per cent. and 0·8 per cent. compared with an average annual rate of 1·9 per cent. between 1978 and 1988.

Mr. Wakeham: The baseline scenarios in energy paper No. 58 represent projections of demand equations, estimated on past behaviour, and do not contain explicit assumptions about energy efficiency per se. The projected

changes in the energy ratio reflect the assumed economic background and, in particular, the energy price scenarios, which were provided by the International Energy Agency.

PRIME MINISTER

Child Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister, further to her reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North of Tuesday 12 June, if she will list the members of the interdepartmental group on child sexual abuse.

The Prime Minister: The interdepartmental group on child abuse is chaired by an under-secretary in the Department of Health and comprises senior officials and professional staff from that Department's social services inspectorate and medical, nursing and research management divisions; senior officials from the Department of Education and Science and a member of Her Majesty's inspectorate of schools; senior officials representing the police and probation departments at the Home Office and senior officials from the Scottish Education Department, the Welsh Office and the Department of Health and Social Services (Northern Ireland). Additional members are co-opted to discuss specific issues as necessary.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister, further to her reply of Tuesday 12 June to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North, if she will set out in tabular form the actions taken by the Government as a result of the deliberations of the interdepartmental group on child sexual abuse.

The Prime Minister: The role of the interdepartmental group on child abuse is to facilitate the exchange of information about the work undertaken by various Government Departments in the field of child protection and to develop consistent policies across the range of Government responsibilities. Examples of issues in respect of which officials have taken account of the group's discussions in advising Ministers include:

(i) guidance on child protection which was issued to all agencies in July 1988 as part of the Government's response to the Butler-Sloss report;
(ii) training;
(iii) implications of the Children Act;
(iv) research, and
(v) management and treatment of perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

Aid (USSR)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Prime Minister what plans the Government have to provide aid to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The Prime Minister: We are already offering bilateral technical assistance to the Soviet Union in areas such as management, banking, and agriculture. Such help can make a significant contribution to the process of economic reform.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ministerial Duties (Nights)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nights each of the Ministers of the Northern Ireland Office spent in Northern Ireland during the months of September, October, November and December 1989 and the months of January, February, March, April and May 1990.

Mr. Cope: The information requested is in the table:

	Mr. Brooke	*Mr. Cope*	*Lord Skelmersdale*	*Dr. Mawhinney*	*Mr. Needham*	*Mr. Bottomley*
September 1989	10	10	18	6	3	14
October 1989	9	8	14	6	9	11
November 1989	10	12	15	5	7	12
December 1989	10	10	15	7	5	7
January 1990	4	13	17	13	8	8
February 1990	9	10	12	9	8	10
March 1990	10	13	16	8	5	9
April 1990	4	4	16	6	7	7
May 1990	8	12	13	9	9	9

SCOTLAND

Graeme Stewart and John Allan Milligan

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply of 11 June, relating to Graeme Stewart and John Allan Milligan, what criteria are used to decide whether to institute proceedings under section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911.

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Dumbarton of 11 June relating to Graeme Stewart and John Allan Milligan, what criteria are used when deciding whether to prosecute under section 1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 14 June 1990]:* When deciding whether or not to institute criminal proceedings in any case reported to him, the public prosecutor in Scotland considers *(a)* whether the known facts and circumstances disclose a crime at common law; *(b)* whether he has jurisdiction in the case; *(c)* whether there is sufficient evidence to justify the institution of proceedings; *(d)* whether the matter is of sufficient substance and importance to merit criminal proceedings; or *(e)* whether it is otherwise in the public interest.

WALES

National Parks

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of planning appeal decisions *(a)* allowed, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* withdrawn and *(d)* undetermined in each of the Welsh national parks in each

of the last two years for which figures are available; and if he will express the numbers allowed and dismissed as a percentage of those determined.

Mr. Roberts: The table sets out the information relating to 1989, the first year for which separate records were kept, and to the period from January 1990 to date:

National Park	*Year*	*Allowed*	*Per cent.*	*Dismissed*	*Per cent.*	*Withdrawn*	*Undetermined*
Snowdonia	1989	9	36	16	64	3	4
	[1]1990	4	21	15	79	1	13
Brecon Beacons	1989	4	27	11	73	5	1
	[1]1990	4	19	17	81	3	20
Pembrokeshire Coast	1989	6	35	11	65	3	4
	[1]1990	3	19	13	81	2	19

[1] January 1990 to date.

Myodil

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he is now able to make of the number of people in Wales who are complaining of side-effects and after-effects arising from the use of the drug Myodil.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on Thursday 14 June 1990.

Pupil-teacher Ratios

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average pupil-teacher ratio at secondary schools in Wales of *(a)* fewer than 100 pupils, *(b)* 100 to 200 pupils and *(c)* 200 plus pupils, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: The information as at September 1989[1] is as follows:

	Pupil-teacher ratio[3]
100 to 200 pupils[2]	10·6
200 plus pupils	15·3

There are no secondary schools in Wales with fewer than 100 pupils.
[1] Provisional data.
[2] Refers to one recently opened school.
[3] Based on teachers within schools.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average pupil-teacher ratio at primary schools in Wales of *(a)* fewer than 100 pupils, *(b)* 100 to 200 pupils and *(c)* 200 plus pupils, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: The information as at September 1989[1] is as follows:

	Pupil-teacher ratio[2]
Fewer than 100 pupils	18·2
100-200 pupils	22·1
200 pupils	23·6

[1] Provisional data.
[2] Based on teachers within schools.

Statutory Health Bodies

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether membership of *(a)* health authorites, *(b)* family practitioner committees, and *(c)* community health councils, has been extended; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Those members of district health authorities whose periods of office were due to terminate on 31 July 1990 have been invited to serve until 31 July 1991. Members of family practitioner committees are due to serve until 31 March 1991 or later. In both cases the membership will cease at an earlier date should Royal Assent be obtained to the National Health Service and Community Care Bill. The periods of office of some of those members of community health councils appointed by the Secretary of State are due to expire on 30 June 1990 and invitations in respect of those positions have recently been issued.

Local Management of Schools

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement concerning the implementation of local financial management of schools in Wales, and how it affects *(a)* schools of fewer than 100 pupils and *(b)* schools of 100 pupils or more.

Mr. Roberts: Schemes for the local management of schools have been approved for each of the local education authorities in Wales and they came into force on 1 April. Accordingly all primary and secondary schools are being formula-funded subject to LEAs' transitional arrangements. The delegation to secondary and larger primary schools of responsibility for managing their budgets is being phased in over the next three years.

The position of small schools was carefully considered before formal approval to the schemes was given. The budgets of schools with fewer than 100 pupils and of the majority of primary schools with 100 pupils or more may benefit from additional LEA funding to protect them against disproportionately high salary costs and to ensure that the requirements of the national curriculum can be met.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what change there has been in the pupil-teacher ratio in Wales since implementation of local financial management; what were the comparable figures for the previous three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Roberts: Schemes for local management of schools were introduced by local education authorities in April 1990. No information on pupils or teacher numbers has been collected since that date.

HEALTH

Community Care

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how it is proposed that the level of funds made available to local authorities in respect of community care services will take into account the proposed closure of hospitals for patients with mental handicap and mental illness.

Mr. Dorrell: Local authority expenditure on community care will continue to be funded in the same way as other local authority expenditure. Additional funds are made available to local authorities by district health authorities as a result of local agreements to support mentally handicapped and mentally ill patients discharged from hospital to live in the community. A specific grant is proposed to facilitate community care for people with a mental illness.

Women Workers

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women have children between the ages of five and 16 years; and how many of these women work *(a)* part time and *(b)* full time.

Mr. Dorrell: Table 1 shows that in 1987, the latest year for which these data are available, 22 per cent. of all women of working age had at least one child aged five to 15 years. Table 2 gives the percentages of these women who were going out to work full time and part time. The data are taken from the general household survey, which obtains information from a sample of private households, and are therefore subject to sampling error.

Table 1 Great Britain

	1987 (per cent.)
Percentage of women with child(ren) aged 5-15 years	22
Base = 100 per cent. (women aged 16-59)	7,656

Table 2 Great Britain

	1987 (per cent.)
Percentage of women, with children aged 5-15 years, who went out to work:	
Full time	21
Part time	47
Total going out to work[1]	68
Base = 100 per cent. (women aged 16-59 with child(ren) aged 5-15)	1,694

[1] Includes a few cases for which hours of work were not given.

Child Sex Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress has been made on child sexual abuse since the statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 15 May 1989, *Official Report*, columns 145-48;

(2) if he will provide a table of recent, current and proposed research funded by each Government Department relevant to child sexual abuse in each of the years since 1979, listing *(a)* projects under consideration, with earmarked funding, *(b)* projects in progress, *(c)* projects completed, *(d)* broad themes identified for research, and the actual and projected cost in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the answer of 2 May, *Official Report*, column *548*, whether all local authorities in England have now incorporated the recommendations of the Butler-Sloss report in the guidelines they issue to those of their social workers involved in cases of alleged child abuse.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department does not routinely see all local guidance issued to social workers. However, the social services inspectorate as part of its inspection work looks at social work practice and local guidance.

General Practitoners' Budgets

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who will be responsible for paying for drug addicts to attend drug dependency units when general practitioners have their own budgets.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The National Health Service and Community Care Bill provides for GP practices which volunteer to do so, and which meet the eligibility criteria, to run their own practice funds. From 1 April 1991, practice funds will enable GPs to purchase a specified range of hospital services for their patients. The practice

funding arrangements will cover all initial out-patient referrals made by GPs—but not those made by other health professionals—and certain in-patient or day case procedures, primarily in the area of elective surgery. The cost of treating patients referred by GP fund holders to drug depedency units on an out-patient basis will be met from the practice fund, whereas the cost of referrals by other agencies (such as social services), self-referrals and of in-patient care will not be a charge on the fund. These patients will be covered (as will the patients of non-fund holders) by the contracts which district health authorities place on behalf of their resident population.

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people with glaucoma and diabetes received free eye tests in each district health authority area in England *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Statistics prior to 1 April 1989 were not broken down by patient group. Since then family practitioner committees have collected data on sight tests paid for under the general ophthalmic services on a six-monthly basis. District health authorities do not collect such information. The table gives estimated numbers by patient group and regional health authority for the period in question.

NHS sight tests paid for during April-September 1989:

RHA	*Diabetics/ Glaucoma sufferers*
Northern	5,410
Yorkshire	8,900
Trent	15,660
East Anglia	3,200
North West Thames	6,700
North East Thames	9,700
South East Thames	11,900
South West Thames	6,450
Wessex	8,290
Oxford	5,250
South Western	8,750
West Midlands	10,200
Mersey	3,940
North Western	9,830

These figures are based on a 2 per cent. sample of national health service sight test application forms processed by family practitioner committees. They do not take into account sight tests paid for after 1 April 1989 but conducted before that period.

NHS Reform

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions officials of his Department have undertaken about the possibility of any part of the health service in the Greenwich district opting for self-governing status.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None.

Health Services, Greenwich

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether his Department has been involved in any discussions about the establishment of a new district general hospital at the Memorial hospital, Woolwich;

(2) what discussions or correspondence his Department has had with officers of the Greenwich health authority about the future of acute services in Greenwich during the past 12 months.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department has not been involved with these issues in the past 12 months. Greenwich health authority is to produce a strategy document for acute services for consideration which should address all options.

Steroids

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department first became aware that high dosages of steroids had serious and lasting side-effects; and what action was taken to make this information known to general practitioners and hospitals.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A number of serious diseases require long-term treatment with steroids. The side-effects of long-term treatment have been well known for many years, and the British National Formulary sent to all prescribers by the Department free of charge, has carried warnings to this effect since 1966. Licensing of medicinal products under the Medicines Act started in 1971, and companies promoting medicines to doctors are required to provide individual product data sheets which include appropriate information on warnings, contraindications and side-effects.

AIDS

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what further proposals he has to eliminate the spread of AIDS through *(a)* blood transfusions, *(b)* dirty syringes and *(c)* sexual transmission; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We are firmly committed to taking effective action to minimise the spread of HIV infection.

All blood donations are tested for HIV antibody and people who may have been exposed to HIV are asked not to donate blood. As a consequence, the risks of infection with HIV through blood transfusion in this country have been reduced to the lowest level currently possible.

We recognise the grave potential for spreading HIV through the use of infected injecting equipment by drug users. To counter this threat we have asked agencies working with drug users to maximise the number of users they are in contact with and to make HIV prevention activities a key part of their work. Advice has been issued on the establishment of syringe and needle exchange schemes, and on cleaning injecting equipment. We are also considering the role pharmacists have to play in the provision of injecting equipment in the light of the recent report of the addiction research unit, a copy of which is in the Library.

Sexual transmission of HIV remains the major threat: national and local action has been set in hand to meet that threat. Nationally, the Health Education Authority runs mass media campaigns and back-up activities aimed at the general public, with targeted work directed at groups at particular risk. Locally, health authorities have been asked to develop HIV prevention initiatives, in collaboration with local authorities and voluntary bodies, paying particular attention to HIV prevention services in genito-urinary medicine clinics.

This year health authorities are receiving £128 million specifically for HIV and AIDS-related work, local authorities have been allocated a £9·8 million support grant, and we expect to make grants of £1·8 million to voluntary bodies working in this field.

We expect action on all aspects of HIV prevention will have to be sustained for the foreseeable future, and the need for further action will be kept closely under review.

Drugs

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department monitors the number of persons who show serious side-effects after a long period of drug therapy; and what action is taken both in informing manufacturers and advising the medical profession.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) carefully monitors all issues of drug safety. Suspected adverse reactions to medical products are reported on a voluntary basis by doctors and dentists under the yellow card scheme, and there is a statutory requirement for pharmaceutical companies to submit reports. This applies to patients receiving treatment over short and long periods. The CSM recommends that manufacturers carry out post marketing surveillance studies for new drugs likely to be used for widespread long-term use, in order to identify any side-effects associated with treatment. In addition the CSM closely monitors worldwide epidemiological studies investigating the long-term effects of medicines.

Information on potential problems is sent regularly to all prescribers by means of CSM's "Current Problems" bulletin; in the case of major drug safety hazards the professions are alerted by means of a letter from the chairman. Drug prescribing information and guidance is also available from a number of other sources, for example the British National Formulary, which the Department issues free to all doctors twice yearly.

The pharmaceutical industry is regularly supplied with information on adverse reactions received by the CSM. In addition it is involved in receiving and providing information in relation to drug safety problems for its licensed products.

Blood Transfusion Service

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the costs of operating the blood transfusion service in each national health service region for the latest available year; and if he will express those costs in terms of cash, cash per head, and cash per litre of blood product supplied.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 23 May 1990]:* The revenue costs of operating the blood transfusion service for 1988-89 (the latest year available) are shown in the table along with the cost per head of population resident in each regional transfusion centre's area. Information is not held centrally to calculate the cost per litre of blood product supplied.

Region	*Revenue expenditure*	
	On the Blood Transfusion Service (£)	*Per head of population in RTC area*[1]
Northern	4,011,374	1·33
Yorkshire	5,626,860	1·79
Trent	6,453,730	1·31
East Anglia	2,990,940	1·47
North West Thames	6,483,135	1·76
North East Thames	5,043,480	1·43
South East Thames South West Thames	9,149,746	1·35
Wessex	3,077,056	1·35
Oxford	3,332,335	1·24
South Western	4,934,100	1·37
West Midlands	6,663,586	1·28
Mersey	3,899,912	1·43
North Western	6,753,782	1·48
Total	68,420,036	

[1] 1986 population.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the correlation coefficient between the incidence of HIV infection and the incidence of tuberculosis in England over the period 1980 to 1990.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The reported number of people with HIV infection has increased during the 1980s in England and Wales and in a small proportion of those who have progressed to develop AIDS, tuberculosis has occurred. However, no evidence of a correlation between the HIV epidemic and the overall incidence of tuberculosis has been identified so far in England and Wales.

Tuberculosis incidence, as measured by notifications, has been declining by approximately 5 per cent. per year in recent decades, but the rate of decline varies from year to year. Total notifications for England and Wales in 1988 (5,161) were 1·5 per cent. higher than the total in 1987 (5,086), but such small annual increases have been seen from time to time (in 1973, 1975, 1978 and 1986) with a subsequent resumption of the downward trend. The small increase that was seen in 1988 occurred mainly in the younger females and the elderly age group.

Alcoholism

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the organisations in receipt of funds from his Department that provide post detoxification residential care, indicating the amount received and the number of beds provided.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* There is no central register of the number of beds provided for detoxification, nor of the funding specifically used for the provision of these facilities.

The Department does not allocate earmarked moneys for the provision of post detoxification residential care for alcohol misusers. The Department does, however, make available to regional health authorities earmarked funding, which this year totals £15·5 million, for the provision of drug services locally. Post detoxification residential care may be funded from these allocations.

COMARE

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, further to the Minister of State's answer of 7 June, *Official Report*, columns *674-75*, when COMARE originally recommended a study of any possible health effects on the offspring of parents occupationally exposed to radiation; for what reason the recommendation was not then adopted; and when the studies will commence.

Mr. Dorrell: The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE)'s original recommendation for epidemiological studies to consider any possible health effects on the offspring of parents occupationally exposed to radiation was made in COMARE's second report (June 1988). The Government accepted this recommendation and research proposals were invited. COMARE subsequently broadened the scope of this recommendation in its third report (June 1989). The Government also accepted this recommendation and, following consultations with COMARE, have invited more detailed proposals. These proposals are currently undergoing the usual refereeing procedure and research should be commissioned later this year.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Income Support

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what the earnings disregards are for all single or married income support claimants who are required to be available for work; what earnings received by a claimant are not counted for income support purposes; what expenses can an income support claimant deduct from their gross earnings when calculating their benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The main disregards and provisions in income support for people with weekly earnings who are required to be available for work are:

Couples aged under 60 years who have been continuously in receipt of income support for two years or more—£15 per couple.
Couples receiving, or with underlying title to, the disability premium—£15 per couple.
All other couples—£5 each member.
Single people—£5

Earnings from employment which ceased before the claim for income support was made are ignored, with the exception of royalties and, for people below pension age, holiday pay, pay in lieu of notice or remuneration, and retainer fees.

Deductions are made from gross earnings in respect of income tax, social security contributions and one half of any contribution towards an occupational or personal pension scheme. In addition, where earnings are from self-employment deductions may be made for certain expenses wholly and exclusively defrayed for the purposes of that employment.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many single-pensioner households in Scotland are in receipt of income support or have been in receipt of income support or supplementary benefit for each of the past five years, expressed as a percentage of all single-pensioner households and as a numerical total.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[pursuant to her reply, 1 March 1990, c. 318-20]:* I regret that the information given was incorrect. The corrected figures, which relate to single people aged 60 and over, are in the table. The information requested is not available for single-pensioner households.

Number of "Single" people in Scotland

Thousands

	1983	*1984*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
a. Aged 60 and over	482	483	483	484	484
b. In receipt of Income Support aged 60 and over	131	138	135	150	149
c. Percentage in receipt of Income Support	27·2	28·6	28	31	30·8

Note: The population figures are mid-year population estimates from the population statistics branch of the General Registry Office for Scotland. The number of benefit recipients are taken from the annual statistical enquiries (ASE) in December 1983, December 1984, February 1986, May 1987 and May 1988. No ASE was produced in 1985.

Retirement Pensions

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the 1988-89 cost of providing the national insurance retirement pension *(a)* including spouse additions and *(b)* excluding spouse additions to category A retirement pensioners (1) in total, (2) for males and (3) for females.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The costs[1] as requested are as follows:

Including Adult Dependency Additions (ADAs)[2]

	£ million
Total Costs	12,240
To men	7,840
To women	4,400
Excluding ADAs	
Total Costs	12,090
To men	7,690
To women	4,400

[1] Source Government Actuary Department.
[2] It is impossible to tell from Government statistics whether the ADA is paid for a spouse or a person having care of children.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his best estimate of the number of *(a)* male and *(b)* female claimants who receive a spouse addition for non-contributory benefits for the latest available year.

Mr. Scott: The latest available figures show that 4,966 male and 487 female claimants receive increases of non-contributory benefits in respect of adult dependants. It is not possible to separate those cases where the increase is payable in respect of a spouse.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 11 June on the cost of spouse additions, what percentage of the £800 million and £4 million relate to the retirement pension.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: On male contribution records approximately 20 per cent. of the estimated £800 million figure relates to retirement pension. On female contribution records the percentage is negligible. (Note: The figures of £800 million and £4 million in the earlier answer were the estimated cost in 1988-89 of adult dependency additions, which include a small number of adult

dependants other than spouses who have care of a child or children. It is not possible to give separate figures solely for spouse additions although the amounts involved are unlikely to be significantly different.)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 24 May, *Official Report*, column *323*, regarding the woman's half-test, what information is available.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: A woman who was affected by the married woman's half-test would not have received any pension (not even a reduced one) based only on her own contributions. However, that test was abolished on 22 December 1984 for all women regardless of when they reached pension age and as a result some women became entitled to a reduced pension based on their own contributions.

At March 1989 there were some 0·6 million women in receipt of a reduced category A pension (that is one based on their own contributions), but it is not possible to say how many of these were women who became entitled to that pension as a result of the abolition of the test.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many single-pensioner households in Scotland are in receipt or have been in receipt of housing benefit for each of the past five years, expressed as a percentage of all single-pensioner households and as a numerical total.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[pursuant to her reply, 7 March 1990, c. 679]:* I regret that a correction is necessary.

The estimate for 1988 of 250,000 single people in Scotland aged 60 or over in receipt of housing benefit represents 51·7 per cent. of the total number of Scots in this group and not 11·3 per cent. as shown in the published reply.

Pension Ages

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 24 May, *Official Report*, column *323*, regarding pension ages, in what form the information is available.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Such information as is available is set out in my answer to the hon. Member's earlier question.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Charities

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many bodies established under the law of Scotland or managed or controlled wholly or mainly in, or from, Scotland are presently recognised by the Inland Revenue as charitable for tax purposes and are eligible for relief under section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

Mr. Lilley: The Inland Revenue is in the process of transferring to computer information about bodies in Scotland which have been recognised as charities for tax purposes. The task is not yet complete, but it is estimated there may be about 15,000.

Mortgages

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his reply of 6 March, *Official Report*, column *595*, if he will now make provision for writing down against tax liabilities the increases in mortgage debts of individuals which were incurred because of the rise in interest rates.

Mr. Lilley: Increases in mortgate interest payable as a result of changes in interest rates qualify for mortgage interest relief in accordance with the normal rules. Relief is allowed for the actual interest paid on qualifying loans up to the statutory limit.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer from the budget of which Department the United Kingdom's contribution to the European bank for reconstruction and development will be paid.

Mr. Ryder: The United Kingdom's contribution to the European bank for reconstruction and development will be paid through the Overseas Development Administration. The contributions for the years up to 1993-94 will be additional to ODA's existing provisions. Provisions for contributions in the years after 1993-94 will be considered in future public expenditure surveys.

Society of Chartered Accountants

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Society of Chartered Accountants; and what was discussed.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 June 1990]:* I have no knowledge of any organisation by this name.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how the status of a BSE-free herd will be affected by *(a)* the purchase of calves or young stock from a herd with BSE and *(b)* the purchase of calves or young stock from a herd that subsequently develops BSE; and, in the second case, how the authorities and the purchasing owner will be guaranteed information of the change in circumstance.

Mr. Maclean: Since there is no test for BSE in the live animal it is not possible to certify that any herd is BSE free.

Salmon

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to receive the report on the future of the east coast salmon fishery.

Mr. Curry: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) on 26 April at column *317*.

Spongiform Encephalopathy (Pets)

Mr. Amos: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the latest figures for the incidences of spongiform encephalopathy in domestic pets.

Mr. Maclean: Thirteen cats' brains have been examined at the central veterinary laboratory at Weybridge, of which three have been confirmed as having a spongiform encephalopathy. There are no confirmed cases involving dogs.

Rabies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the result of the rabies tests carried out on an eight-month-old border collie, which died in Walthamstow, east London on 15 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The rabies tests were all negative.

DEFENCE

Disarmament

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the process of disarmament.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: In common with our NATO allies, the United Kingdom has continued to give strong support to current arms control negotiations, and to work actively in those in which we are involved. We are now making important progress in achieveing our long-standing aim of enhancing security and stability in Europe at the lowest possible levels of forces consistent with our security needs. We intend to maintain this policy, which has proved such a success.

Air-to-Surface Missiles

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the proposed sitings of tactical air-to-surface missiles.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The question of the detailed sitings of tactical air-to-surface missiles has not arisen.

Cruise

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about sea-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave on 5 April at column *832*.

German Unification

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes he envisages in Britain's defence policy as a result of the two-plus-four talks on the reunification of Germany.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State informed the House on 6 February, we are examining options for change in the structure and deployment of our armed forces in the light of changing international circumstances. We will also be playing a full part in the forthcoming review of NATO strategy. It is still too early to indicate any specific changes, but we will continue to maintain our commitment to NATO which provides the best guarantee of peace and security in Europe.

Aircraft Procurement

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current state of the CFE negotiations and their possible effect on future military aircraft procurement for the RAF.

Mr. Alan Clark: The negotiations continue to make good progress and there are hopes that an agreement may be reached later this year. There has, as yet, been no agreement on either the definition or number of combat aircraft which might be covered by a CFE treaty. It is, therefore, not possible to speculate on the likely effects on future procurement.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what tests of nuclear weapons have taken place in the last five years; whether they have been to test the effectiveness of the weapons or in connection with modernisation; where such tests took place; and what notification was given to any international bodies.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The following joint UK-US nuclear tests have been held in the last five years:

Kinibito—5 December 1985
Darwin—25 June 1986
Midland—16 July 1987
Barnwell—8 December 1989

All were conducted at the Nevada test site. Such tests are carried out in order to maintain the effectiveness of the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons capability. In line with standard practice, all were simultaneously announced in London and Washington 30 minutes after shot time; no specific notifications were given to any international body.

RAF Akrotiri

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date, the number of times the United States U2 spy aircraft has used the facilities of RAF Akrotiri; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The USAF U2 aircraft has been permanently stationed at RAF Akrotiri since 1974 in support of middle east peacekeeping arrangements. It operates with the knowledge of all Governments directly involved.

Biological Defence

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has obtained for his departmental library a copy of the United States Department of Defense 1986 publication, "Biological Defense Programme"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: No. A copy is, however, on order by the relevant departmental library.

Trilateral Air Force

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement in respect of the proposed plan to create a trilateral British, United States and West German air force, based primarily in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We have received no proposals for a trilateral British, United States and West German air force based primarily in the United Kingdom.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the procedure for ensuring that the non-military potential applications of work carried out with genetically modified organisms are identified and subsequently exploited; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: Scientific work leading to the development of defensive measures against chemical and biological warfare, including the limited amount of work on genetically manipulated organisms, often has non-military potential. It is identified by the scientists in the course of their experiments and reviewed by the independent medical, physical sciences and life sciences committees.

Where possible, the work is then exploited through contacts between the MOD's scientific staff and industry and scientific research organisations. The greater part of the work not disseminated in this way is published in open literature.

Low Flying

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Wardell) of 25 April, *Official Report*, column *208*, on how many occasions full charges were carried on low-flying training exercises in 1989 and 1990 to date; and what forms of charges were involved.

Mr. Neubert: The detailed information requested is not available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost and effort.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the number of low-flying training sorties flown by RAF and NATO aircraft over South Yorkshire and neighbouring counties in 1989 and the proposed number in 1990; and how close any such sorties fly to Crowedge, Hazlehead, South Yorkshire.

Mr. Neubert: Central records are not held in a form that would enable the information requested to be provided.

Army Structures

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has initiated to reduce public expenditure on the British Army by rationalising its regimental and property structure.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is this Government's policy to make the most cost-effective use of resources in all areas, including the organisation and infrastructure of the Army. The scope for reducing costs is kept under continuous review.

Royal Ordnance Factory, Nottingham

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will conduct an immediate review of security at the royal ordnance factory, Nottingham.

Mr. Neubert: Security arrangements at the factory are regularly reviewed by the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons Ministry of Defence police are currently employed at the royal ordnance factory, Nottingham; whether they are armed; and whether he has any plans to withdraw them.

Mr. Neubert: Ministry of Defence police officers are present as required by the Ministry of Defence as part of the security arrangements for the factory and there are no plans for their withdrawal. All Ministry of Defence police officers are trained in the use of firearms and may be armed if it is considered necessary for operational reasons.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Ministry of Defence police currently patrol the royal ordnance factory at Nottingham; and at what cost.

Mr. Neubert: It is not the practice to give details of numbers of Ministry of Defence police (MDP) patrolling any particular location. The estimated cost of the MDP detachment at ROF Nottingham for 1989-90 is £500,000. Final figures are not yet available.

British Aerospace

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Ministry of Defence police are employed at British Aerospace establishments.

Mr. Neubert: Currently 118 MDP officers are employed at the five ROF plc sites.

Atomic Weapons Establishment, Cardiff

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what manufacturing materials are used in increased quantities at the atomic weapons research establishment, Cardiff, following the transfer of work from the atomic weapons research establishment, Aldermaston, to the atomic weapons research establishment, Cardiff;

(2) what increase there has been in the percentage by value of the Trident D5 warhead programme at the atomic weapons research establishment, Cardiff, by virtue of the transfer of work from the atomic weapons research establishment, Aldermaston.

Mr. Neubert: There has been a small increase in the non-fissile workload at AWE Cardiff associated with the Trident warhead production programme. For security reasons it would be inappropriate to quantify this in either material or cost terms.

Ministry of Defence Police

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the current rates of pay for Ministry of Defence police.

Mr. Neubert: The current rates of pay for officers of the Ministry of Defence police, from 1 September 1989 are as follows:

Rank	*Salary £*
Constable on Appointment	9,405
After 1 year	10,058
After 2 years	11,839
After 3 years	12,118
After 4 years	12,520
After 5 years	12,950
After 6 years	13,364

Rank	Salary £
After 7 years	13,777
After 8 years	14,184
After 12 years	15,104
After 15 years	15,695
Sergeant on Promotion	15,014
After 1 year	15,695
After 2 years	16,248
After 3 years	16,787
After 4 years	17,223
Inspector on Promotion	17,223
After 1 year	17,761
After 2 years	18,457
After 3 years	19,004
After 4 years	19,554
Chief Inspector on Promotion	19,554
After 1 year	20,101
After 2 years	20,648
After 3 years	21,198
After 4 years	21,751
Superintendent on Promotion	26,599
After 1 year	27,277
After 2 years	27,953
After 3 years	28,885
Chief Superintendent on Promotion	29,574
After 1 year	29,996
After 2 years	30,669
After 3 years	31,401
Assistant Chief Constable	34,864
Deputy Chief Constable	36,608
Chief Constable	41,562

Arms Control

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made in reaching arms control arrangements between Britain and the USSR.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have been asked to reply.

There are no current bilateral arms control negotiations between Britain and the USSR. However, both nations participate actively in a number of multilateral negotiations, in particular those covering conventional forces in Europe, confidence and security-building measures, and a global ban on chemical weapons. Progress is being made, although complex issues remain to be resolved in all these negotiations.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

COCOM

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the most recent meeting of COCOM.

Mr. Waldegrave: The high-level meeting of COCOM took place in Paris from 6-7 June. The meeting agreed a British proposal for the establishment of a "core list" of items of essential strategic significance, to be applied to all the proscribed destinations. This core list will replace the existing industrial list and will result in a new, shorter set of controls.

The meeting also agreed to the deletion of 30 items from the existing industrial list, identified as a direct result of work already done following the British proposal for a core list. The deletions will be implemented on 1 July. Work will continue to identify further items for deletion.

Signifiant revisions were also agreed in the controls on machine tools, computers and telecommunications. These will be implemented on 1 July.

The high-level meeting welcomed the establishment from 1 July of an interim export control regime for the GDR.

Soviet Union (Exit Visas)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will raise with the Soviet authorities their failure to grant an exit visa to Irinia Sokolova-Lidsky of Kiev.

Mr. Waldegrave: The case of Irinia Sokolova was raised with the Soviet authorities during my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's visit to the USSR, 7-10 June. We shall not let up until there is a satisfactory outcome.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will raise with the Soviet authorities their refusal to grant an exit visa to Emil Kunin and his family of Moscow.

Mr. Waldegrave: We can certainly raise the case of Emil Kunin and his family with the Soviet authorities but in order to make our representations most effective we shall need further details.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will raise with the Soviet authorities their failure to grant an exit visa to Boris and Eda Zolotarevsky of Moscow.

Mr. Waldegrave: We can certainly raise the case of Boris and Eda Zolotarevsky with the Soviet authorities but in order to make our representations most effective we shall need further details.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will raise with the Soviet authorities their failure to grant an exit visa to Valery Zelichenok of Kranoyarsk and his family.

Mr. Waldegrave: We can certainly raise the case of Valery Zelichenok with the Soviet authorities but in order to make our representations most effective we shall need further details.

Cyprus

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he is now prepared to meet Mr. Rauf Denktash, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement about political progress following the presidential and parliamentary elections in Northern Cyprus.

Mr. Maude: We would consider a ministerial meeting with Mr. Denktash if it would materially assist the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus problem. That is not currently the case. We fully support United Nations efforts to reconvene the intercommunal talks.

British Embassies

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all British embassies with the number of diplomatic staff in each *(a)* at the present time, *(b)* in May-June 1989, *(c)* in May-June 1988, *(d)* in May-June 1985 and *(e)* in May-June 1979.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the current edition of the HM diplomatic service overseas reference list, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Actual staff levels vary from day to day, depending on leave, training and urgent operational requirements.

The other information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

USSR—South Korea Relations

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, in its capacity as a member of the Security Council, the United Kingdom has been involved in recent developments concerning relations between the Soviet Union and the Republic of South Korea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No. We welcome the meeting between President Roh and President Gorbachev, in San Francisco on 4 June, as an important step towards the improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Korea. We hope that this will also improve the prospects for peace on the Korean peninsula.

Yemen

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's relations with Yemen.

Mr. Waldegrave: We enjoy good relations with the Republic of Yemen. This was reflected in messages of congratulations from the Queen and my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on the occasion of the unification of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen on 22 May. We wish the Government and people of the Republic of Yemen well.

Anti-Semitism

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on United Kingdom Government policy on the increase in anti-Semitism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Mr. Waldegrave: We of course deplore anti-Semitism in all its forms and will continue to do all we can to counter it. Our embassies in eastern Europe are monitoring the situation carefully. There have been some reported incidents of anti-Semitism, and the freer atmosphere has allowed it to be expressed openly, but we do not think that there has been a general increase in anti-Semitism in the area.

Liberia

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the United Kingdom Government propose any assistance towards ending the civil war in Liberia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are following the situation in Liberia closely through our embassy in Monrovia. We hope that the talks in Freetown between the Liberian Government and opposition forces will lead to a peaceful solution for this troubled country. We are funding an eight-man UNDRO relief team at a cost of £200,000.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 18 June 1990

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Lenient Sentences

Mr. Hind: To ask the Attorney-General how many cases involving lenient sentences he has referred to the Court of Appeal for review; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Since 1 February 1989, when this power took effect, I have applied for leave to refer the sentencing in 15 cases to the Court of Appeal. Four cases have not yet been heard, and I have withdrawn two cases in the light of further information. Leave has been granted in eight of the remaining nine cases, and sentences have been increased in seven of the cases. I have referred one case to the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland; the sentence in that case was also increased.

Legal Aid

31. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Attorney-General what was the smallest amount paid in legal aid in the past year; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: There is no minimum sum below which a claim for legal aid will not be met. Details of legal aid fund expenditure are contained in the legal aid annual report, a copy of which is placed in the Library each year.

House of Fraser

32. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will discuss with the Director of Public Prosecutions the arrangements for promoting prosecutions on breaches of company law, in the light of the publication of the House of Fraser report.

The Attorney-General: Primary responsibility for the enforcement of company law rests with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The Crown prosecution service prosecutes Companies Act offences where they are relevant to other proceedings which they have brought. The relevant principles are clearly established, and I have no present plans to discuss them with the DPP.

Judges (Retirement Age)

33. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Attorney-General if he has any proposals to lower the retirement age for judges.

The Attorney-General: No.

Maguire Case

34. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last discussed the Maguire case with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Member to my reply today to the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore).

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

The Attorney-General: No such studies have been conducted within the legal secretariat to the Law Officers or the Serious Fraud Office. In the case of the Treasury Solicitor's Department the firm of Peat Marwick McLintock advised on the installation of a computerised time recording and billing system. The cost of this consultation was £86,337·63 and the system has now been installed.

Since the service was created in 1986, the following studies by management consultants have been carried out in the Crown prosecution service.

Strategic planning and budgeting study by Hay Management Consultants, completed April 1987, cost £37,000, results—strategy set and planning system implemented;

Telecommunications strategy study by Logica, completed January 1987, cost £20,000, result—strategy set;

Internal communications study by Charles Barker Communications, completed December 1987, cost £29,000, result—internal communication manager appointed and work on improving internal communications put in hand;

Information study, assistance from The Mindworks Partnership, cost £37,000, completed December 1988, result—programme of work to develop internal information systems put in hand;

Staffing model feasibility study by PA Management Consultants, cost £37,000, completed December 1988, result—feasibility established leading to full study;

Staffing model development by PA Management Consultants, completed January 1990, cost £135,000, result—model produced, currently being tested and refined;

Evaluation of the use of information technology to present evidence in court by The Human Science and Advanced Technology Research Centre, Loughborough University, completed February 1990, cost £15,000, result—evaluation report produced and supplied to other relevant organisations;

Review of CPS contract car-hire scheme by Transtech Consultancy Services, completed April 1990, cost £14,000, the report is now being considered.

Licensed Conveyancers

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Attorney-General how many licensed conveyancers are presently registered to practise in England and Wales.

The Attorney-General: There are presently 766 licensed conveyancers holding licenses, of whom 270 are practising on their own account. The remaining 496 are employed as conveyancers.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Attorney-General what educational requirements and what technical educational qualifications are required before an applicant can be accepted as a licensed conveyancer.

The Attorney-General: To be accepted as a licensed conveyancer a person must have successfully completed or obtained exemption from the Council for Licensed Conveyancers' examinations and the prescribed practical training. Information about the educational requirements and training for licensed conveyancers is available from the Council for Licensed Conveyancers at Golden Cross house, Duncannon street, London WC2N 4JF.

Leaseholders

Mr. Soley: To ask the Attorney-General when he expects legislation concerning leaseholders to be presented to Parliament.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor announced in June 1988 that the Government had arranged for draft legislation to be prepared at the Law Commission to give effect to the proposals contained in the report of the working group on commonhold (Cm. 179) under the chairmanship of Mr. T. M. Aldridge. That work is taking longer to complete than was originally expected and a number of important issues remain to be resolved. No final decision has yet been taken about the implementation of the report, nor can I give any indication of when legislation on commonhold may be introduced.

Mr. Kevin Taylor

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Attorney-General, pursuant to his answer of 13 June to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe, whether the Director of Public Prosecutions has yet received a reply to his letter of 19 January to the chief constable of Greater Manchester.

The Attorney-General: Yes. The terms of the reply are confidential between the chief constable and the DPP. The right hon. Member will, however, be aware of the announcement by the chief constable of Greater Manchester that he has decided to ask a senior officer from another police force to investigate the issues raised by the DPP.

Social Security Commissioners

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Attorney-General what steps have been taken to reduce delays in deciding appeals to the social security commissioners and in notifying claimants of commissioners' decisions and what effect those steps have had or are expected to have on the average length of such delays.

The Attorney-General: The following steps have been taken within the last month by the Lord Chancellor's Department and local management of the office of social security commissioners (OSSC):

(a) The Department is recruiting an additional legally qualified Nominated Officer to assist the Commissioners;

(b) A 'fast-stream' system has been introduced to expedite appeals where both parties agree the lower tribunal erred in law. At present up to 20 cases a week of this sort are being dealt with out of the usual chronological order;

(c) Agency typists and word processor operators are now used to cover for sick and annual leave by full-time staff;

(d) Two new word processors have been installed. A new photocopier will be installed shortly which will significantly reduce the time taken to photocopy case papers and Commissioners' decisions;

(e) Tighter targets have been set for the typing of work, including Commissioners' decisions, to reduce delays; and

(f) Office systems at OSSC's London headquarters have been reviewed and simplified to increase effectiveness and management control. Some sections have been amalgamated.

The Department believes that these measures will start to reduce the average length of delays over the next three months, but it is too early to predict the scale of that reduction.

Divorce

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Attorney-General how much legal aid for divorce cases cost in the latest year for which figures are available; and how much this cost in 1985.

The Attorney-General: The latest year for which figures are available is 1988-89. The cost of full civil legal aid in all matrimonial cases was £116·91 million in 1988-89 and £74·88 million in 1984-85.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Aid Recipients (Growth Rate)

39. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what studies have been made of the impact of British aid on the growth rate of recipient countries.

Mrs. Chalker: The ODA's own evaluation studies examine the specific impact of our aid projects and programmes. There have been many other studies of the impact of global aid flows on the economies of aid-recipient countries, but I am not aware of any which focused on the relationship between British aid and the growth rate of recipients.

EC Ministers

41. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the last meeting of European Community Development Ministers.

Mrs. Chalker: European Community Development Ministers last met on 29 May. We discussed the direction of the Community's aid to Asia and Latin America. I emphasised the importance of focusing on poor countries and poorest sectors of the population. We agreed on a resolution stressing the importance of environmental aspects of development. I gained the support of all partners to my call for reform of the tropical forestry action plan and for further discussion on completion of the review. We also discussed food aid policy; the role of women in development; and evaluation of projects.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the European Community Council of Development Ministers meeting of 29 May.

Mrs. Chalker: At the European Community Development Ministers meeting on 29 May we discussed the direction of the Community's aid to Asia and Latin America. I emphasised the importance of focusing on poor countries and poorest sectors of the population. We agreed on a resolution stressing the importance of environmental aspects of development, and I repeated my call for reform of the tropical forestry action plan. We also discussed food aid policy; the role of women in development; and evaluation.

Bergen Declaration

42. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he plans to take as a result of the Bergen ministerial declaration; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The Bergen ministerial declaration will be helpful in informing the Government's views on the global aspects of implementing sustainable development. Where appropriate we shall be following up in the relevant fora, especially in the preparations for the UN conference on environment and development in Brazil in 1992.

Vietnam

43. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has recently had with representatives of the Vietnamese Government on the subject of aid relief to Vietnam.

Mrs. Chalker: During the visit of my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Hanoi from 18 to 21 February the possibility of British aid was discussed in the context of a satisfactory overall settlement to the problem of returning all non-refugees from Hong Kong to their country of origin.

44. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit Vietnam to discuss with the Government of Vietnam future aid programmes to that country.

Mrs. Chalker: I have no current plans to visit Vietnam.

50. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to establish a government-to-government bilateral aid programme with Vietnam.

65. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consideration he is giving to establishing a government-to-government bilateral aid programme in Vietnam.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) on 17 May. The Government have made it clear that the provision of direct bilateral aid would depend on the co-operation of the Vietnamese Government in reaching a satisfactory solution to the Hong Kong boat people and on a continuing commitment to economic reform.

Southern Africa

45. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with non-governmental organisations about aid for people in southern Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I have regular meetings with representatives of non-governmental organisations, and aid to southern Africa is often discussed.

AIDS

46. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what resources have now been committed by the Overseas Development Administration to help developing countries to combat the spread of AIDS.

Mrs. Chalker: To date we have provided £16·83 million as our contribution to the global programme on AIDS being run by WHO. We have also committed £6·58 million to help finance a number of individual country AIDS control programmes in Africa and the Caribbean; these have been formulated under the umbrella of the WHO global programme.

In addition, we have contributed £2·98 million over six years to the International Planned Parenthood Federation's AIDS programme; and £3 million for AIDS-related research studies in developing countries in a number of key fields by a range of British institutions and experts.

Namibia

47. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to help relieve the debts incurred by Namibia before independence.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) on 14 May.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the application of African, Caribbean and Pacific trade preferences to Namibia was discussed at the meeting of the European Community Development Council on 29 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Namibia's application for accession to the Lomé convention was not discussed at the Development Council. The Commission is in contact with the Namibian Government and will be making proposals for accession arrangements which will cover trade preferences. The United Kingdom Government have told the Namibian Government that we will view their application sympathetically, and we hope their accession will be formalised as soon as possible.

Global Warming

48. **Mr. Sean Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on how his Department is monitoring the impact of Britain's bilateral aid programme on global warming.

Mrs. Chalker: It is not possible to monitor specifically the overall impact of the bilateral aid programme on global warming. The ODA's manual of environmental appraisal guides managers in assessing environmental issues in all bilateral projects and programmes.

Our programmes in forestry and energy efficiency are designed to help developing countries pursue their development objectives while limiting their contribution to global warming.

54. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much of the current Overseas Development Administration budget is directed towards chlorofluorocarbon and carbon dioxide reductions in developing countries.

Mrs. Chalker: We have so far committed over £340,000 to assist developing countries to phase out substances that

deplete the ozone layer. This support covered a study of the options open to India for phasing out these substances; funding for an international conference on tropical ozone and atmospheric change which was held in Penang, Malaysia in February; and help to enable developing countries take an active part in international meetings of the Montreal protocol.

It is not possible to monitor specifically how much of the current aid budget is directed towards carbon dioxide reductions in developing countries. However, key programme activities like our tropical forestry initiative and our energy efficiency initiative are designed to help developing countries pursue their development objectives, while limiting their contribution to global warming through reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. During my visit to India last month I announced a new aid package under the energy efficiency initiative which will provide £50 million to improve energy efficiency in India.

Caribbean Bananas

49. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Government are taking to protect the livelihoods of Caribbean banana workers when the European single market comes into effect.

55. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what effect he expects the European single market to have on the economies of the main banana-producing Caribbean states.

Mrs. Chalker: The European Commission has not yet come forward with a proposal for the arrangements to apply for bananas post-1992. It is not possible at present to say what impact the creation of the single European market will have on Caribbean banana-producing countries. However, we are encouraging the Commission and other member states to ensure that any new arrangements fulfil our commitments to our Commonwealth Caribbean suppliers, and that they take account of consumer interests and the competition and efficiency objectives of the single market initiative.

Climate Change

51. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the British Government are contributing to the fund to help developing countries participate in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Mrs. Chalker: The Overseas Development Administration and the Department of the Environment have each contributed £25,000, and the Overseas Development Administration has offered a further £25,000.

Refugees

52. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to discuss the position of refugees; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I met the new High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Stoltenberg, in Geneva on 5 June. We had a most useful and wide-ranging discussion, focusing particularly on Mr. Stoltenberg's plans for reorganising UNHCR and improving its operational effectiveness. I also announced new British contributions totalling £5 million which will help UNHCR over its current financial difficulties.

Cambodia

53. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to establish a bilateral aid programme with Cambodia.

Mrs. Chalker: Britain has no relations with the Hun Sen regime. This rules out the provision of normal bilateral aid. We are, however, committed to providing humanitarian assistance inside Cambodia through British non-governmental organisations and UN agencies.

Eastern Europe

56. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the effect of developments in eastern Europe on the global availability of funds from multilateral institutions.

Mrs. Chalker: OECD member Governments are agreed that assistance to eastern Europe must not detract from the high priority placed on international co-operation with the developing countries; and this was reaffirmed in the declaration by the UN special session on international economic co-operation held from 23 April to 1 May.

European Community aid to eastern Europe has not been at the expense of any other development assistance. Any increase in World Bank lending would be funded from borrowings in the financial markets. Additional funds will be made available for eastern Europe through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Ethiopia

57. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the latest information he has on the famine situation in Ethiopia.

Mrs. Chalker: Although the situation remains critical, it has so far been possible to avert mass starvation and mass migration of people in search of food. There are some grounds for hope that the threat can be contained, provided that relief operations are not further disrupted by the civil conflict and that there is good rainfall over the coming months.

68. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to ensure that food supplies reach northern Tigray and Eritrea.

Mrs. Chalker: We are providing both food and logistical support for the southern line operation which, by the end of May, had delivered more than 15,000 tonnes of food to the famine-affected areas of northern Wollo and Tigray. We are also providing support for deliveries of relief supplies from Sudan into Eritrea and Tigray, and for the United Nations-organised airlift of supplies for vulnerable groups in Asmara, the besieged capital city of Eritrea. We have also been pressing for the reopening of

the port of Massawa and welcome recent reports of the Ethiopian Government's willingness in principle to agree to this.

Romania (HIV-infected Babies)

58. **Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further plans he has to make funds available to help HIV-infected babies in Romania.

Mrs. Chalker: The Government have already given 1 million disposable syringes and a quantity of HIV testing equipment to Romania; and we have paid for the transport to Romania of disposable gloves, syringes and other supplies generously donated by British companies. We have also asked the World Health Organisation to use for AIDS work a substantial part of the £500,000 we recently gave to the World Health Organisation's programme of aid to the Romanian health services. We have no plans for further aid at present.

Third World Debt

59. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by how much he estimates developing countries have benefited from the Brady plan for third world debt.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) on 14 May at column *340*.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what he estimates the benefit to have been to developing countries of the Toronto plan for the poorest indebted countries.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Members for Manchester, Blackley (Mr. Eastham) and for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) on 14 May at column *340*.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proposals the Government have made to the World Bank about the cancellation of debt owed by the poorest developing countries.

Mrs. Chalker: Britain has taken the lead in international efforts to assist the poorest debtors. We have cancelled over £1 billion-worth of old aid loans. On other official debt, we proposed concessions which were agreed at the 1988 Toronto economic summit. We regularly review the debt strategy with the management and other members of the IMF and World Bank.

Southern Africa Universities

60. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money was given in aid by the United Kingdom to universities during *(a)* 1988-89 and *(b)* 1989-90 in (i) South Africa, (ii) Malawi and (iii) Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The figures in the table represent the cost of the following activities—

(i) in South Africa scholarships for black students, and advice on strengthening academic support programmes for them;

(ii) in Malawi and Zimbabwe the supplementation from the bilateral aid programme of the salaries of British lecturers and the provision of equipment; and expenditure in these countries from the ODA grant to the committee for international co-operation in higher education.

	1988-89 £	*1989-90* £
South Africa	350,000	800,000
Malawi	613,000	760,000
Zimbabwe	264,000	756,000

Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference

61. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on British support for SADCC.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 24 May at column *368*.

Zambia

62. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what priorities Her Majesty's Government use in their aid programme for Zambia.

Mrs. Chalker: Our main priority is support for Zambia's structural adjustment programme, which is being monitored by the International Monetary Fund, and to which we have pledged £30 million in balance of payments support. In addition we are spending over £14 million per annum, largely on manpower support projects involving some 200 aid personnel in Zambia and training for over 300 Zambians in the United Kingdom; and on the strengthening of institutional capacity at district level in the northern and central provinces.

Amazon Forests

63. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new measures he proposes to take to ensure an integrated and comprehensive approach to aid designed to protect Amazonian forests.

Mrs. Chalker: The United Kingdom is supporting the development of effective tropical forestry action plans in the Amazon countries as an important means of encouraging an integrated and comprehensive approach towards protection of the Amazonian rain forests. We are doing this both by seeking reforms of the tropical forestry action plans mechanism in general and by helping in specific countries.

South Africa

64. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on British aid to black South Africans.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) at column *431*.

Sri Lanka

66. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what help has been given during the last 12 months to extend the services of the British Council in Sri Lanka; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The British Council has not contemplated an extension of its services in Sri Lanka over the last 12 months in view of the security situation in the country. Help for this purpose has neither been sought from, nor offered by the Government. When the security situation permits, further assistance for English language teaching is one of a number of possibilities that we are prepared to consider under our bilateral aid programme to Sri Lanka.

Forestry Projects

67. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans further to assist forestry projects overseas; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The Overseas Development Administration is currently implementing a forestry initiative with the aim to commit a further £100 million bilaterally to assist forestry activities over the next three years.

Animal Conservation

69. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much will be made available by his Department for animal conservation schemes in 1990-91.

Mrs. Chalker: We expect to spend over £2 million. This includes projects jointly funded by the ODA and non-governmental organisations which concentrate on environmental issues and their impact on local communities, but which are expected to have an indirect but distinctly beneficial effect on animal conservation.

Tropical Forests

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what he is doing to fund research designed to increase the productivity of tropical forests, particularly non-timber products.

Mrs. Chalker: We are funding 40 projects at a total cost of £6·2 million under the forestry research programme managed for the ODA by the Oxford Forestry Institute. These include projects on, for example, agro-forestry and buffer zones. The Natureal Resources Institute is considering research on the economic potential of rain forest products.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the new projects in preparation which will be financed from the new £100 million for rain forest-related projects.

Mrs. Chalker: As the Prime Minister told the hon. Member on 11 December 1989, at column *459*, details of particular projects will be made known when formal agreement has been reached with the country concerned. I summarised recent developments in my speech to the rain forest harvest conference on 17 May.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to strengthen forestry departments of tropical countries, where they are charged with conservation and management.

Mrs. Chalker: An ODA report on forestry projects of November 1989, a copy of which is in the Library, lists ongoing bilateral forestry projects aiming to strengthen forest departments in tropical countries. Many of the projects in preparation also have this as a major aim. I gave examples in my speech to the rain forest harvest conference on 17 May, a copy of which is also in the Library.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the contract with Professor Malcolm Wilkins, regius professor of botany at the university of Glasgow, on the development of space-based monitoring of rain forest.

Mrs. Chalker: Professor Wilkins has recommended that the ODA should contact the European Space Agency and the British National Space Centre. Officials will do this.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Overseas Travel

Mr. Amos: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list the airline used and the destination of each of the overseas visits undertaken by the Select Committee on Employment for the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Since April 1989 the Committee has undertaken two visits overseas. The first, in July 1989, was to Copenhagen and Amsterdam, using British Airways flights except for the flight between Copenhagen and Amsterdam (KLM Royal Dutch Airlines) and one Member's return flight to Manchester (NLM Dutch Airlines). The second, in October/November 1989, was to Rome and Bordeaux; the flight to Rome was by British Airways; from Rome to Bordeaux by Air France and Air Inter; from Bordeaux to London by Air France.

Broadcasting

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Lord President of the Council what representations he has received from the Royal National Institute for the Deaf concerning sign language inserts on broadcasts of Parliament.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have received no recent representations from the Royal National Institute for the Deaf on the subject of sign language inserts. However, the Select Committee on Televising of Proceedings of the House, which I chair, has been examining the issue as part of its monitoring of the experiment, during the course of which evidence has been received from the RNID and other organisations representing the deaf. A closed-circuit trial with the signing of Prime Minister's questions was arranged by the Select Committee during the first two weeks after the Whitsun Adjournment and the relevant tapes were shown in the Division Lobby. The Select Committee's report, which will cover this aspect of the experiment, is expected to be published by about early July.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Romania

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to extend the eastern European know-how fund to Romania.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have no plans to do so at present.

Lockerbie

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received any offers of help from the Government of Syria with regard to the Lockerbie air disaster.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Prisoners (Turkey)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has received calling for his Department to put pressure on the Turkish Government to release Demetrios Leuka and Christalis Savvides; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: Nineteen. We have made it clear to the parties concerned that neither incursions into territory controlled by the Turkish Cypriots, nor the continued detention of the two youths, contributes to the creation of the right atmosphere for progress towards a settlement of the Cyprus problem.

BBC World Service

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give the reasons for his approval of the BBC's decision to end World Service broadcasts in Japanese and Malay.

Mr. Sainsbury: The BBC and the FCO have jointly reviewed new broadcasting opportunities against the effectiveness of world service output. It was agreed, subject to the outcome of the 1990 public expenditure survey, to increase broadcasts in Russian, Mandarin Chinese and Vietnamese, as well as programmes in English for south-east Asia, the Indian sub-continent and west Europe.

The review identified offsetting savings, including the ending of broadcasts in Japanese and Malay. In both countries, audiences for these services are small and there are many other sources of news and information from Britain, including the world service in English.

COCOM

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department is party to the discussions between the United States Government and central European Governments on relaxations in the COCOM rules.

Mr. Waldegrave: Following an agreement reached at the COCOM high-level meeting on 6 and 7 June, we and other COCOM member Governments will be discussing with certain eastern and central European countries a more favourable application of the COCOM rules. These discussions will build upon earlier soundings carried out by the United States and other COCOM partners.

Israel

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Government of Israel following the gas grenade attack on the United Nations health centre in Gaza city on 12 June; what information he has as to the number and ages of the casualties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We condemn any use of excessive force by the Israeli Defence Force.

HEALTH

Dental Hygienists

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on regrading for dental hygienists in the national health service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The pay and grading of dental hygienists are matters for negotiation in the professional and technical staffs B Whitley council. The management side of the council recently carried out a review of all dental auxiliary grades in order to inform this year's negotiations on pay. I understand that negotiations on the staff side's claim are expected to begin shortly.

Hospital Beds

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total number of hospital beds available in each of the past five years within the constituency of Norfolk, North-West.

Mr. Dorrell: Information about hospital beds is collected centrally by district health authority, and is not available for individual parliamentary constituencies. The figures for West Norfolk and Wisbech health authority are given in the table.

Average daily available beds, and in-patient cases treated, West Norfolk and Wisbech district health authority, 1984 to 1988-89

Year	*Available beds*	*In-patient cases treated*	*In-patient cases treated per available bed*
1984	841	19,703	23·4
1985	847	20,445	24·1
1986	838	20,382	24·3
1987-88	871	21,949	25·2
1988-89	876	22,462	25·6

Social Workers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on the number of cases prescribed by statute as requiring the attention of social workers which are not currently receiving appropriate attention.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not collected centrally.

Disabled People

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when sections 1 and 2 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 will be implemented.

Mr. Dorrell: No decisions on the implementation of these sections can be taken until we have established their resource and service implications. We are consulting the local authority associations on these issues and are currently awaiting their preliminary assessments as a basis for discussion.

Medical and Dental Education

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the second report of the steering group on undergraduate medical and dental education will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The report is published today, and is available in the Library. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and I are sending copies of the second report to all interested parties under cover of a message which reads as follows:

The report from the Steering Group on Undergraduate Medical and Dental Education has been prepared in response to the remit which our predecessors gave the Group to consider how the current arrangements for undergraduate medical (and subsequently dental) education can be improved to ensure that the policies and programmes of the bodies concerned are properly co-ordinated and directed. The Group was later invited to assess the implications for these matters of the proposed NHS reforms, and to make recommendations. The present report subsumes the Interim Report which was published in June 1989.

We welcome, and endorse, this new report. We are grateful to the members of the Steering Group, and to the organisations which have been associated with it, for working effectively together to support the common purpose of the NHS and the universities in maintaining and improving standards of undergraduate medical and dental education.

The organisational and financial arrangements must encourage those responsible in both the universities and the NHS to work together to teach students, advance knowledge through research and provide and develop services for patients. These three functions are integral, something as true in the reformed NHS as it is today. That is why the Steering Group has emphasised the essential common purpose of the universities and the NHS in the fostering of medical knowledge and skills, an emphasis which we support. The ten key principles proposed by the Steering Group to underpin jointly agreed working arrangements have already been promulgated with our endorsement. The sense of common purpose will be strengthened by the new provision in the NHS and Community Care Bill regarding university membership of those health authorities and NHS Trusts having significant involvement in medical and dental education.

The Steering Group has given close attention to certain details of finance and management. It has proposed revised procedures for the distribution of the Service Increment For Teaching (SIFT) which again have been promulgated, and are being implemented, with our support. It has made proposals for handling the relationship known as "knock for knock", emphasising the importance of changing only by agreement the balance of expenditure between co-operating institutions. It has also suggested that the flexibility essential to the management of the job plans of clinical academics who are honorary consultants in the NHS might be achieved through a tightly defined package of clinical service commitments, to be delivered by university staff under the management of heads of clinical academic departments in consultation with NHS managers. We endorse these proposals, which encourage an agreed approach to the management of those areas in which the universities and the NHS must engage together in responsibilities which neither can discharge alone.

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people on family credit or income support received free eye tests in England *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Statistics prior to 1 April 1989 were not broken down by patient group. Since then, family practitioner committees have collected data on sight tests paid for under the general ophthalmic services on a six-montly basis. A tota of 530,660 national health service sight tests for adults receiving income support for family credit were paid for in England during the period 1 April to 30 September 1989. This figure is based on a 2 per cent. sample of NHS sight test application forms processed by family practitioner committees. It does not take into account sight tests paid for after 1 April but conducted before that period.

Dame Jill Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what method statistics relating to the collection of information on the number of (i) national health service eye tests and (ii) non-national health service eye tests have been collected.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information on NHS sight tests is collected from family practitioner committees. The data are obtained from a count of the forms signed by patients at the time of their sight test and forwarded by the optician to the family practitioner committee for payment. Routine statistics on non-NHS sight tests are not collected. The NOP survey, the results of which were made available to the House on 6 June, was commissioned by the Department to provide an independent measure of total volume during the first quarter of 1990.

Allergies

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will consider appointing to the Committee on Safety of Medicines a consultant specialising in allergic diseases, such as hay fever and asthma.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Appointments and reappointments to the Committee on Safety of Medicines and its sub-committees were made as from 1 January 1990: members include specialists in allergic diseases. Additional experts in this or other fields may be consulted or appointed as temporary members as necessary.

Nursing Homes

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from local authorities on the provision of nursing home care; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Ministers and officials have frequent meetings with representatives of local authorities at which this and other aspects of community care are discussed.

Community Care

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultation has taken place with local authority organisations on the additional staff required to carry out the necessary assessment for the provision of community care; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We are not aware of any specific consultations with local authority organisations on this matter although there have been frequent discussions with local authority associations on the

implementation of the proposals in the White Paper "Caring for People". It is for individual local authorities to determine their own staffing needs.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to how many extra social workers and support staff are being appointed; what training provisions have been made to implement the proposed community care programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information on the number of appointments of social workers and support staff is not collected centrally. The White Paper "Caring for People" recognises that its proposals have implications for the training of staff involved in community care. The social services inspectorate has established a community care training strategy group to identify and address these needs. We have increased this year's training support programme to £19·4 million in grant to local authorities, £2 million of which is targeted towards the training of management staff in social services departments.

GPs, Manchester

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the general practitioner practices in Manchester which have indicated that they wish to become fund-holders.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not available centrally.

Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport

Mr. Favell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds were operational at Stepping Hill hospital, Stockport on *(a)* 1 June 1979 and *(b)* June 1989.

Mr. Dorrell: The number of available beds at Stepping Hill hospital, Stockport on 21 June 1979 and 1 June 1989 was 589 and 791 respectively.

Mr. Favell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* trained and *(b)* untrained nursing staff were employed at Stepping Hill hospital, Stockport on 1 June 1979 and 1 June 1989.

Mr. Dorrell: The number of trained and untrained nursing staff at Stepping Hill hospital, Stockport on 1 June 1989 was 432 and 116 respectively. Comparable figures for 1 June 1979 are not available centrally.

Water Pollution, Camelford

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to establish whether children in the Camelford area have suffered any intellectual impairment as a result of the water pollution incident there on 6 July 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: The report of the Lowermoor incident health advisory group, which was published in July 1989, a copy of which is available in the Library, concluded that no long-term effects on the health of people in the Camelford area were expected. It is for the district health authority to take any further measures it thinks necessary for the health of the population.

Ambulance Services

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ambulance services have expressed an interest in becoming self-governing trusts; and if he will list them.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Five ambulance services have expressed interest in NHS trust status including two which are incorporated in other units. The units are:

Northumbrian Ambulance Service
Lincolnshire Ambulance Service
Norfolk Ambulances
Cornwall Community Services
Swindon Health Authority—All District Services

Income Generation

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the income generated from a contract under the National Health Service and Community Care Bill by a district health authority-managed hospital will be credited specifically to that hospital.

Mr. Dorrell: Yes.

Departmental Savings

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms exist in his Department for identifying and tracking value-for-money savings in its operations.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* The Government's policy is to secure significant improvements in value for money within the NHS through the reforms contained in the NHS and Community Care Bill. The NHS management executive has also established a value for money unit to stimulate—in collaboration with local NHS management—opportunities for improving value for money within the NHS.

The Department has various mechanisms for improving value for money within its own operations. The departmental accounting system, the public expenditure survey and the Department's management plan all place heavy emphasis on value for money and are supplemented by other mechanisms such as internal audit, staff inspection and consultancy.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the value-for-money savings in his Department's operations identified by internal audit and internal efficiency arrangements, and by external audit and by management consultants retained by his Department between 1983-84 and 1988-89; and what is the amount of those savings fulfilled to date.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* I refer to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Security on 12 June 1990 at column *166*.

Storm Damage

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of total cost of storm damage to health authority property in England and Wales since 1987; and what consideration he is giving to enabling health authorities to insure against future risks of this sort.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* No central estimate has been made. NHS property is not covered by

commercial insurance and authorities are expected to make provision within their allocations to meet such contingencies. While there are no plans to alter the current policy on commercial insurance, we are seeking powers in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill which would enable us to establish a scheme for meeting the losses and liabilities to health authorities and NHS trusts. However, no decision has yet been taken on when such a scheme would be implemented.

PRIME MINISTER

Economic Policy

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what steps she has taken since 26 October 1989 to improve co-ordination at ministerial level in the formulation and implementation of economic policy.

The Prime Minister: Economic policy is co-ordinated in the usual way at ministerial level with meetings between Ministers, including discussion at Cabinet.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what steps she has taken since 27 October 1989 to ensure the confidentiality of official information relating to the conduct of the Government's economic policies.

The Prime Minister: The normal rules of confidentiality for official information apply to information relating to the conduct of the Government's economic policies.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what steps she has taken since 26 October 1989 to remove obstacles to the efficiency of communication within Government in respect of developments in economic policy.

The Prime Minister: I am entirely satisfied with the degree of consultation and communication between Ministers on matters of economic policy.

Hospitality

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what has been the cost of hospitality given at No. 10 Downing street since 31 March to visitors other than representatives of overseas governments and representatives of official bodies from within the United Kingdom; and if she will list each such visitor and the identifiable costs of associated hospitality.

The Prime Minister: This information is not available in the form requested.

USSR

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister when she hopes to complete her consideration of what role Britain might best play in the ecological research centre the Soviet Union is proposing to establish at Lake Baikal.

The Prime Minister: We are in close consultation on this with interested scientific bodies. We will also be pursuing contacts with the appropriate Soviet authorities in the near future.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Prime Minister in what capacity, in what role and at whose expense the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster accompanied her on her visit to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and what duties he performed.

The Prime Minister: The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster accompanied me for part of my visit to the Soviet Union, and did so as a member of Her Majesty's Government. The principal reason for my right hon. Friend's visit was to attend the opening of the Lord Byron school in Armenia, a gift from the British people following the Armenian earthquake tragedy of December 1988. My right hon. Friend was Secretary of State for Education and Science when the offer to build the school was made. The idea was his.

There was no cost to the taxpayer for my right hon. Friend's visit.

Economic Advisers

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her *(a)* paid and *(b)* unpaid economic advisers.

The Prime Minister: The provision of economic advice is primarily a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and other ministerial colleagues and their staff. In addition, members of my policy unit also provide economic advice. There is no shortage of unpaid economic advice which comes from a wide variety of sources.

Soviet Studies

Mr. Madden: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to her statement of 12 June, *Official Report*, column 138, concerning the establishment of new lectureships in Soviet studies at British universities, whether any of the lectureships will be established in Bradford university; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The British Council will be given funds for the financial years 1991-92 to 1993-94 inclusive to enable it to contribute to the cost of additional lectureships in Soviet and east European studies in this three-year period. The aim is to establish 10 posts, the costs to be shared with the universities, polytechnics and other sources including the private sector. A committee of leading academics will be set up by the British Council to help decide how the funds should be used.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Contributions

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will take steps to ensure that information is provided by his Department when someone returns to employment as to their entitlement to make up full contributions for any missing time.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The Department writes automatically to relevant groups of contributors following the end of any year in which their contribution record is insufficient to count towards basic retirement pension. Full information is always provided to contributors on request. No change to these arrangements is proposed.

Political Asylum

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy to rename income support refugee support in cases where it is awarded to non-British nationals claiming political asylum in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We have no plans to make such a change.

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will raise the level of funding for the independent living fund to £20 million per year.

Mr. Scott: Provision for the fund in the current year was already set at £24 million. Following my announcement to the House on 3 April, a further £8 million is to be made available bringing the provision for the fund to £32 million in 1990-91.

Invalidity Benefit

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement as to the reasons for the subtraction of the state earnings-related pension scheme from the entitlement of persons in receipt of invalidity benefit when they reach 65 years of age.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Where an invalidity pensioner who reaches pension age—65 for men, 60 for women—chooses not to retire, the amount of invalidity benefit payable is determined by the amount of retirement pension that would have been payable had he retired.

The earnings-related additional pension—AP—element of retirement pension can be paid either by the state or through an occupational pension scheme, which is contracted-out of the state scheme. Persons in contracted-out schemes and their employers pay a lower national insurance contribution and in return the employer is required to provide a guaranteed minimum pension—GMP—to the employee from age 65—or 60. Up to pension age, AP is paid with invalidity benefit, but thereafter the amount of any AP payable is reduced by the amount of the GMP received from the employer. This ensures that people contracted out of the state scheme are not treated more favourably than those who are not.

Income Support

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many refugees from overseas are currently in receipt of income support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: People from other countries who have been granted a right of abode in the United Kingdom are not separately identifiable for income support purposes. People arrived in the United Kingdom whose applications for refugee status are under consideration are eligible for income support at a reduced rate. We estimate that there are approximately some 8,000 such claimants at present.

Wath upon Dearne Local Office

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what moneys were provided as grant allowances, pensions or loans through the Wath upon Dearne office of his Department in 1989-90.

Mr. Scott: Information regarding the numbers of and amounts paid as community care grants and budgeting loans for each local office is placed in the Library. I regret that neither information about the numbers of, nor the amount paid to, pensioners residing in a particular locality is recorded.

Private Residential Homes

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in what circumstances his Department contributes towards the costs of the care of a person in an unregistered private home.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Some independent residential care homes are not required to be registered under the Registered Homes Act 1984. Adjudication officers may decide to treat claimants for income support purposes in such homes in the same way as those in registered homes if the accommodation has fewer than four residents and provides board and personal care and satisfies certain conditions defined by regulation, or is run by the Abbeyfield Society, or is managed or provided by a body set up by Act of Parliament or incorporated by royal charter, or in Scotland is run by a housing association registered with the Housing Corporation.

Attendance and Mobility Allowance

Mr. Terry Fields: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many doctors are employed by his Department for the purpose of assessing attendance allowance and mobility allowance claims in each region; on what basis they are employed; what salaries or fees they receive; and whether such payments are affected by the number of claimants they see.

Mr. Scott: On average there are between 600 and 700 doctors in each region who carry out examinations in connection with attendance allowance and mobility allowance claims. The work is of a casual nature, the available cases being allocated among the doctors who are available and have been trained in the work. Payment is from a scale of fees agreed between the Treasury and the medical profession's representatives. A fee is paid for each case completed, individual case fees depending on the time taken to deal with that case.

National Insurance

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement about the fraudulent use of national insurance numbers.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The Department makes every effort to ensure that members of the public have correctly issued national insurance numbers and that others cannot use them to make fraudulent claims to benefit.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list for the last available year the number of *(a)* national insurance numbers used by more than one person and *(b)* credits made by employers to false or non-existent national insurance numbers.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information regarding the misuse of NI numbers is not available. Employers cannot credit NI accounts. Contributions paid by employers on behalf of themselves and their employees are subject to strict accounting controls.

Community Charge

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in Lambeth are entitled to community charge rebate based on claims for refund of

rebate received from Lambeth council; what percentage of charge payers this represents; and what was the percentage of ratepayers who received housing benefit for rates in 1989-90.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information in the detail requested for community charge benefit is not yet available from the local authority. However, approximately a quarter of domestic ratepayers received rate rebates in 1989-90.

Leaflet Shortage

Mr. Terry Fields: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps his Department is taking to rectify the shortage of leaflets and benefit application forms in offices; and how widespread and severe this problem is.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We are aware that difficulties have been experienced this year in obtaining bulk supplies of some benefit application forms. The Department has been in discussion with HMSO to remedy this. However, we are satisfied on information available that local offices in all areas have sufficient supplies of benefit application forms and leaflets to meet the needs of our customers.

Incomes

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to reply to the questions of the hon. Member for Oldham, West of 23 April and 17 May relating to further information pursuant to an answer of 4 April, and to the question of the hon. Member for Oldham, West of 17 May concerning the estimated income rises of the poorest tenth of the population.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to him today and on Thursday 14 June.

Pensioners' Incomes

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if, further to his reply of 4 April, *Official Report*, columns *689-90*, he will *(a)* provide a breakdown of tables 1 and 2 differentiating SERPS as a separate source of income, *(b)* indicate what is covered in table 2 by related benefits and other benefits, *(c)* state the average annual percentage increase implied in the last two columns of tables 1, 2 and 3 and *(d)* provide whatever similar information is available for 1988-89;

(2) if he will set out the actual incomes in pounds sterling and pence which underlie his answer to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 4 April, *Official Report*, columns *689-90*, table 2, which lists the percentage increase in components of pensioners' income from 1974 to 1979 and 1979 to 1987; what is the source of each of these items of data; and if he will list exactly which benefits are covered by RP and related benefits and other benefits;

(3) what are the actual income levels on which table 2 is based in his answer on 4 April, *Official Report*, columns *689-90*, regarding the percentage increase in the components of pensioners' incomes in 1974, 1979 and 1987.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answers 23 April and 6 June 1990]:* The source for the figures used in this and the previous reply is the family expenditure survey. The information on SERPS is not available; it is not separately identified from state retirement pension in the source data. Information is not available beyond the latest available family expenditure survey data of 1987.

The term "RP and related benefits" in table 2 refers to the state retirement pension, supplementary benefit and housing benefit. The term "Other benefits" refers to all other social security benefits than those listed above.

The annual average percentages implied in the last two columns of table 1 of the reply given to the hon. Member on 4 April, *Official Report*, columns *689-90*, are set out in table 1; the same figures in respect of tables 2 and 3 are set out in table 2.

The figures requested, which underlie the percentage movements at table 2, are set out in tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 1
Pensioners' Incomes: 1974, 1979 and 1987—Percentage Increase and Average Annual Increase

Pensioners' Income	*Real increase 1974-79 per cent.*	*Annual rate per cent.*	*Real increase 1979-87 per cent.*	*Annual rate per cent.*
Total Social Security Benefits	12	1·5	17	2·0
Occupational Pensions	12	1·5	77	7·3
Savings Income	−16	−2·2	130	11·0
Earnings	−27	−3·8	−20	−2·9
Total Gross Income	[redacted]	0·3	34	3·8
Total Net Income	3	0·4	31	3·5

Table 2
Pensioners total net incomes: Percentage increases 1974-79 and 1979-87

Decile	*Increase 1974-79 per cent.*	*Annual rate of increase per cent.*	*Increase 1979-87 per cent.*	*Annual rate of increase per cent.*
Lowest	14	2·7	18	2·1
2	12	2·3	20	2·3
3	10	2·0	23	2·6
4	7	1·4	24	2·8
5	5	0·9	24	2·7
6	5	0·9	24	2·8
7	4	0·8	25	2·9
8	4	0·7	27	3·1
9	5	1·0	29	3·3
Highest	−6	−1·3	53	5·4
Overall	3	0·6	31	3·5

Table 3
Components of pensioners' income by decile 1974 at 1987 prices

Decile	*RP, Supplementary Benefit and Housing Benefit*	*Other SS benefits*	*Occupational pensions*	*Investment income*	*Earnings*	*Tax and National Insurance*	*Total net*
Lowest	27·81	1·56	0·31	0·94	0·64	0·12	31·14
2	34·52	1·19	0·63	1·66	0·60	0·16	38·44
3	38·56	1·61	0·95	2·07	0·67	0·24	43·61

Decile	RP, Supplementary Benefit and Housing Benefit	Other SS benefits	Occupational pensions	Investment income	Earnings	Tax and National Insurance	Total net
4	41·45	1·02	2·66	3·35	1·25	0·56	49·18
5	45·93	0·89	4·32	3·84	2·68	1·64	56·03
6	48·58	1·20	6·45	5·03	4·28	1·75	63·79
7	50·37	1·09	10·83	7·15	6·97	3·47	72·94
8	54·95	3·23	13·50	7·54	9·76	4·61	84·38
9	50·05	3·35	22·59	14·53	26·00	12·60	103·93
Highest	39·08	3·34	55·55	61·65	83·11	48·41	194·33
Overall	43·13	1·85	11·77	10·77	13·59	7·35	73·76

Table 4
Components of pensioners' income by decile 1979 at 1987 prices

Decile	Retirement pension, supplementary benefit and housing benefit	Other statutory state benefits	Occupational pensions	Investment income	Earnings	Tax and National Insurance	Total net
Lowest	33·02	1·02	0·27	0·91	0·80	0·51	35·50
2	40·07	0·85	0·56	1·67	0·11	0·25	43·01
3	43·66	0·37	2·19	2·01	0·37	0·44	48·17
4	45·07	2·63	2·80	2·56	0·18	0·50	52·74
5	47·17	2·14	4·87	3·43	2·36	1·39	58·60
6	51·23	2·85	6·65	5·56	2·62	2·19	66·72
7	58·85	2·17	7·69	5·92	3·49	2·33	75·79
8	55·34	5·85	15·71	5·12	10·45	4·96	87·51
9	55·23	3·59	30·43	11·70	19·54	11·39	109·10
Highest	50·08	4·25	61·30	51·60	59·41	44·47	182·17
Overall	47·97	2·57	13·24	9·04	9·93	6·84	75·92

Table 5
Components of pensioners' income by decile 1987 at 1987 prices

Decile	Retirement pension, supplementary benefit and housing benefit	Other statutory state benefits	Occupational pensions	Investment income	Earnings	Tax and National Insurance	Total net
Lowest	39·20	0·59	0·45	1·98	0·24	0·64	41·82
2	44·54	1·29	2·87	3·49	0·25	0·93	51·51
3	52·79	0·38	3·36	3·45	0·37	1·28	59·07
4	55·24	1·76	5·31	4·20	0·59	1·54	65·55
5	56·85	3·49	8·58	4·67	1·17	2·36	72·40
6	60·37	4·39	12·28	7·59	1·69	3·35	82·96
7	64·08	7·61	16·59	8·98	2·03	4·29	95·01
8	62·17	8·34	26·80	17·11	5·81	8·78	111·45
9	58·67	7·75	47·50	27·05	17·53	17·22	141·28
Highest	56·99	5·52	109·14	130·16	49·07	72·99	277·88
Overall	55·09	4·11	23·28	20·86	7·87	11·33	99·88

Note:
All tables source: Family Expenditure Survey.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 4 April, *Official Report*, columns *687-92*, what information is available on the contribution of state earnings-related pension to the real rise in pensioner incomes since 1979.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 17 May 1990]:* Information is not available in the family expenditure survey on the state earnings-related pension scheme. However, data from the Department's biannual statistical inquiry of retirement pension and widows benefit[1] shows that between 1979 and 1987 the average amount[2] of net additional component in payment rose from £0·65 to £2·71[3].

Figures from the family expenditure survey show that pensioners' average net incomes rose from £75·90 in 1979 to £99·90[3] in 1987.

[1] Copy available in the Library.

[2]Average is for those pensioners receiving an additional pension.
[3]All amounts are £s per week at 1987 prices.

NATIONAL FINANCE

International Monetary Fund

70. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the recent quota increase for the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. Ryder: The interim committee of the board of governors of the International Monetary Fund met in Washington DC on 7 to 8 May and agreed that the present total of fund quotas should be increased by 50 per cent. to SDR135 billion. This decision has to be ratified by the board of governors.

North Sea Oil

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is *(a)* the monthly market value of North sea oil for the purposes of petroleum revenue tax from 1984 onwards and *(b)* the number of relevant transactions that were used as the base for each month.

Mr. Lilley: There is no single, overall monthly market value of North sea oil for petroleum revenue tax purposes and I cannot disclose the tax position of individual taxpayers. The other information requested could not be provided without disproportionate effort.

Taxation

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions the Inland Revenue has used section 772 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

Mr. Lilley: The power at present contained in section 772 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 has only once been formally invoked. Companies almost invariably supply the information in response to informal requests.

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what was the level of manufacturing investment in the United Kingdom in 1979 and 1989 on a constant value basis, by regions;

(2) if he will publish a table, using 1979 at a value of 100, of investment in real terms in manufacturing in the north-west for each of the last 11 years.

Mr. Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 16 May, *Official Report*, column *442*. Constant price estimates are not made because there are no regional price indices.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for each year from 1979 to date manufacturing investment, including leased assets, at 1985 and current prices *(a)* including and *(b)* excluding company cars as defined for the purposes of taxation by the Inland Revenue.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates of manufacturing investment from 1979 to 1989 are given in the following table:

Manufacturing investment, including leased assets
(£ million)

Year	*Current prices*	*1985 prices*
1979	7,154	11,150
1980	7,309	9,911
1981	6,235	7,735
1982	6,521	7,603
1983	6,822	7,516
1984	8,427	8,934
1985	10,265	10,264
1986	9,982	9,654
1987	11,014	10,142
1988	12,652	11,334
1989	13,920	12,043

Estimates excluding company cars are not available.

VAT

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will remove value added tax on repairs and maintenance and impose zero rating; and impose 15 per cent. value added tax on extensions to listed buildings.

Mr. Ryder: No. Our obligations under the EC sixth VAT directive prevent such extensions of zero rating.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost, in each case, of extending business relief for capital gains tax so that *(a)* there was no age limit, *(b)* there was a share qualification of 5 per cent. and *(c)* there was no limit on the amount of the gain.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that appropriate information on which to base reliable estimates is not available.

ENVIRONMENT

Chlorofluorocarbons

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he intends to take to control or regulate contractors involved in the disposal of chlorofluorocarbons; and if he will introduce a licensing system for such contractors.

Mr. Trippier: Waste chlorofluorocarbons from industry, commerce or households are controlled waste, the disposal of which already requires a licence from a waste disposal authority. Under the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989, persons carrying any controlled waste will be obliged to register. The Environmental Protection Bill will also impose a duty of care on any person who produces, carries or disposes of controlled waste.

Waste into Energy

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of industrial and municipal refuse is currently converted into useful energy by combustion in the United Kingdom, each of the EEC and Scandinavian countries.

Mr. Trippier: The World Health Organisation has made the following estimates of percentages by weight:

Country	
United Kingdom	3
Belgium	7
Denmark	30
France	25
Italy	4
Netherlands	30
Spain	4
W. Germany	30
Norway	15
Sweden	40

The United Kingdom's low proportion is partly explained by the ready availability of landfill.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the reduction in greenhouse gas release he expects from combustion of waste into energy projects, as a contribution to the Government's declared target by 2005.

Mr. Trippier: Power generation by waste incineration or the combustion of methane from landfill sites results in no net addition of CO_2 to the environment. Indeed, in replacing power generated by fossil fuel burning, it may actually help to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions.

Estimates of the contribution of such technologies to reduction in greenhouse gas release are under development. Overall Government strategy to stabilise CO_2 emissions at 1990 levels by 2005 will be presented in the environment White Paper to be published in the autumn.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the incineration plants currently operational in the United Kingdom, identifying those that convert waste into useful heat or electricity; how much such energy is produced: and which incinerators currently meet the agreed proposed EEC pollution standards.

Mr. Trippier: There are 35 incinerators, as follows:

Location	Energy produced (megawatts)
Alloa	—
Altrincham	—
Basingstoke	—
Belfast	—
Bolton	—
Bristol	—
Coventry	40
Derby	—
Dudley	—
Dundee	—
Edmonton, north London	40
Exeter	—
Havant	—
Huddersfield	—
Jersey	3
Lichfield	—
Mansfield	—
Marchwood, Fawley, Hants	—
Nottingham	28
Portsmouth	—
Renfrew	—
Rochdale	—
Scillies	—
Sheffield	24
South Shields	—
Stoke on Trent	—
Sunderland	—
Swindon	—
Teesside	—
Tynemouth	—
Tysley, Birmingham	—
Winchester	—
Wolverhampton	—
Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire	—
York	—

None yet meets the standards which will be required in 1996.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the increased proportion of waste he expects will be combusted into useful energy, as a result of the Environmental Protection Bill; and if he will seek to amend the Bill in order to provide stronger incentives or regulation, to achieve the potential.

Mr. Trippier: The waste disposal provisions in the Bill, aimed at improving standards, will undoubtedly have the effect of increasing landfill costs, thus improving the competitiveness of incineration as a disposal option. In tandem with this, the Bill also requires the waste disposal authority, when framing the terms of disposal contracts, to have regard to the desirability of including conditions designed to maximise the recycling of waste under the contract. These measures should have the effect of encouraging energy-from-waste schemes. The Government have no intention of further amending the Bill in the way my hon. Friend suggests.

Questions

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many written and oral questions on pollution and the protection of the environment by the hon. Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) he has answered in the current year.

Mr. Trippier: In this Session the Department has replied to five questions from my hon. Friend on environmental matters.

Greenhouse Effect

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to introduce any United Kingdom legislation in addition to Community regulation 3322/88 relating to chlorofluorocarbons and halons in order to achieve the agreed target for reductions in chlorofluorocarbons.

Mr. Trippier: Community regulation 3322/88 on chlorofluorocarbons and halons is due to be replaced by the end of the year, to reflect the changes which we expect to be made to the Montreal protocol at the end of the month. Any more stringent action which member states consider can be implemented within the Community.

Common Land

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has yet made a decision regarding the Government's intention to legislate to protect common land.

Mr. Trippier: No. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) on 12 June, *Official Report*, column *157*.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mr. Donald Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many sites of special scientific interest have been established since 1981 and are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Mr. Trippier: I am advised by the NCC that by 30 April 1990 it had notified 5,283 sites under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This included 3,329 sites which had previously been notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and have now been renotified.

Housing Action Trusts

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what evidence he received *(a)* from ballots, *(b)* from opinion surveys made available to him and *(c)* otherwise, in respect of tenant attitudes towards the proposed designation of housing action trusts in (i) Tower Hamlets, (ii) Lambeth, (iii) Southwark, (iv) Sandwell, (v) Leeds and (vi) Sunderland.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In Sunderland, the Electoral Reform Society conducted a ballot on the proposal to designate a housing action trust. In Leeds, Leeds polytechnic ran a ballot for the tenants on the issue of continuing the discussions about the HAT proposal. I am also aware of a MORI poll in Lambeth. In addition, the Department has used consultants, chairmen designate and meetings between Ministers and tenants' representatives to inform themselves of tenants' views.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to make a statement on his intentions in respect of the housing action trust proposed in Southwark; and what measures he proposes to take in respect of housing within the areas previously considered for housing action trusts in *(a)* Tower Hamlets, *(b)* Lambeth, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Sunderland and *(e)* Sandwell.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Consultations are continuing with tenants and Southwark council with the intention of proceeding to a ballot later this year. Tenants can then decide whether they want the improvements that a HAT would bring. In the other areas local authorities will doubtless be preparing plans for dealing with their housing problems.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much has been spent by his Department *(a)* on consultants' fees and expenses and *(b)* otherwise, on the proposed housing action trusts in (i) Tower Hamlets, (ii) Lambeth, (iii) Southwark, (iv) Sandwell, (v) Leeds and (vi) Sunderland.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Expenditure on those six housing action trust proposals is shown in the following table:

	(a) expenditure related to consultancies	*(b) expenditure related to the Department's information material and to ballots*
	£000	*£000*
Tower Hamlets	182	3
Lambeth	182	12
Southwark	933	12
Sandwell	191	17
Leeds	161	13
Sunderland	613	23

Diesel Pollution, Firle

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review the Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 1989 (No. 1159) following the recent diesel pollution incident in Firle.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Secretary of State may amend the regulations only on application from the Director General of Water Services. I understand that the director is considering whether to propose any amendments in the light of the circumstances of the Firle case.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the public inquiry resulting from the site investigations undertaken by Nirex include full consideration of national policy on radioactive waste management.

Mr. Trippier: Decisions have yet to be taken as to the matters to be considered at the public inquiry into Nirex's planned respository for low and intermediate-level radioactive waste. Before the inquiry begins, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will set out the matters which appear to him to be relevant to his consideration of the application based on the information available to him at the time. The inspector appointed to preside over the inquiry will also have discretion to consider any other factors which he feels to be relevant.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will require Nirex to implement the recommendations made by the panel on the evaluation of the UK Nirex Ltd. programmes on deep repository post-closure safety research and development and site assessment that met in June 1989.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy gave the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) on 21 May 1990, *Official Report*, column *11*.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to consider *(a)* alternative methods of radioactive waste management, and *(b)* alternative sites, as part of the environmental impact assessment of the proposed Nirex repository.

Mr. Trippier: This is a matter for UK Nirex Ltd. The requirements for an environmental assessment with which Nirex will need to comply are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988.

Architects

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when proposals were adopted in the EEC to enable qualified architects to operate in professional practice in other member states, if he has any record of the number of Community nationals who have been accepted to practise in the United Kingdom under these arrangements; and if he has figures on the numbers of United Kingdom architects who have been provided with the opportunity to practise in each of the other member states.

Mr. Tripier: The architects directive was adopted on 10 June 1985. Since that date 230 Community nationals have been registered by the Architects Registration Council of the United Kingdom as qualified to practise under the title architect in the United Kingdom. No figure is currently available for the number of United Kingdom architects registered to practise elsewhere in the European Community.

Energy Use (Government Buildings)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if, pursuant to the answer of 6 June, *Official Report*, columns *648-49*, he will list the information collected by the Property Services Agency for its own energy management purposes concerning the use of energy in Government buildings;

(2) if he will list the information which was collected by the Property Services Agency about the use of energy in Government buildings in the period up to 30 March.

Mr. Chope: The information collected by the PSA for its own energy management is the monthly consumption and cost of all fuels and water used in buildings in the United Kingdom where PSA is the major occupier.

Similar information was maintained for the great majority of buildings on the Government civil estate, for which the PSA used to pay the bills. The MOD has always paid its own bills. With the untying of Departments from the PSA, Departments pay their own bills and the PSA no longer has access to this information.

Norman Shaw North (Heating)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) of 17 May, *Official Report*, column *513*, if he will improve the sensitivity and responsiveness of the central heating system to external temperatures.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 6 June 1990]:* Work to modernise the system in the Palace of Westminster will continue during the summer recess.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the ratio of payment from central funds to the personal community charge in each local authority in England.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The available information for 1990-91 is given in the table. The ratio of central funds to community charge income has been calculated for individual local authority areas since some payments from central funds are made to charging authorities on behalf of both charging and precepting authorities in the area. Complete information for all authority areas will not be available until all authorities' budget returns for 1990-91 have been made to my Department.

Ratio of Payments from central funds to community charge income

Area	*Central funds*[1]	*Community charge income*[2]	*Central funds plus community charge income*
Buckinghamshire	63	37	100
Cleveland	76	24	100
Derbyshire	67	33	100
Devon	70	30	100
Durham	75	25	100
Gloucestershire	64	36	100
Isle of Wight	67	33	100
Kent	70	30	100
Lincolnshire	72	28	100
Northamptonshire	70	30	100
Suffolk	65	35	100
West Sussex	64	36	100
Wiltshire	69	31	100

Notes:

[1] Payment from central funds comprise Revenue Support Grant including safety net adjustments, special grants, amounts distributed from the NNDR pool and specific and supplementary grants both inside and outside AEF. Community charge benefit and transitional relief payments are included.

[2] Community charge income net of community charge benefit and transitional relief grant.

Insulation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of loft insulation jobs completed so far this year and completed in the equivalent periods of 1987, 1988 and 1989; and what were the full-year figures for 1987, 1988 and 1989 for each region and England as a whole.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The information is not available.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of loft insulation jobs completed so far in the current year and completed in the equivalent periods of 1987, 1988 and 1989 for *(a)* the London borough of Camden and *(b)* the London borough of Islington; and what were the full-year figures for 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The information is not available.

Homelessness

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give an estimate of the current number of homeless in the United Kingdom, and of those how many suffer from *(a)* alcoholism or drug dependency, *(b)* AIDS and *(c)* mental illness.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* Latest estimates of households accepted as homeless in England appear in table 1(a) of "Local authorities' action under the homeless provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England. Results for the fourth quarter 1989. Supplementary Tables", which is in the Library.

My Department has no estimates of how many of those accepted were suffering from alcoholism, drug dependency or AIDS. Estimates, in percentage terms, of those who were accepted because of mental illness appear in table 3 of the same publication.

For information about Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and for Northern Ireland and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Housing Associations

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what have been the total number of properties being renovated or built by housing associations in the last five financial years.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* The figures for housebuilding starts and completions and dwellings renovated by housing associations in England are as follows:

Thousands

	New dwellings		
	Starts	*Completions*	*Completed renovations*[1]
1985-86	10·3	10·8	11·5
1986-87	10·4	9·9	13·6
1987-88	9·6	10·4	11·7
1988-89	10·7	9·0	10·9
1989-90[2]	10·9	9·0	10·8

[1] Work funded by grants under specific housing association legislation and local authority loans. Includes improvement for sale but excludes hostels.
[2] Provisional.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cattle Crushes

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions have taken place about the introduction of financial assistance in respect of the provision of cattle crushes at each agricultural holding in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: While a number of suggestions have been made to the Department of Agriculture about the introduction of assistance for various items including cattle crushes, no formal discussions have taken place.

Suction Dredgers

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received about the fishing operation of suction dredgers in Strangford lough.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Representations have been received from the National Trust and Queen's university, marine biology station, Portaferry about the presence of a suction dredger in Strangford lough. The Department of Agriculture was approached informally by a number of individuals and organisations including representatives of the fishing industry about this vessel.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action will be taken to prevent suction fishing dredgers from operating within inland waters.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I was appalled by reports that a suction dredger may have entered Strangford lough.

I am determined that there will not be fishing in the lough that would be damaging to its ecology.

The people most at risk from fishing which damages the lough are those in the fishing industry. I am glad that the vast majority of trawlermen agree that damaging the lough is wrong.

The responsibilities of the Department of Environment and the Department of Agriculture will be carried out so that all the interests of the lough, both in the short term and in the long term, are protected.

Schools

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the intake enrolments for September, additional places requested and granted, if any, together with the number of pupils in each of grade one, two, three and four selected according to the respective admission criteria of *(a)* Laurel Hill school, *(b)* Lisnagarvey high school, *(c)* St. Patrick's high school, *(d)* Friends high school, *(e)* Wallace high school, *(f)* Forthill high school, *(g)* Rathmore grammar school, *(h)* Hunterhouse college and *(i)* Dunmurry high school.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information is as follows:

School	*Admissions number*	*Additional places requested*	*Additional places granted*	*Admissions*					
				Grade				*Other*	*Total*
				One	*Two*	*Three*	*Four*		
Laurel Hill high school	180	3	3	—	17	27	77	61	182
Lisnagarvey high school	150	—	—	—	8	12	29	40	89
St. Patrick's high school	100	—	—	—	7	17	51	11	86
Friends' School	132	1	1	117	11	3	—	2	133
Wallace high school	168	—	—	139	27	1	—	1	168
Forthill high school	180	—	—	—	6	26	64	40	136
Rathmore grammar	175	64	41	186	30	—	—	—	216
Hunterhouse college	95	2	2	29	41	20	4	1	95
Dunmurry high school	150	—	—	—	3	14	41	16	74

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Company Directors

71. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to seek to amend the law relating to company directors who open, close and reopen similar companies with great frequency.

Mr. Redwood: No. The Insolvency Act 1986 and the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 contain provisions concerning the conduct of directors.

Consumer Affairs Council

Mr. Eastham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what items were discussed at the European Community Consumer Affairs Council on 13 June.

Mr. Forth: The following items were discussed: the package travel directive, the proposed general product safety directive, the system for the rapid exchange of information on consumer products, the European home and leisure accident surveillance system, and the Commission's three-year plan for consumer policy in the EC.

Research

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what procedures his Department uses for determining the priorities for investment in scientific and technological research in Europe;

(2) if he will outline his Department's responsibilities, and the procedures used, for allocating funds from this country for national, European and international research projects in science and technology.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Department of Trade and Industry's responsibilities include support of firms through longer-term national collaborative research programmes and EUREKA—and for small firms, through the small firms' merit award for research and technology (SMART). The Department of Trade and Industry also plays a key role in the definition of European Community research and development framework programmes, and other international research programmes of interest to United Kingdom industry.

With regard to resource allocation for support of industrial innovation, the Department consults widely with industry, and with research councils and universities on areas of research and technologies which are likely to be most beneficial, both at the national and international level. Hence during the recent negotiations on the framework programme, careful attention was paid to advice from the Advisory Council on Science and Technology and the Confederation of British Industry, and from industry through our own advisory committees. In this way the Department plays an active role in defining the priorities and objectives of the framework programme and in identifying appropriate areas of national expenditure. However, with a maximum of 50 per cent. support from the Department or the European Community, the key decisions are those of the individual firms participating in the programmes.

The Department's policy is to ensure that expenditure is directed towards well-justified programmes of all types which represent good value for money. Framework programmes should have a clear European rationale and be complementary to national programmes and other international activities.

Inward Investment

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on the number of companies which have announced inward investment projects in the United Kingdom over the past 12 months; and which regions have most benefited from the projects.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: According to the latest figures readily available to the Invest in Britain Bureau, in the 12 months ending March 1990, 304 inward investment decisions were made to locate in the United Kingdom. These included the establishment of a new business, expansion or acquisition of an existing business and involvement in joint venture. The figures are based on information provided by the companies themselves at the time of the investment and do not take into account subsequent developments. The table sets out the number of inward investment decisions broken down on a regional basis.

Regional breakdown of inward investment decisions in the 12 months to March 1990

	Number
Scotland	35
Wales	31
Northern Ireland	23
North East	36
North West	43
Yorkshire and Humberside	14
East Midlands	12
West Midlands	86
South East	16
South West	6
United Kingdom (undefined region)	2
TOTAL	304

Bar Codes

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce regulations to require that shops using bar code equipment to register the price of goods also ensure that the price is printed on the products; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: I expect to introduce an order later this year under the Prices Act 1974 as amended implementing an EC directive requiring prices to be shown for goods on sale to private consumers. Having considered views expressed during consultations on the proposed order, my present intention is to allow traders the freedom to indicate prices on the goods themselves, on the shelf edge, or on notices, as they choose, provided that the indication is clear and legible.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice his Department is giving retailers on the use of bar codes following the European Commission's directive.

Mr. Forth: I am not aware of any European Commission directive relating to bar coding.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has sought the views of the

National Consumer Council and the Consumers Association about the European Commission's directive on bar codes.

Mr. Forth: I am not aware of any such directive.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps he proposes to take to ensure that bar code equipment manufactured or supplied in the United Kingdom is accurate in recording the price charged;

(2) what regulations he proposes to introduce to ensure that bar code equipment used in shops is free from errors in recording the price of items purchased.

Mr. Forth: A trader who gives a misleading price indication commits an offence under the Consumer Protection Act 1987. That and competition between suppliers should be sufficient to ensure that suitable equipment is used.

Personal Computers

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many personal computers his Department estimates are sold annually.

Mr. Forth: There is no agreed definition of personal computers, and official statistics are not compiled on a basis which would enable any departmental estimate of the United Kingdom market to be given. The Department is, however, aware of market research estimates for United Kingdom personal computer sales in 1989, ranging from approximately 500,000 to 1,500,000.

Research and Development

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the total of the reduction in his Department's expenditure on research and development achieved by taking advantage of the additionality principle when grants have been awarded to United Kingdom companies by the European Economic Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is not possible to identify the specific impact of European Community support of United Kingdom companies under the various Framework programmes, on the applications for support received by the DTI. However, we ensure as far as possible that European programmes reflect the views of United Kingdom industry, and that they are complementary to national programmes and other international activities and continue to provide good value for money. It is up to companies themselves to judge which activities suit their needs best. Manufacturing industry is now receiving support for collaborative research and development from the Community comparable to that from the DTI, and it is likely that this trend will become more pronounced in future.

Rainham Marshes

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what requests he has received for financial assistance in respect of the development of Rainham marshes.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department has had discussions with the promoters of this major inward investment project, but I have not received any application for specific financial assistance.

Radio

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he intends to take in response to the recommendations of the review committee which examined civil use of the radio spectrum from 470 to 3,400 MHz.

Mr. Forth: The report of the stage 1 civil spectrum review committee, which was published in April last year, has been widely welcomed as making a major contribution towards our commitment to make more efficient use of the radio spectrum and to provide more information regarding current use.

Since receiving the report, I have had the opportunity to consider the findings in detail and assess the comments of industry and users. The report emphasises that frequency planning ought to maintain a long-term perspective and that in many areas, our freedom for action is limited by international treaty obligations. However, within these confines, the committee found that there remained considerable scope for improvements in the way in which the radio spectrum is managed in the frequency range concerned, and I am pleased to announce today that measures will be taken to follow up all the recommendations. A detailed schedule of the steps being taken to implement each of the recommendations has been published and is available from the DTI's radio communications agency.

I should like to take this opportunity to announce that, in consultation with my right hon. and right hon. and learned Friends the Secretaries of State for Defence, the Home Department and Scotland, I have accepted the Committee's recommendation that the next stage of the review process should be a combined assessment of defence and civil use of the radio spectrum from 3,400 MHz to 30 GHz. I am also delighted to announce that Sir Kenneth Corfield, who chaired the first stage review of defence spectrum usage, has accepted the invitation to become chairman of the combined stage 2 review committee.

The stage 1 civil spectrum and defence spectrum review reports have stimulated widespread discussion of the future requirements and options for the key frequency range of 1-3 GHz and I am confident that this new review will likewise reveal fresh challenges for the United Kingdom to ensure that we continue to lead the field in making effective and efficient use of this scarce natural resource at these higher frequencies.

Industrial Development

Mr. Crowther: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions since the Industrial Development Act 1982 came into force expenditure has been incurred under section 3(2)(a) of the Industry Act 1980 on projects which otherwise fully satisfied the criteria of either section 7 or section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* The sum of £547 million was paid to Rover Group plc on 12 August 1988 under section 3(2)(a) of the Industry Act 1980

as the consideration for a special security ("The Instrument") which formed part of the agreement of 14 July 1988 between the Secretary of State, Rover Group plc and British Aerospace. The cash injection included £78 million in respect of projects in the assisted areas which met the standard conditions set out in section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Community Service

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, further to his reply of 15 May, *Official Report*, column *375*, to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) *(a)* which officers from his Department are involved in the joint examination with the Department of Employment into training and enterprise provision for offenders in the community, *(b)* whether a report will be produced by his Department presenting the findings of the examination and *(c)* whether he intends to consult relevant outside bodies during the course of the examination.

Mr. John Patten: There is regular contact and discussion between the Home Office, the Training Agency, the employment service and relevant voluntary organisations, in particular the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders and the APEX Trust, about training and enterprise provision for offenders in the community.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost of administering community service orders in England and Wales in the last year for which figures are available; how many orders were made per 100,000 of the population in that year; and what was the average cost per order.

Mr. John Patten: Information on the expenditure of the probation service is published in "Probation Statistics England and Wales 1988" (table 12·3). In 1987-88, the probation service cost of administering community service orders was approximately £18 million and the average cost per completed order in that year was estimated at approximately £500. Using a mid-year population estimate of 40·3 million people aged 16 years and over, 87 orders were made per 100,000 of the population in 1988.

Cyprus

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on contact between members of police forces in Great Britain and the police in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; and if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on visits by police force in London to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the past four weeks.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Members of British police forces maintain operational contacts with the Turkish Cypriot police among many other forces. Officers from the City of London police visited northern Cyprus on 5 June in connection with the recent theft of securities worth £300 million in London.

Probation Service

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation orders have been made by the courts in England and Wales in each of the last five years; how many orders were made per 100,000 of the population in the latest available year; and what was the cost of administering probation orders in that year.

Mr. John Patten: The number of persons given probation per 100,000 of the population aged 17 or over was 106 in 1988. Information on the expenditure of the probation service is published annually in chapter 12 of "Probation Statistics England and Wales". The probation service cost of administering probation orders in 1987-88 is estimated at approximately £50 million.

Persons placed on probation orders by the Courts

1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
40,900	42,400	40,100	42,200	43,600

Source: Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1988.

Romanian Orphans

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Chelmsford of 30 April, *Official Report*, column 409, what information he has of the average delay for British couples wishing to adopt an orphan from Romania, from first notifying his Department of their intention and obtaining his Department's approval; what action his Department takes in respect of those couples and the child concerned if the procedure is not followed; and if he plans to review the procedure.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Where a child adopted in Romania is to be brought to live in the United Kingdom an application for entry clearance must be made at the British embassy in Bucharest before the child leaves Romania. The entry clearance officer will first obtain information about the child's background and the circumstances of the adoption. The application is then referred to the immigration department of the Home Office which will normally seek advice from the Department of Health on the welfare aspects of the case and the likelihood of a United Kingdom court granting an adoption order before deciding whether to grant the application. The time taken to complete the necessary inquiries depends on the individual circumstances, but in the four recent cases where applications for Romanian children have been referred to the Home Office approval has been given in three weeks or less. Children adopted in Romania who are brought to the United Kingdom without entry clearance are liable to be refused admission and removed to Romania. The immigration officer, however, has discretion to admit them temporarily while further inquiries are made. We are reviewing the procedures for dealing with overseas adoptions to see whether they can be streamlined further while continuing to provide proper protection for the children involved.

Prison Conditions

Mr. Tony Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 5 June, *Official Report*, column *421*, how many hours on average each week prisoners spend on regime activities.

Mr. Mellor: In 1989-90 each prisoner spent on average 20·87 hours per week on structured regime activities such as work, education, training courses and physical education. The calculation excludes time spent on other out-of-cell activities, for example, exercise, visits and association, of an essentially personal or recreational kind.

Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the voluntary organisations to which he has given headquarter grants in each of the last three years; what percentage the grant is of each body's total expenditure; and what percentage the Government grant is in relation to the funds received from private sources.

Mr. John Patten: This information is not immediately available centrally for the 400 or so voluntary organisations which the Home Office funds. I will, therefore, write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Mr. Kevin Taylor

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Greater Manchester about the action he intends to take subsequent to the Director of Public Prosecutions' letter to him of 19 January about the outcome of the trial of Mr. Kevin Taylor.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. These are matters for the chief constable who has asked an independent senior officer from another police force to investigate the issues raised by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Sunday Trading

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in view of recent cases over Sunday trading when he proposes to bring forward a Bill to align United Kingdom legislation with the treaty of Rome.

Mr. Mellor: Although a European Court judgment last year has presented the courts with questions of interpretation, it did not find United Kingdom legislation to be in breach of the treaty of Rome. Nevertheless, the Government continue to hold the view that the Shops Act 1950 is in need of reform and are prepared to consider any practicable proposal from interested parties if they can reach agreement on a way forward which is likely to command parliamentary support.

Tear Gas

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what regulations and guidelines he issues governing the use of tear gas in cases of civil disorder;

(2) what information he has as to which constabularies hold supplies of tear gas and as to what standing orders govern its use.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: For guidance on the use of CS by the police in situations of serious public disorder I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary to a question from my hon. Friend for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) on 19 May 1986 at columns *15-16*. This explained that revised guidelines on the use of CS and baton rounds to deal with serious public disorder had been issued to all chief officers of police in England and Wales and that they covered the following points:

CS or baton rounds are to be used only with the express authority of the chief officer of police (or in his absence his deputy) under the direction and control of a designated senior officer, and by police officers who have been trained in the use of the equipment and know its characteristics.

CS or baton rounds are to be used only as a last resort where conventional methods of policing have been tried and failed, or must from the nature of the circumstances be unlikely to succeed if tried; and where there is risk of loss of life, or serious injury (or widespread destruction of property such that there is, or is judged to be, a sufficiently serious risk of loss of life or serious injury to justify the use of baton rounds or CS); and where the use of CS and baton rounds is judged as necessary because it is likely to reduce the risk. An oral warning is to be given to the crowd to disperse before CS or baton rounds are used. Once the use of baton rounds has begun the need to continue use is to be assessed continuously. Particular caution is to be taken over the use of baton rounds for offensive purposes.

If a chief officer is not present at the scene, he must be satisfied from reports that the criteria for use set out above have been met. In such circumstances, before the chief officer's authority for use is put into effect, a designated senior officer should satisfy himself at the scene that the criteria are met.

After each operational firing of baton rounds, a report on the circumstances of the incident in which they were fired is to be made to the Home Secretary.

Only CS equipment and baton rounds and launchers of a type authorised by the Home Office are to be used for these purposes.

Nothing in the guidelines affects the principle, to which section 3 of the Criminal Law Act 1967 gives effect, that only such force as is reasonable in the circumstances must be used. The degree of force justified will vary according to the circumstances of each case.

These guidelines remain in force.

I understand that the following police forces in England and Wales hold CS for public order purposes:

Avon and Somerset
Bedfordshire
City of London
Cleveland
Derbyshire
Durham
Dyfed-Powys
Essex
Greater Manchester
Gwent
Hertfordshire
Humberside
Kent
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Merseyside
Metropolitan
Norfolk
North Wales
Nottinghamshire
South Yorkshire
Staffordshire
Sussex
Warwickshire
West Midlands
Wiltshire

Energy Costs

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 30 April, *Official Report*, columns *399-402*, if he will give for each of the 21 buildings, for the 21 buildings all together, and for his Department as a whole, the spending on *(a)* electricity, *(b)* gas, *(c)* solid fuel and *(d)* oil in the latest available year.

Mr. Waddington: For expenditure in each of the 21 buildings I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question on 10 May at columns *197-98*. The total spent in these buildings in 1989-90 was as follows:

	£
Gas	155,147
Electricity	1,169,570
Oil	231,490
Solid fuel	186,098

As I said in my reply to the hon. Gentleman's question on 30 April at columns *399-402*, the information requested for the Department as a whole is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Immigration

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will abolish the use of the primary purpose rule in considering applications for entry clearance to the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. We believe that the primary purpose rule continues to be necessary.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants over 18 years, supporting their applications with positive DNA results, have *(a)* been granted entry clearance to the United Kingdom and *(b)* been refused entry clearance since June 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Since June 1989, when my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary announced the circumstances in which we would be prepared to waive the normal requirements of the Immigration Rules and admit reapplicants aged over 18 who could now establish their relationship by means of DNA evidence, entry clearance has been authorised in 34 such cases and refused in 76.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will meet a deputation from Bangladesh Porishad, at Bradford, accompanied by hon. Members from Bradford, to discuss the matters contained in a letter to him from Bangladesh Porishad, dated 11 June.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The president of Bangladesh Porishad accompanied the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) to discuss immigration issues with my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary and my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton) in June 1989. Bangladesh Porishad has been offered a further meeting with officials.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will arrange for all individual cases of entry clearance refusal submitted by Bangladesh Porishad in its letter to him of 11 June to be urgently considered.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Those cases where an entry clearance application is outstanding will be considered and decided as soon as possible.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what charges will be made to Hong Kong residents seeking to take advantage of the provisions in section 1 of the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill; and if he intends to give guidance to the Governor on what his powers to fix charges will be.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The level of fees would be a matter for the Governor. Detailed work on the administration costs has yet to be completed, but on the basis of a preliminary estimate, the Hong Kong Government expect that the fees would not differ substantially from those currently prescribed in regulations under the British Nationality Act 1981—that is, £10 for application and £50 for registration.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the entitlement to United Kingdom benefits of Portuguese nationals from Macau coming to the United Kingdom after 1 January 1993.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

Portuguese nationals from Macau coming to the United Kingdom after 1 January 1993 will have the same social security benefit rights, and be subject to the same eligibility conditions, as other EC nationals coming to the United Kingdom taking account, where appropriate, of regulation (EEC) No. 1408/71—co-ordination of EC member states' social security schemes for migrant workers and their families moving within the EC.

ENERGY

Waste into Energy

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the waste combustion into energy proposals submitted to date for the initial renewable energy tranche and their proposed output.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The details of individual proposals submitted for inclusion within the non-fossil fuel obligation are commercially confidential.

Mr. Rost: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate the increase in the proportion of waste likely to be converted into useful energy by combustion as a result of proposals being submitted for consideration under the renewable energy tranche.

Mr. Peter Morrison: This information will not be available until the number of waste projects to be contracted within the non-fossil fuel obligation has been established.

Offshore Installations

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list his sources of independent expert advice on the design and removal of oil and gas rigs and their related undersea installations.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Secretary of State has appointed six certifying authorities to carry out independent assessments of both the design and method of construction of offshore installations before certificates of fitness are issued. No installation can be operated on the United Kingdom continental shelf without a certificate of fitness.

An abandonment programme for the removal of an offshore installation on the United Kingdom continental shelf requires the approval of the Secretary of State under the Petroleum Act 1987. Those required to submit an abandonment programme will be asked to include independent advice from a certifying authority as to the safety and feasibility of the programme to assist the Secretary of State in his assessment of the programme.

The six certifying authorities are:

Lloyd's Register of Shipping
Det Norske Veritas
Bureau Veritas
American Bureau of Shipping
Germanischer Lloyd
Offshore Certification Bureau.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his funding plans for research into wave power for the financial years 1990-91 to 1992-93.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Provision for wave energy research is currently £200,000 per year. Future funding will depend on the results of the review of wave energy being carried out by the Department and on the progress of the Department's wave energy project on the island of Islay in Scotland.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will take steps to increase the cap on the premium price for renewables entering the non-fossil fuel obligation from 6p per unit per kilowatt hour, to 8p per unit.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The terms on which projects are contracted within the non-fossil fuel obligation (NFFO), including the level and timing of payments, are a matter for the public electricity suppliers (PES). However, I am confident that the legislation provides the public electricity suppliers with a fair degree of flexibility which will allow a significant number of renewables projects to be included within the non-fossil fuel obligation.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he proposes to take to protect the development of renewable energy sources after the removal of the fossil fuel levy after 1998; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Government do not expect to take a view on the future of the non-fossil fuel obligation beyond 1998 until the time of the nuclear review in 1994. The strategy for research and development into renewable energy was published as Department of Energy paper No. 55.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has made an assessment of the implication for the viability of renewable energy development of the European Community decision to limit the future of the fossil fuel levy to eight years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer the hon. Member to my answer on 18 April to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) at column *853*.

Bradwell Power Station

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what steps are being taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident that took place at Bradwell nuclear power station on 30 March or any of the other Magnox stations; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what was the quantity of carbon dioxide released during the incident at Bradwell nuclear power station on 30 March; to what extent this gas was radioactively contaminated; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what was the source of the carbon dioxide that was released during the incident at Bradwell nuclear power station on 30 March; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The quantity of carbon dioxide which was released from the leak in the reactor's gas circuit was estimated to be no more than 250 kg and was well within operating limits. No radioactive contamination was detected as a result of the incident.

The source of the leak was traced to an incorrectly set valve in the gas circuit blowdown room, which is a closed area containing equipment for reducing reactor pressure. The leak was isolated and the carbon dioxide was cleared from the area.

Nuclear Electric has taken corrective action to prevent a recurrence by tightening control procedures. The investigation into the incident is almost complete and the results will be made known to the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate.

Hinkley Point C

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to receive the inspector's report on the public inquiry into the Hinkley Point C proposed pressurised water reactor nuclear power station.

Mr. Baldry: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) on 14 June 1990 at column *287*.

Hawkshurst Moor (Coal Mine)

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any responsibility in relation to the planning inquiry on the proposal for a new coal mine at Hawkshurst moor in Berkswell near Coventry.

Mr. Baldry: No.

Magnox Reactors

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will now set a maximum operational life for the Magnox reactors.

Mr. Baldry: This is a matter for the operators, subject to the safety requirements of the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate.

DEFENCE

Cruise Missiles

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on any negotiations he has entered into with regard to the future control of cruise missiles on board United States warships and submarines.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We have entered into no such negotiations.

Trident

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on the study ordered by the United States Energy Secretary, Mr. James D. Walters, on the cost and feasibility of redesigning the Trident W88 warhead in order to enhance its safety; and what action he proposes to take.

Mr. Alan Clark: The study which the United States Energy Secretary, James D. Watkins, has ordered is an internal matter for the United States.

Polaris

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the British Polaris nuclear warheads use insensitive high explosives.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish on 14 June, *Official Report*, column *325*.

Nuclear Warheads (Transport)

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will obtain for his departmental library a copy of the recently published report by Large and Associates on the safety and risks involved in the transport of nuclear warheads in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I understand that the report was commissioned by the national steering committee of "nuclear free" local authorities; it contains no contribution by the Ministry of Defence. We have obtained a copy.

Short-range Nuclear Warheads

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to prohibit the deployment in, storage in or transit through or over the United Kingdom of W69, W79 and W88 warheads until such time as faults in them have been thoroughly investigated and eliminated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at particular places and times. We do, however, maintain regular contact with the US Government on safety matters and are satisfied with US assurances on the safety of their nuclear weapons.

Military Ranges, Pembrokeshire

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on any proposals he has to privatise the organisation, maintenance or administration of the Penally, Manorbier and Castlemartin ranges in Pembrokeshire.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are presently no plans to contractorise the administration of any of these ranges. However the MOD is constantly exploring options to increase efficiency, and such a course could not be ruled out if it could be demonstrated to offer better value for money.

Arms Sales, Iraq

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will provide details of the value of arms sales by the United Kingdom to Iraq for each of the years from 1980 to 1989 inclusive in the same form as that provided in his answer to the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) on 19 June 1989, *Official Report*, column *59*.

Mr. Alan Clark: It has been the normal policy of successive Administrations not to provide details of arms sales to specific countries as this is a commercially confidential matter between the customer and the supplier. I see no reason to make a further exception in this case. However, since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq conflict in September 1980 the United Kingdom has refused to allow the supply of any lethal equipments to Iraq in accordance with the guidelines applying to the export of such equipments to both countries.

WE177 Free-fall Bomb

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the WE177A B and C nuclear warheads use insensitive high explosives.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) on 14 June, *Official Report*, column *325*.

Royal Ordnance Factory, Nottingham

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts his Department has with the royal ordnance factory at Nottingham.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Department currently has an order of 300 direct and indirect contracts with the royal ordnance factory at Nottingham, mainly for guns and small arms and their spares support.

Military Training

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) of 26 February, *Official Report*, column *75*, if he will list where this military training takes place; on which training sites live firing is permitted; and what is the range of the weapons involved.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Military training takes place at the following locations which are in Ministry of Defence ownership:

Region and Location
Central
Cambusbarron
Grampian
Blackdog[1]
Rosehearty

Highland
Cape Wrath and Garvie Island[1]
Fort George[1]
Kinlochleven
Tain

Lothian
Dreghorn[1]
Kirknewton

Strathclyde
Dundonald
Garelochhead[1]

Tayside
Arbroath
Barry Buddon[1]
Rannoch Forest
Tighnablair[1]

Western Isles
South Uist[1]
St. Kilda

[1] Locations at which live firing takes place.

Military training also takes place at the following locations over which the Ministry of Defence has training rights:

Region and location
Dumfries and Galloway
Galloway

Grampian
Auchallater
Blackdog

Highland
Tain

Lothian
Dreghorn

Strathclyde
Dundonald

Tayside
Barry Buddon
Tighnablair

Western Isles
South Uist

It would not be possible to give details of the ranges of all the weapons involved in training in Scotland, some of which are classified. In any event the practice of live firing of weapons can constitute a danger at distances greater than would normally be the range in combat use. The theoretical range of a particular weapon can, if considered alone, give a misleading impression of the practical implications of firing live rounds. All service weapons have an associated safety template which governs the minimum requirement for land where live rounds are to be fired. These templates also take account of the design of the range concerned and the topography of the surrounding land and therefore vary. Live firing is permitted only in locations where sufficient land is available to accommodate the safety templates in full.

WALES

Health Service

12. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had from health authorities in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I receive many representations from health authorities in Wales on a wide variety of issues.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department refused to allocate capital resources for any projects submitted by Gwynedd health authority in 1988-89.

Mr. Grist: In common with other health authorities in Wales Gwynedd health authority submitted bids for the central funding of a number of capital developments in 1988-89. Of the seven bids submitted by the authority, three were successful and four were rejected.

In addition a request from the chairman of Gwynedd health authority in July 1988 that consideration be given to the development of a new hospital for Ynys Môn under the Secretary of State's programme for the valleys initiative was turned down since the initiative was restricted to a defined geographical area in south Wales.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 10 May, *Official Report*, columns *193-94*, what information he has on the reasons why Gwynedd health authority's level of capital expenditure in 1988-89 comprised 4 per cent. of the Welsh total for district health authority capital spending.

Mr. Grist: I would refer the hon. Member to my reply of 10 May at columns *193-94*, which identified the levels of virement between district health authorities' revenue and capital allocations in the period 1985-86 and 1988-89, which influence both the respective levels and proportions of their capital expenditure in each of these years.

Private Water Supplies

14. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many private sources of water supply in Wales will be subject to licensing by the National Rivers Authority after September.

Sir Wyn Roberts: There are at present more than 4,000 licensed abstractions in the National Rivers Authority's Welsh region. It is not possible to predict how many applications for new licences will be made in the next few months.

Education (Mid Glamorgan)

15. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the director of education in Mid Glamorgan to discuss education in Mid Glamorgan.

Sir Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend met the chairman of Mid Glamorgan education committee, accompanied by the assistant director for further education and the deputy county clerk, on 4 June.

Community Councils

16. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will introduce legislation to protect local democratic representation through elected community councils in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Present legislation already confers such protection, as each individual community is entitled to decide whether to have a council or not.

Project 2000

17. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make it his policy to enable the health service in Wales to meet the original 1990-91 deadline for implementing the Project 2000 nurse training initiative.

Mr. David Hunt: My policy is to ensure that Project 2000 is implemented in Wales as soon as resources and planning considerations allow.

Labour Statistics

18. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; and if he will give the equivalent figures for 1979 on the most nearly comparable basis.

Mr. David Hunt: On May 10 1990 the number of unemployment claimants in the Newport district, Gwent and Wales were 4,446, 13,136 and 81,194 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis which enables a valid comparison to be made.

Employment Training

19. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the reduction in employment training funding in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: Individual budgets are still being discussed but the fall in unemployment means that Government funding at previous levels is no longer required.

National Curriculum

20. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on progress on the implementation of the national curriculum within Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: We have made good progress in the implementation of the national curriculum in Wales commencing with mathematics, science and primary English in autumn 1989; to be followed this year by secondary English, technology and Welsh in schools where Welsh is taught already. In preparation for the introduction of history and geography in 1991 I have published recently my proposals for geography in the national curriculum and the report of the history committee for Wales.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what provision he is making within the national curriculum for teaching Welsh history in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The report of the history committee for Wales was published on 12 June. The report sets out recommendations for the history course for pupils from age five to 16 in schools in Wales and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

We will publish proposals for attainment targets and programmes of study for history within the national curriculum in the schools of Wales in due course.

Argoed High School

21. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he has received against the proposed closure of Argoed high school.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Some 140 letters have been received since March 1990 about the proposed closure of Argoed high school.

Floods (Compensation)

22. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will now make an assessment of the total contribution which the Government will have made to compensate individuals and local authorities for losses caused by the flooding in February; and what calculation he has made of the additional community charge which will be payable in Colwyn and in Rhuddlan in 1991 as a direct consequence of the floods.

Mr. David Hunt: I acknowledge the speed with which the authorities concerned are undertaking all the work arising from the emergency. The Government, too, responded swiftly. We immediately activated the Bellwin arrangements and contributed to the funds established by the mayors. Subsequently we set up a working party to co-ordinate the Government's efforts in support of the local authorities and the people affected. Throughout, my Department has been in close touch with the local authorities concerned. Priority has been given to restoring confidence especially through ensuring the provision of the best possible sea defences.

An early estimate based in part on information provided by the local authorities is that the total Government contribution could exceed £4 million. The local contribution to the community charge to expenditure arising from the emergency should not be significant.

Local Government Finance

23. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received about the effect of the poll tax on young people on low incomes in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I have received various representations about community charge, some of which have been about the position of young people.

NHS Reform

24. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the implications of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill for the future role of East Dyfed health authority and the other health authorities in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: The implications of the Bill for all health authorities are explained in the Welsh Office National Health Service directorate's paper, "Developing Roles in NHS Wales", published in April 1990, copies of which were sent to all Welsh Members and placed in the Library of the House.

Opencast Coal

25. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on present planning procedures as they affect Welsh opencast coal sites.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Procedures for handling mineral planning applications, including opencast coal sites, are set out in the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 (S.I. 1988, No. 1813). Advice on

handling specific development proposals is given in minerals planning guidance note No. 3, "Open Cast Coal Mining", issued in May 1988.

Ophthalmic Services

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, further to his reply of 15 May, *Official Report*, column *371*, regarding glaucoma cases, when he expects to provide the information.

Mr. David Hunt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my letter of 18 June 1990, a copy of which is also in the Library of the House.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people on family credit or income support received free eye tests in Wales *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mr. Grist: The data requested were not collected centrally prior to 1 April 1989, since when they have been collected on a six-monthly basis. The available information is given as follows:

	Estimated[1] number of sight tests paid for by family practitioner committees in the six months ending	
	30 September 1989	*31 March 1990*
Adults receiving family credit or income support	33,420	35,700

[1] Estimates based upon a 2 per cent. sample of all such sight tests.

Home Improvement Grants

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how the amount of the financial allocation for the new system of home improvement grants for the financial year 1991-92 will be determined.

Mr. Grist: This is a matter to be determined in the current public expenditure survey.

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when the new system for home improvement grants will come into operation.

Mr. Grist: The new area renovation arrangements and minor works assistance were introduced on 1 April this year. The remainder of the new renovation grant system will be brought into effect on 1 July 1990.

Housing

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consultations he proposes to have on the housing needs of the elderly in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The Department is currently consulting statutory and voluntary bodies on the future of home improvement agencies in Wales. The housing needs of elderly people will also be considered by Welsh district councils and officials in the context of authorities' housing strategies for 1991-92.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will call for a report from the chairman of Tai Cymru on its supervision of the financial affairs of Corlan Housing Association;

(2) when he expects to receive the report of the inquiry instituted under the Housing Association Act 1973 into the financial difficulties of Corlan Housing Association;

(3) if he will publish the report of the inquiry into the financial affairs of Corlan Housing Association; and if he will make a statement;

(4) whether he has any plans to issue new guidelines to Tai Cymru on the supervision of the financial affairs of Welsh housing associations.

Mr. Grist: Under the Housing Associations Act 1985 Housing for Wales has various powers and responsibilities in respect of registered housing associations and under section 28 of the Act has instituted an inquiry into the affairs of Corlan Housing Association. A report is expected within about six weeks. Housing for Wales will then decide what further action needs to be taken in the light of the inquiry's findings. My right hon. Friend and I are, of course, in touch with the situation.

The board of Housing for Wales is already considering the wider implications of the situation and will be discussing these with me.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what consideration he has given to the independent technical report prepared for Newport borough council by Ove Arup, consulting engineers, on the structural soundness of houses at Ringwood hill, Newport, Gwent;

(2) if he will vary or revoke the designation of properties at Ringwood hill, Newport, Gwent, as being defective within the terms of section 528 of the Housing Act 1985;

(3) if he will now reply to a letter dated 9 May from the hon. Member for Newport, East concerning the designation of houses at Ringwood hill, Newport, Gwent, as being defective within the terms of section 528 of the Housing Act 1985.

Mr. Grist: I have not received any recent correspondence from the hon. Gentleman about houses at Ringwood hill, Newport. However, we have very recently written to Newport borough council to say that my right hon. Friend is not prepared to revoke or vary the designation of Hawksley SGS houses under section 528 of the Housing Act 1985.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether the policy outlined in his reply of 11 June, *Official Report*, column *25*, applies to properties owned by Douglas Haig Memorial Homes.

Mr. Grist: As a landlord body, Douglas Haig Memorial Homes will be able to apply for financial assistance under the renovation grant being introduced from 1 July.

Communicators for the Deaf

Mr. John P. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on future funding for the Communicators for the Deaf course at Barry college.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The Training Agency funded the course on a 12-month contract which ends in July. There are no plans to extend funding.

Mr. John P. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how he proposes to provide training for communicators for the deaf in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The Department recognises the need for and value of training in this field. A three-year grant

was awarded to the Wales Council for the Deaf in 1989-90 to set up a pilot project with the aim of increasing the number of people with advanced qualifications in sign language.

Bathing Beaches

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 13 June, if he will make it his policy to provide the financial resources necessary to fully implement the display of information on water quality at all bathing beaches in Wales.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer that I gave him on 13 June at column *226*, to which there is nothing that I can add.

Engineering

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will call for a report on the supply and demand for engineering skills and training facilities in Wales arising from *(a)* new investment projects and *(b)* existing firms, including small enterprises.

Sir Wyn Roberts: A labour market assessment covering the whole of Wales is undertaken annually by the Training Agency for Wales. In addition, the Training Agency carries out specific research exercises such as the "Valley Skills" study. At a local level the developing training and enterprise councils are undertaking local labour market research for their corporate and business plans. The supply and demand for engineering skills and training feature as subjects in these studies. Known inward investment projects are taken into account and firms of all sizes are considered.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what public funds have been made available towards the cost of a regional freight terminal linking Welsh industry and commerce with the channel tunnel.

Sir Wyn Roberts: No specific amount has been set aside for freight terminals. British Rail is proposing to spend over £1 billion to enable freight and passenger services to be in place when the tunnel opens. This includes expenditure on freight terminals. British Rail is currently negotiating to obtain the best commercial deals on terminals in partnership with the private sector.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consultations he has undertaken on the demand for a regional freight terminal in south Wales to link with the channel tunnel.

Sir Wyn Roberts: None. This is a matter for British Rail, which has identified south Wales as a possible location for a major terminal for channel tunnel freight services.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make an assessment of the demand in Wales for regional freight terminals to link with the channel tunnel.

Sir Wyn Roberts: No. British Rail has already assessed the demand in Wales for freight terminals in drawing up its published plan for channel tunnel services. It is now up to businesses in Wales to consider their requirements and make these known to British Rail.

TRANSPORT

M6 (Road Works)

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report (a)* the number of occasions when major road works have taken place on the M6 motorway between junction 8 (M5 Ray Hall) and junction 9 (Bescot), *(b)* the type of work carried out and *(c)* the total cost of such work since that portion of the M6 motorway was completed.

Mr. Atkins: Since the M6 opened, there has been one major road maintenance scheme on this section, in 1979, when major reconstruction and resurfacing of the carriageways between junctions 8 and 10 was undertaken at a cost of £3 million. Further major maintenance works between junctions 8 and 9 will start this month. In addition there is an ongoing programme of structural maintenance to the viaducts themselves.

Bedford Bypass

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to publish Her Majesty's Government's recommendations about the line of route for linking the projected southern relief road at Elstow in the county of Bedford with the A428.

Mr. Atkins: Such a link would form a western bypass of Bedford. The Department is discussing its preferred inner route with the local authorities, which favour alternative proposals further to the west. Technical analyses of traffic data will take a number of months to complete and I do not expect to make any announcements before the autumn.

Dial-a-Ride

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements are made to fund dial-a-ride and similar services for disabled people outside London; if he will list the amounts paid in support of such services in shire county and metropolitan areas in the years 1988-89 and 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Shire councils and passenger transport authorities and executives in the metropolitan areas have a duty to have regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled, and may fund dial-a-ride and other special needs services. We do not have comprehensive figures on local authority spending in this area, but a recent assessment by the local authority associations put provision by the PTAs in the metropolitan areas at £4·4 million in 1988-89 and £8·2 million in 1989-90.

East London Rail Study

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received concerning the release of any economic evaluation of the east London rail study; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will publish any cost/benefit analysis of the east London rail study commissioned by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: A small number of representations have been received about the release of details of the economic

evaluation of the Jubilee line extension including some from hon. Members. This material was not released at the time the east London rail study report was published last July as it might have prejudiced negotiations with developers about their contributions to the cost of the line. However, now that agreement has been reached about the level of these contributions, I can now release this information. The cost benefit analysis which lay behind the ELRS report was as follows.

Present value of costs and benefits for the Jubilee line extension from Green Park via (inter alia) Waterloo, Canary Wharf and Greenwich Point to Stratford

1988-89 prices discounted to 1989

	£ million
Capital costs	(690)
Operating cost	(90)
Additional revenue	290
Funding gap	(490)
Passenger benefits	730
Road user benefits	200
Net benefit	440
Benefit: cost ratio	1·56:1

London Underground

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received advocating the extension of the London underground to Thamesmead; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The Department has received a small number of representations in support of an extension of the Jubilee line to Thamesmead. The east London rail study showed that the capital costs (estimated at £420 million in 1989 prices) and operating costs would greatly exceed the revenues and benefits.

Channel Ferries (Fire Drills)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply, *Official Report*, 7 June, column *696*, what fire drill practice passengers on cross-channel ferries undergo on each voyage; and what fire drill information they are given in case of fire.

Mr. McLoughlin: Fire drills are directed at the crew and passengers are not required to participate. A fire in a space used by passengers should be detected by automatic fire detection systems or by fire patrols required by the SOLAS convention. This will activate the measures provided on the vessel for fighting a fire—including the provision of trained crew. In the event of a fire passengers would be instructed on the public address system to muster at specified positions on the vessels in the same way as in any other emergency. These instructions are also required to be posted in cabins and in other spaces used by passengers.

SCOTLAND

Lead Contamination

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research his Department has conducted into the effects of lead in water; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Scottish Home and Health Department has provided funding for a number of long-running major projects over the past 18 years:

Studies in Environmental and Industrial Lead Intoxification.

Studies on the Biological Effects of Lead and Cadmium in the Environment.

The Evaluation of Certain Aspects of Lead and Cadmium Exposure in Terms of Biochemical Effects and Consideration of Bio-Analytical Indices of Exposure.

Developmental Behavioural and Neurochemical Aspects of Lead Exposure in Man and Experimental Animals.

Neuropsychological Function in Children Exposed to Low Levels of Lead in the Environment (in conjunction with the Medical Research Council).

Community Service Orders

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost of administering community service orders in Scotland in the last year for which figures are available; how many orders were made per 100,000 of the population in that year; and what was the average cost per order.

Mr. Rifkind: The gross expenditure incurred by local authorities in the financial year ended 31 March 1989 in respect of community service schemes was estimated to be £3·2 million. There were 3,492 orders made during the same period, representing 69 per 100,000 population. On the basis of these figures, the average cost per order was about £920.

Security Firms

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the private security firms presently employed by his Department, the buildings at which they operate and the date of expiry of each contract.

Mr. Rifkind: The information relating to the Scottish Office and associated departments is set out in the table:

Company	*Location*	*Expiry date of contract*
Burns International Security Services (UK) Ltd.	Middleton Hall, by Gorebridge	13 July 1990
Wackenhut (UK) Ltd.	Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen	1 December 1990
Burns International Security Services (UK) Ltd.	Brandon Street, Edinburgh	31 March 1992
Burns International Security Services (UK) Ltd.	Saughton House, Edinburgh	31 March 1992
Burns International Security Services (UK) Ltd.	Jeffrey Street, Edinburgh	31 March 1992
Burns International Security Services (UK) Ltd.	Supreme Courts, Edinburgh	31 December 1991
Burns International Security Services (UK) Ltd.	Edinburgh Sheriff Court	31 December 1991
Burns International Security Services (UK) Ltd.	Glasgow Sheriff Court	25 April 1992
Group 4 Total Security Ltd.	Ladywell House, Edinburgh	[1]—
Group 4 Total Security Ltd.	GRO Building, Station Road, Edinburgh	[1]—

[1] These buildings are covered by an ongoing contract which may be terminated following one month's notice.

Probation Orders

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many probation orders have been made by the courts in Scotland in each of the last five years; how many orders were made per 100,000 of the population in the latest available year; and what was the cost of administering probation orders in that year.

Mr. Rifkind: The number of persons placed on probation in each of the past five years for which figures are available is published in the Scottish Home and Health Department statistical bulletin No. 1/1990, "Criminal Proceedings in Scottish Courts, 1988", which is available in the Library.

In 1988, 68 persons per 100,000 of the population aged eight or over were placed on probation. (If a person is placed on probation more than once in the same year, each occasion is counted separately.)

Local authorities are unable to identify separately within the social work budget the cost of supervision of persons subject to probation orders.

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mr. Rifkind: Comprehensive records of all studies for the period requested are not held centrally and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost. Details of contract costs cannot be disclosed because of commercial confidentiality. The following information is readily available:

1. Contracts awarded for Management Consultancies

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
1986[1]	
BP International Limited	Scottish Office Procurement Manual
Coopers and Lybrand Associates Limited	Marketing Awareness, Historic Buildings and Monuments
Coopers and Lybrand Associates Limited	Investment Function, Scottish Development Agency
Ernst and Whinney	Management Organisation and Procedures, Scottish Legal Aid Board
Hay—MSL Management Consultants Limited	Grading Review—Nursing Services
Inbucon Management Consultants Limited	Financial Management Scottish Development Agency
Inbucon Management Consultants Limited	NHS Linen Services in Scotland
SCICON Limited	Patient Administration System
1987[1]	
Frank Griffiths Associates Limited	Overview of Roads Procurement Procedures
CIPFA Services	Community Charge
1988[1]	
PIEDA	Dounreay rundown
Deloitte, Haskins and Sells	Scottish Homes
Coopers and Lybrand Associates Limited	Scottish Homes (several projects)
Coopers and Lybrand Associates Limited	New Towns industrial and commercial assets
Gilpin Black Associates	Scottish Homes
Firn, Crichton Roberts Limited	Strathclyde Integrated Development Operation
Open College	Open Learning
University of Warwick	Performance measurements in Further Education
Dr. S. Clarke	Evaluation and quality of learning and teaching in Further Education
Dundee College of Technology	Investigation of the administrative arrangements in Jordanhill School
1989-90[2]	
A. Fegent	Procurement (2 Projects)
Touche Ross	Health Education Review
Peat, Marwick McLintock	Lothian Health Board
Coopers and Lybrand Associates Limited	HBM Executive Agency proposals
Price Waterhouse	Creche facilities
British Institute of Management	Network analysis on probation court services and parole
Peat, Marwick McLintock	Further Education development planning
Edinburgh University	Interpretation of a new statistical method
CSL Group Limited	Financial Regulations for School Boards
Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte	Education Finance

[1] Calendar year.
[2] Financial year.

(2) Expenditure on management consultancies[1]

	£
1985-86	491,864
1986-87	569,038
1987-88	198,338
1988-89	1,162,108
[2]1989-90	300,000

[1] Expenditure in a particular year does not necessarily relate exclusively to contracts awarded in that year.
[2] Estimated figure.

Urban Aid

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish figures showing total urban aid funding disbursed to new projects in the area of the Govan Initiative in 1988-89 and 1989-90; and how much of this went to projects submitted through the Govan Initiative.

Mr. Lang: There were 11 additional urban programme approvals in 1988-89 for the area of the Govan Initiative amounting to £1·340 million in total capital and annual

running costs of which £1·311 million was for nine new projects. Three of this number, representing £0·264 million of the total, were submitted through the Govan Initiative.

There were 11 additional urban programme approvals in 1989-90 for the area of the Govan Initiative amounting to £0·682 million in total capital and annual running costs of which £0·537 million was for six new projects. Four of this number, representing £0·490 million of the total, were sponsored by the Govan Initiative.

The additional approvals in 1989-90 brought total approved expenditure for the Govan Initiative area for the year to £1·708 million on 28 projects.

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, when considering urban aid allocations to economic initiatives in Strathclyde, he treates this aid as supplementary to the urban aid disbursed to non-initiative projects, and therefore not prejudicial to the non-initiative applicants.

Mr. Lang: In arriving at the dedicated urban programme budgets which have been offered for Castlemilk, Drumchapel and Easterhouse in Glasgow and for Ferguslie Park in Paisley, account was taken of each area's share of the worst deprivation, and its track record of success in securing urban programme resources.

The budgets offered for Castlemilk and Ferguslie Park also took into account the fact that urban programme resources had been increased in order to allow additional priority to be given to urban partnerships areas without reducing the Government's commitment to other eligible areas. There is therefore no reason to believe that the provision of dedicated budgets should cause other areas to lose out.

Community Service Orders

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many community service orders have been made by the courts in Scotland in each of the last five years; and if he will break down the figure in the last available year according to the number of hours of service specified in the order.

Mr. Rifkind: The information is set out in the tables.

Community Service Orders made by Courts

Year	*Number of Orders*
1985	2,889
1986	3,453
1987	3,508
1988	3,590
1989	4,190

Number of Hours of Service Specified in the Order 1989

Number of Hours	*Number of Orders*
40-95	802
100-140	1,429
150-190	991
200-240	968
Total	4,190

Forestry Commission

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much Forestry Commission land was sold in each of England, Scotland and Wales in the 12 months to 1 April; and how much of this land was subject to agreement securing future public access.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is as follows. The figures given are provisional at this stage.

Area of Forestry Commission land sold in the year to 31 March 1990

	Hectares
England	1,699
Scotland	4,689
Wales	1,276

None of the land was subject to specific agreements concerning future public access.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what policies he has adopted to secure continuing public access to Forestry Commission land sold to the private sector; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government are concerned that the general public should continue to enjoy access to those forests to be disposed of by the Forestry Commission in a way which is compatible with their management for forestry and other purposes. We are giving careful consideration to ways of achieving this objective, but a number of complex issues is having to be addressed. In the meantime, the commission is deferring the sale of woodlands that are particularly sensitive from the point of view of public access, except in those cases where the sale is to an environmental body under the sponsorship arrangements.

Secondary Education

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is able to announce the membership of the committee which he has established to review courses and examinations in the fifth and sixth years of Scottish secondary education.

Mr. Lang: I am glad to be able to announce that the following have accepted my right hon. and learned Friend's invitation to serve on the committee to be chaired by Professor John Howie:

Mr. David Alexander, Depute Director of Education, Strathclyde Regional Council.
Mr. Richard Bisset, Headteacher, Kemnay Academy, Aberdeenshire.
Mr. Thomas Burness, Principal, Glenrothes and Buckhaven Technical College, Fife.
Mr. Ronald Crawford, Academic Registrar, University of Strathclyde and Executive Secretary, Universities of Scotland Standing Conference.
Mrs. Dorothy Dalton, Chief Executive, Scottish Community Education Council.
Dr. John Gow, Secretary General, The Royal Society of Chemistry.
Mrs. Deirdre Hutton.
Professor Ian Lockerbie, Department of Educational Policy and Development, University of Stirling.
Mr. James McVittie, Headteacher, St. Ninian's High School, Eastwood, Renfrewshire.
Professor Ian Marrian, Director of Education, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland.

Mr. David Meek, Assistant Headteacher, Boclair Academy, Bearsden.
Mr. Robert Nimmo, Rector, High School of Dundee.
Mrs. Jennifer Rees, Head of Management Studies Department, Scottish College of Textiles, Galashiels.
Mr. David Semple, Director of Education, Lothian Regional Council.
Mr. James Thompson, Principal Teacher of Mathematics, High School of Stirling.
Sir John Thomson, former member of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service.
Dr. Gordon Wilson, Principal, Craigie College of Education.
Professor John Woodward, Vice Principal, Paisley College of Technology.

HIV

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each health authority in Scotland the number of persons infected with HIV; and if he will separately distinguish these numbers by age.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The following table gives a breakdown by health board area of the total number of positive HIV antibody test results in Scotland which have been reported to the communicable diseases (Scotland) unit up to 31 March 1990. Where the total number of results in each board area is under 10, the figure, in accordance with established practice, is not published so as not to jeopardise medical confidentiality.

Health board	*Number of positive results*
Argyll and Clyde	14
Ayrshire and Arran	[1]
Borders	[1]
Dumfries and Galloway	13
Fife	26
Forth Valley	60
Grampian	40
Greater Glasgow	278
Highland	12
Lanarkshire	27
Lothian	1,053
Orkney	Nil
Shetland	[1]
Tayside	233
Western Isles	Nil
TOTAL (SCOTLAND)	1,769

[1] Under 10.

The age distribution of results by health board area is not readily available and could not, in any event, be given where the number involved is under 10. The age distribution, where known, of the total number of results is shown in the table.

Age	*Number of positive results*
Under 14 years	116
15 to 24 years	723
25 to 34 years	624
35 to 44 years	158
Over 45 years	44
Not known	104

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the correlation coefficient between the incidence of HIV infection and the incidence of tuberculosis in Scotland over the period 1980 to 1990.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* As the respective relevant data on HIV antibody positive results reported to the communicable diseases (Scotland) unit and on the notification of tuberculosis in Scotland are not compatible, any attempt at a correlation coefficient using the data would not be valid. No evidence exists of a correlation in Scotland between the incidence of HIV infection and the incidence of tuberculosis, although tuberculosis has occurred in a small proportion of persons with AIDS.

The annual number of positive reports of HIV infection and notifications of tuberculosis in Scotland from 1980 to 1989 inclusive are given in the following table:

	HIV positive results	*Tuberculosis*
1980	0	1,138
1981	2	972
1982	9	902
1983	42	829
1984	169	738
1985	314	707
1986	472	756
1987	373	560
1988	197	534
1989	151	[1]540

[1]provisional.

Farm Pollution

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details about steps taken by his Department in order to quantify the damage to health and safety of people and environment caused by cases of farm pollution in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The Scottish farm waste liaison group compiles records of pollution incidents and publishes information on the numbers and types of such incidents. The group, which was established in 1981, comprises representatives of river purification boards, the Scottish agricultural college and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland.

Reports on specific incidents are made in the annual reports of the river purification authority concerned. There are very few recorded cases of direct damage to health arising from specific farm pollution incidents.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement regarding the role of his Department in the care and protection of the health and safety of the Scottish people and environment from farm pollution.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to my answer on 8 June, *Official Report*, Vol. 173, column *737*. The Government aim by a policy of education, regulation and enforcement to reduce farm pollution at source in the interests of safeguarding public health and protecting the environment.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, together with other Departments, keeps the use

and effectiveness of pesticides under review. Where it is justified on scientific grounds action is taken to ban substances whose continued use is found to be unacceptable. The Department was associated with the preparation of a code of practice for the safe use of pesticides on farms and holdings published earlier this year. Guidance has also been issued on the operation of intensive livestock units and on the control of slurry spreading.

The safeguarding of public health is one of the objectives of the Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations 1989, a measure introduced recently to protect the environment, and in particular the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture.

The Scottish Development Department sponsors the seven Scottish river purification boards which, along with the three islands councils, are responsible under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 for controlling pollution of the water environment. Their powers were recently improved and strengthened in the Water Act 1989. Where pollution of water occurs, whether from farm or other sources, it falls on these authorities both to take action to safeguard health by notifying water authorities and the public likely to be affected and to assemble evidence against the possibility of offenders being prosecuted.

All employers and the self-employed, including farmers, have a general duty under section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of persons who may be affected by their work activities.

The specific obligations relating to the protection of employees' health imposed on employers by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations also extend so far as reasonably practicable to non-employees both on and off the employer's premises.

Disabled People

Mr Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people with disability are on employment training placements with employers; and what percentage this is of placements for people with disabilities.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The information requested is not collected by the Training Agency. However, I can say that 2,822 (3·5 per cent. of the total) disabled people joined employment training in Scotland in the period end September 1988 to March 1990 and that overall within that period 22 per cent. of all employment training placements have been with employers.

Hepatitis B

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of medical and nursing staff in Scotland who have contacted hepatitis B in each of the last 10 years; and how many medical nursing staff have died from contracting hepatitis B in these years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* This information is not held centrally. National statistics about the incidence of hepatitis B do not separately identify particular occupational groups.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total expenditure by the Scottish Home and Health Department over the past 10 years in advertising risks to medical staff of contracting hepatitis B as a result of their work.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* The Scottish Home and Health Department does not incur specific expenditure on advertising the occupational risks of hepatitis B to medical staff. The Department does, however, issue to health boards the memorandum "Immunisation against Infectious Disease", which is prepared and regularly revised for the health departments by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation. The memorandum, the latest edition of which has just been sent to health boards, identifies the occupational groups, including medical staff, particularly at risk from hepatitis B and gives advice on those to whom vaccination should be offered. Further advice is contained in "Guidance for Clinical Health Care Workers: Protection against Infection with HIV and Hepatitis Viruses". This booklet, which was issued by the Department to health boards recently, contains guidance on measures for the protection of health care workers in hospital and the community against occupational infection with HIV and hepatitis viruses.

The occupational health services within health boards will also give advice to medical staff about the risks of contracting hepatitis B and on the protective measures which can be taken.

Salmon

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to be able to publish the results of the inquiry into the east coast salmon fishery.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* The analysis of scientific data is almost complete. Once this is submitted, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will then have to consider the implications. A report to both Houses will be submitted as soon as possible thereafter.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Capital Allocations

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the 1990-91 capital allocations to each local education authority, indicating in each case the bid submitted and the allocation as a percentage of the bid and indicate which local education authorities have made representations for additional resources.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information requested on annual capital guidelines for education is set out in the table. Local education authorities are free to augment their annual capital guidelines within the flexibilities of the capital finance system by the use of capital receipts and other sources of income. The following LEAs have made formal representations for additional resources:

Berkshire
Bolton
Bradford
Buckinghamshire
Cornwall
Coventry

Devon
Dorset
Dudley
East Sussex
Essex
Gateshead
Hackney
Hammersmith and Fulham
Hampshire
Humberside
Leeds
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Manchester
Newham
Norfolk
Northumberland
Nottinghamshire
Oldham
Rochdale
Rotherham
St. Helens
Sheffield
Stockport
Sunderland
Surrey
Sutton
Tower Hamlets
Westminster
Wiltshire

Education plans and annual capital guidelines for 1990-91

LEA	*1990-91 Plans (cash)*	*1990-91 Annual capital guideline (ACG) (cash)*	*1990-91 Initial ACG percentage of plans*
Barking	1,415	485	34
Barnet	4,484	888	20
Bexley	4,892	1,242	25
Brent	6,332	687	11
Bromley	6,612	1,684	25
Croydon	19,319	1,061	5
Ealing	14,683	889	6
Enfield	30,222	1,315	4
Haringey	5,245	1,132	22
Harrow	3,345	1,073	32
Havering	8,589	5,881	68
Hillingdon	7,692	1,140	15
Hounslow	7,000	539	8
Kingston	4,475	268	6
Merton	11,257	3,608	32
Newham	16,733	5,572	33
Redbridge	5,787	1,577	27
Richmond	7,290	1,390	19
Sutton	14,161	2,974	21
Waltham	11,771	6,661	57
City of London	0	0	0
Camden	5,369	1,421	26
Westminster	5,613	380	7
Greenwich	10,823	3,849	36
Hackney	9,218	2,605	28
Hammersmith and Fulham	3,662	1,047	29
Islington	8,670	1,079	12
Kensington	9,172	2,145	23
Lambeth	4,858	1,480	30
Lewisham	8,762	1,232	14
Southwark	17,740	5,429	31
Wandsworth	17,305	1,677	10
Tower Hamlets	33,246	7,778	23
Birmingham	15,407	10,494	68
Coventry	12,758	1,962	15
Dudley	6,308	3,608	57
Sandwell	8,493	1,647	19
Solihull	6,365	1,511	24
Walsall	4,911	1,369	28
Wolverhampton	3,353	783	23
Knowsley	6,594	2,080	32
Liverpool	16,861	9,742	58
St. Helens	6,610	5,066	77
Sefton	7,111	4,176	59
Wirral	7,099	3,354	47
Bolton	5,619	802	14
Bury	1,476	815	55
Manchester	29,168	3,062	10
Oldham	7,707	3,429	44
Rochdale	12,529	4,078	33
Salford	6,461	3,899	60
Stockport	3,385	1,300	38
Tameside	2,438	1,410	58
Trafford	11,268	9,448	84
Wigan	7,748	4,378	57
Barnsley	2,276	1,883	83
Doncaster	1,269	860	68
Rotherham	3,712	1,589	43
Sheffield	6,068	2,428	40
Bradford	28,814	9,731	34
Calderdale	2,845	1,514	53
Kirklees	6,876	1,216	18
Leeds	15,768	2,562	16
Wakefield	6,860	5,394	79
Gateshead	8,776	1,082	12
Newcastle	8,438	1,564	19
North Tyneside	5,138	1,265	25
South Tyneside	10,019	1,894	19
Sunderland	10,205	1,883	18
Isles of Scilly	300	221	74
Avon	20,049	5,653	28
Bedfordshire	12,767	2,409	19
Berkshire	15,932	4,500	28
Buckinghamshire	14,902	4,544	30
Cambridgeshire	34,854	13,229	38
Cheshire	15,935	5,814	36
Cleveland	7,761	3,329	43
Cornwall	18,786	6,522	35
Cumbria	13,051	7,930	61
Derbyshire	26,701	14,653	55
Devon	28,679	12,984	45
Dorset	11,414	3,853	34
Durham	19,564	4,924	25
East Sussex	23,967	8,613	36
Essex	42,364	13,895	33
Gloucester	18,734	7,917	42
Hampshire	37,095	13,325	36
Hereford and Worcester	12,740	6,248	49
Hertford	16,526	6,526	39
Humberside	17,795	9,004	51
Isle of Wight	6,275	1,912	30
Kent	33,849	16,210	48
Lancashire	36,022	18,524	51
Leicestershire	16,794	11,154	66
Lincolnshire	23,274	7,387	32
Norfolk	10,044	2,880	29
North Yorkshire	7,735	4,105	53
Northamptonshire	10,076	6,182	61
Northumberland	5,601	1,961	35
Nottinghamshire	12,952	3,716	29
Oxfordshire	15,443	3,751	24
Shropshire	10,272	6,319	62
Somerset	13,498	4,837	36
Staffordshire	16,421	6,375	39
Suffolk	15,754	7,921	50
Surrey	11,805	3,718	31

LEA	1990-91 Plans (cash)	1990-91 Annual capital guideline (ACG) (cash)	1990-91 Initial ACG percentage of plans
Warwickshire	6,355	1,507	24
W. Sussex	12,754	3,633	28
Wiltshire	19,214	6,256	33

Notes:—All figures are in £000's and in cash terms.

Students

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total number of *(a)* undergraduate and *(b)* postgraduate students studying in universities in England and Wales; and what are the estimated targets for undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers for each year up to 1995.

Mr. Jackson: Information published by the universities statistical record for the 1988-89 academic year, shows that there 223,311 undergraduates and 82,713 postgraduates studying at universities in England and Wales.

Future levels of admissions are for individual universities to decide.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total number of *(a)* undergraduate and *(b)* postgraduate students in the university of Wales; and what targets have been set for (i) undergraduate and (ii) postgraduate numbers for each university college in each year up to 1995.

Mr. Jackson: Information published by the universities statistical record for the 1988-89 academic year, shows that there 17,618 undergraduate and 5,549 postgraduate students in the university of Wales. Future levels of admissions are for the individual constituent colleges to decide.

Teacher Training

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will instigate an experimental period of payment for teachers who undertake training during holiday periods.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend agrees with the interim advisory committee's view that it would not be helpful to distinguish training which takes place within the 1,265 hours from training which takes place outside directed time.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the increase in cost of paying teachers for holiday training periods during the 1990-91 school year.

Mrs. Rumbold: If such payments were made available, the cost would depend on a variety of factors including the amounts of holiday training undertaken and the extent to which it replaced the training currently undertaken in directed time, as well as rates of pay. Given these variables, an estimate is impossible.

Assessment

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he circulated to the teacher unions for consultation the draft document entitled the Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements in English, Mathematics and Science) Order 1990.

Mrs. Rumbold: Copies of the draft document were dispatched to relevant teacher associations on 18 May with the exception of two of the associations which, by error, were not sent copies. The Department has since sent copies to these two associations.

Community Work Training

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what plans he has for the future of community work training;

(2) what representations he has received about the future of community work training; and if he will place them in the Library.

Mr. Alan Howarth: On 5 April my right hon. Friend announced that from 1 April 1991, he would channel funding to the national level youth service bodies through a single national youth agency. The agency will be based on the existing youth service bodies, in particular the National Youth Bureau (NYB) and the Council for the Education and Training of Youth and Community Workers (CETYCW). One of the functions of the agency will be the development, endorsement, accreditation and, in some circumstances, the provision of youth and community worker training and I shall look to the agency to build upon the work currently undertaken by CETYCW.

My right hon. Friend has received a number of general representations about the establishment of the agency.

School Buildings (Access)

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what advice he gives to local education authorities on the standards of access for people with disabilities for new designs for and adaptations to school and college buildings; and whether he will consult interested parties regarding statutory provision for standards of access for new school and college buildings.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Guidance to those responsible for making educational buildings accessible to disabled people and for adapting ordinary school buildings for pupils with special needs is given in design note 18 (1984) and building bulletin 61 published by DES architects and building branch. The design note is based on the recommendations of a working party including representatives of Her Majesty's inspectorate, local authorities and interested central Government Departments.

Access for disabled people to new school and college buildings is required to be confirmed under the arrangements for obtaining the Secretary of State's approval to capital building projects.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many nursery, primary and secondary schools are fully accessible to pupils and teachers with disabilities; what are these figures as percentages of the total number of schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information is not held centrally.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what specific funding has been available to local education authorities to enable access to school and college buildings for pupils and teachers with disabilities in each of the last 10 years; and if he has any plans to make specific grants available to local education authorities to carry out necessary capital works to facilitate physical access for people with disabilities.

Mr. Alan Howarth: None. It is for local education authorities to decide their priorities for capital expenditure on schools and colleges, taking account of their responsibilities under section 8 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

Special Educational Needs

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many appeals were received under section 8(6) of the Education Act 1981 by each local education authority; and what were the decisions taken by the appeals tribunal for each of the years from April 1983.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Appeals under section 8(6) of the Education Act 1981 are made directly to my right hon. Friend. Appeals to local appeal committees are made under section 8(2) of the 1981 Act. Information concerning the number and outcome of such appeals is not collected centrally.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many appeals were received under section 5(6) of the Education Act 1981 by each local education authority; and what were the decisions taken by the appeals tribunal for each of the years from April 1983.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Appeals under section 5(6) of the Education Act 1981 are made directly to my right hon. Friend. Since April 1983 he has received 164 such appeals. The following table lists by year the number of such appeals and the number of appeals under section 5(6) which resulted in my right hon. Friend directing the LEA to reconsider its decision not to make a statement of special educational needs.

Year	*Appeals received*	*LEA directed to reconsider*
1983	3	0
1984	19	0
1985	19	1
1986	21	3
1987	31	6
1988	17	3
1989	12	7

There are 42 such appeals upon which my right hon. Friend has yet to reach a decision.

Student Teachers

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the number of students with disabilities who have entered initial teacher training for each of the last 10 years; and what percentage of the total number of student teachers this represents.

Mr. Alan Howarth: These data are not available centrally.

Research and Development

Mr. Warren: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total of the reduction in his Department's expenditure on research and development achieved by taking advantage of the additionality principle when grants have been awarded to United Kingdom universities by the European Economic Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: None. The European Community's requirements in respect of additionality arise in relation to the structural funds rather than to research and development, and the principle applies to the setting of levels of expenditure by public bodies, including Government Departments, rather than to universities which are private sector bodies.

EMPLOYMENT

National Insurance Credits

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have been disallowed national insurance credits for not being available or not actively seeking work in each quarter since January 1987; how many have appealed against those disallowances and with what result; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Lady.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the percentage change in employment in manufacturing industry for each region of the United Kingdom from 1979 to the latest figures available.

Mr. Nicholls: The latest employment estimates are for December 1989. The information is as follows:

Employees in manufacturing in the United Kingdom
Percentage changes June 1979 to December 1989, unadjusted

	Percentage
South East including London	−30
East Anglia	−14
South West	−14
West Midlands	−32
East Midlands	−18
Yorkshire and Humberside	−31
North West	−29
North	−29
Wales	−21
Scotland	−30
Great Britain	−27
Northern Ireland	−29
United Kingdom	−27

Labour Statistics

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the percentage change in the north-west of employment in *(a)* the service sector, *(b)* self-employment and *(c)* manufacturing industry between 1979 and 1990.

Mr. Nicholls: Latest employment estimates are for December 1989. In the north-west region, between June 1979 and December 1989, employment in the service sector rose by 10 per cent., self-employment rose by 50 per cent. and employment in manufacturing industries fell by 29 per cent.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table showing a ward-by-ward breakdown of the numbers of unemployed in the constituencies of *(a)* Burnley and *(b)* Pendle for the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: The following table shows a ward-by-ward breakdown of unemployment in the constituencies Burnley and Pendle as at May 1990, the latest available date. The figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Ward Unemployment—May 1990

Ward	*Total*
Burnley	
Barclay	232
Briercliffe	52
Brunshaw	109
Burnley Wood	172
Calder	366
Cliviger	30
Coal Clough	169
Daneshouse	301
Deerplay	12
Fulledge	120
Gawthorpe	120
Hapton	59
Heasandford	130
Lanehead	101
Lowerhouse	83
Park	117
Queensgate	88
Rosehill	114
Simonstone Hill	12
Trinity	185
Whittlefield	119
Worsthorne	20
Pendle	
Barrowford	51
Boulsworth	42
Bradley	193
Brierfield	143
Clover Hill	68
Coates	91
Craven	55
Earby	68
Fence	18
Foulridge	10
Horsfield	101
Marsden	98
Pendleside	14
Reedley	55
Southfield	104
Vivary Bridge	185
Walverden	84
Waterside	132
Whitefield	172

Mr. Oppenheim: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently in work in *(a)* the east midlands and *(b)* Derbyshire; and how many people were in work in these areas in 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: Information relating to counties is available only from censuses of employment. The latest data relate to September 1987 and the earliest comparable to September 1981.

The available estimates are as follows:

(a) EAST MIDLANDS
Civil work force in employment
December 1979 1,687,000
December 1989 1,850,000

(b) DERBYSHIRE
Employees in employment
September 1981 335,000
September 1987 343,000

Employment Protection

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to seek to change the law so that women with less than two years' service have the same protection against dismissal for pregnancy as women with a minimum of two years' full-time service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: We have no plans to reduce the qualifying periods of service for unfair dismissal on grounds connected with pregnancy. To do so would add to the burdens of employers and thereby threaten employment opportunities.

Wages Councils

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what research he has commissioned into the effectiveness of the wages councils.

Mr. Nicholls: The councils are empowered to set minimum rates of pay in certain industries. The extent of compliance with these rates is regularly assessed by reference to information collected by wages inspectors. This information shows that compliance with wages council orders is running at a very high level.

Local Offices

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his answer of 13 June, what period is given to any hon. Member who is informed of the possible closure of a local part-time employment office to make representations regarding the proposal; by what mechanism such representations are considered; and whether the chief executive of the Employment Services Agency requires ministerial approval for a closure decision.

Mr. Eggar: It is not the practice to undertake a consultation process as part of considering the closure of a part-time local employment service office.

Any plans that the employment service has to close a full-time local office which involves the withdrawal of its services from a local community are subject to a consultation process in which the views of the appropriate hon. Members, local authorities, civil service trade unions and any other interests are sought and taken into account.

I refer the hon. Member again to section 6 of the agency framework document which sets out the terms under which the chief executive has the authority to manage the employment service office estate.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many part-time benefit signing offices were operative in 1985; and what is the most recent figure available, giving the figures on a regional basis.

Mr. Eggar: The employment service became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Member.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he intends to introduce legislation for a minimum wage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to do so. A national minimum wage would raise employers' costs and destroy jobs.

Youth Training

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make a statement on the relationship between youth training allowances and the community charge following the meeting between the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Hertfordshire, West on 6 June.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* My right hon. and learned Friend has received a number of representations about the relationship between liability to pay a proportion of the community charge and the minimum level of training allowance to young people aged 18 years or over who are on youth training. These representations have been referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who is reviewing the operation of the community charge to see if there are any anomalies which need to be addressed.

TVEI

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list, by local education authority, the amount of money made available or planned for the technical and vocational education initiative in 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Mr. Eggar *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* Below is a table showing by LEA the budgets available or planned for TVEI extension in 1989-90 and 1990-91.

The additional information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Extension budgets 1989-90

	£
Barking	233,438
Barnet	377,91
Bexley	223,125
Bromley	499,979
Croydon	675,951
Ealing	607,368
Enfield	826,943
Harrow	78,173
Havering	712,951
Kingston	56,285
Richmond	171,174
London total	4,123,283
Berkshire	1,888,050
Buckinghamshire	1,556,313
Essex	3,963,826
Hampshire	4,089,115
Hertfordshire	2,915,486
Isle of Wight	273,423
Kent	3,549,967
Oxfordshire	1,235,000
Surrey	1,463,191
East Sussex	1,817,018
West Sussex	1,511,363
South East total	24,262,752
Cornwall	1,310,463
Devon	1,145,950
Gloucestershire	1,298,761
Somerset	1,192,075
Wiltshire	1,296,233
South West total	6,243,482
Bedfordshire	1,648,399
Cambridgeshire	1,114,039
Derbyshire	1,017,900
Leicestershire	2,994,284
Norfolk	1,818,302
Northamptonshire	1,677,071
Nottinghamshire	175,382
Suffolk	1,143,000
East Midlands Total	11,588,377
Birmingham	2,551,091
Coventry	1,018,000
Dudley	945,878
Hereford	2,293,950
Sandwell	754,630
Shropshire	851,000
Solihull	629,350
Staffordshire	4,475,150
Walsall	286,500
Warwickshire	1,586,291
West Midlands Total	15,361,840
Bolton	755,425
Bury	479,751
Cheshire	1,289,000
Cumbria	789,146
Manchester	841,964
Rochdale	475,000
Salford	515,500
Stockport	825,125
Tameside	399,991
Wigan	635,700
Wirral	822,910
North West Total	7,829,512
Bradford	1,990,934
Calderdale	510,000
North Yorkshire	1,845,205
Sheffield	271,030
Wakefield	541,400
Doncaster	91,680
Humberside	175,000
Yorkshire and Humberside Total	5,425,249
Cleveland	1,213,434
Durham	1,725,826
Gateshead	285,908
Newcastle	652,571
North Tyneside	504,592
Northumberland	1,106,328
South Tyneside	411,289
Sunderland	1,112,234
Northern Total	7,012,182
Clwyd	1,021,139
Dyfed	392,557
Mid Glamorgan	1,558,613
South Glamorgan	442,653
West Glamorgan	452,940
Gwent	712,013
Gwynedd	931,219
Powys	265,039
Wales Total	5,776,193

	£
Ayr	104,239
Borders	206,025
Central	9,500
Dumbarton	70,800
Dumfries	420,250
Fife	899,376
Glasgow	1,487,372
Lothian	2,883,473
Renfrew	1,188,631
Tayside	82,882
Scotland total	7,352,598
Great Britain total	94,975,448
Extension Budgets 1990-91	
Barking	366,973
Barnet	232,000
Bexley	341,685
Bromley	683,274
Croydon	732,384
Ealing	750,794
Enfield	826,620
Harrow	216,000
Havering	791,663
Hillingdon	230,000
Kingston	215,026
Merton	97,000
Newham	224,000
Redbridge	165,000
Richmond	298,905
Sutton (Development funding 1990-91, only)	150,000
London total	6,171,324
Berkshire	1,908,986
Buckinghamshire	1,892,778
Essex	4,992,371
Hampshire	4,274,138
Hertfordshire	2,724,450
Isle of Wight	323,289
Kent	4,712,424
Oxfordshire	1,340,700
Surrey	2,234,785
East Sussex	1,524,934
West Sussex	1,772,089
South East total	27,700,994
Avon	910,000
Cornwall	1,343,225
Devon	2,458,501
Dorset	325,000
Gloucester	1,395,947
Somerset	1,392,574
Wiltshire	1,647,498
South West Total	9,472,745
Bedfordshire	1,449,300
Cambridgeshire	1,946,225
Derbyshire	1,738,300
Leicestershire	2,853,760
Lincolnshire	433,000
Norfolk	2,123,000
Northamptonshire	1,715,939
Nottinghamshire	418,000
Suffolk	1,932,125
East Midlands/Eastern Total	14,609,649
Birmingham	4,023,579
Coventry	917,195
Dudley	942,583
Herefordshire	2,293,861
Sandwell	955,280
Shropshire	1,554,925
Solihull	694,027
Staffordshire	4,800,305
Walsall	821,996
Warwickshire	1,653,847
West Midlands Total	18,657,598

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Slaughterhouses

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the relative advantages which follow from the practice of requiring inspection of slaughterhouses by prior arrangement with the proprietor as against unannounced inspections; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Local authorities (district councils) are responsible for the enforcement of hygiene and welfare legislation in slaughterhouses. Visits made by officers of the state veterinary service are for the purpose of providing advice to the local authority and are made in the company of local authority personnel. It is usual for visits to be arranged with the plant concerned as their purpose is served best if representatives of plant management are present. Unannounced visits may be made, however, in response to reports of problems at a plant.

Countryside Premium Scheme

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many landowners have entered the agricultural set-aside scheme; and how many are receiving additional payments under the countryside premium scheme.

Mr. Maclean: Almost 3,100 farmers in the United Kingdom have entered the set-aside scheme. Of these, 115 have been accepted into the premium scheme run by the Countryside Commission in the seven eastern counties of England.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to which areas he has considered extending the countryside premium scheme beyond the existing pilot area in the east of England to other parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I have been asked to reply.

The countryside premium scheme was launched by the Countryside Commission in June 1989 and initially covers seven counties in eastern England. Arrangements are in hand for monitoring the effectiveness of the scheme. It is too early yet to consider extending the scheme to other areas in England. Decisions on application of the scheme in other areas of the United Kingdom rest with the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what provisions exist to help ensure that land entered into the set-aside scheme, but not attracting countryside premium payments, is managed to a satisfactory standard of husbandry.

Mr. Maclean: On land set aside to fallow under the scheme, a green cover crop must be established and maintained throughout the set-aside period, and must be cut at least once a year. Though there is a general prohibition on the use of pesticides, certain herbicides may be used with the permission of Agriculture Departments to cope with difficult weeds. The use of fertilisers is not permitted except in specific circumstances, and the land may not be used as a dumping ground for any kind of organic or inorganic material. We are considering in the light of the operation of the scheme so far whether the management requirements are adequate.

Crabs

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the numbers of crabs identified as showing levels of toxic contamination from the current shellfish closure area on the north-east coast; and if he will give the levels registered and the origins of the crabs concerned.

Mr. Maclean: Of the 190 crab samples from the north-east coast tested up until 8 June, 16 showed levels of paralytic shellfish poison toxin. These are as follows:

Units of toxin per 100g in brown meat (digestive gland) of crabs

Location	*Units of toxin*
Craster, Alnwick	243
Eyemouth	206
Eyemouth	222
Anstruther	317
Inshore Anstruther	176
Inshore Anstruther	171
Seahouses	257
North East Fife coast	197
Staithes Wyke	244
Staithes Wyke	210
Staithes Wyke	255
Whitley Bay	260
Off Beadnell Bay	265
Off Beadnell Bay	260
Hartlepool (1 mile)	198
Hartlepool (1 mile)	229

In addition, trace levels of toxin were found in a further eight of the 190 samples tested.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures are in force to ensure that bovine spongiform encephalopathy-infected material is not fed to mink and foxes.

Mr. Maclean: There have been no recorded cases of spongiform encephalopathies in foxes or, in this country, of mink. All carcases of known or suspected cases of BSE are burned or buried.

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mr. Maclean: The management consultancies, excluding computer consultants, engaged by my Department since 1984-85 are listed in the table. The annual costs have been aggregated so as to preserve commercial confidentiality.

Financial year	*Aggregated Annual cost (£)*	*Management consultancies*	*Subject*
1984-85	27,110	(i) Binder Hamlyn	Dairy Crest Foods
		(ii) Coopers and Lybrand	Dairy Crest Foods
		(iii) Arthur Young McClelland Moores and Co.	Financial management
		(iv) Dr. Goodwin	ADAS work-time database
		(v) Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co.	Decentralised budgetary control
1985-86	174,724	(i) Dr. Goodwin	Work-time database: continuation of above
		(ii) Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co.	Decentralised budgetary control: continuation of above
		(iii) Touche Ross	Dairy Crest Foods
		(iv) Touche Ross	Milk quotas
		(v) B. R. Parkinson	ADAS marketing plan
		(vi) R. B. L. Ltd.	ADAS marketing plan
		(vii) Black Rod Ltd.	ADAS marketing plan
1986-87	135,279	(i) Dr. Goodwin	Work-time database: continuation of above
		(ii) Touche Ross	Milk quotas: continuation of above
		(iii) Special Research Unit	ADAS marketing plan
		(iv) Coopers and Lybrand	Reorganisation of MAFF's regional structure
1987-88	44,015	(i) Touche Ross	Dairy Crest Foods: continuation of above
		(ii) Mr. P. W. Cunliffe	Review of animal medicines licensing
1989-90	162,114	(i) Touche Ross	Dairy Crest Foods: continuation of above
			Impact of Single Market on agricultural R and D priorities
		(ii) Agro-Economic Services Ltd.	Fees to local veterinary inspectors
		(iii) Deloitte, Haskin and Sells	Relocation of Ministry work
		(iv) Deloitte, Haskin and Sells	
1989-90	143,150	(i) Touche Ross	Dairy Crest Foods: continuation of above
		(ii) Deloitte, Haskin and Sells	Fees to local veterinary inspectors: continuation of above
		(iii) Deloitte, Haskin and Sells	Relocation of Ministry work: continuation of above
			Impact of Single Market on agricultural R and D priorities: continuation of above
		(iv) Agro-Economic Services Ltd.	

Financial year	Aggregated Annual cost (£)	Management consultancies	Subject
		(v) Deloitte, Haskin and Sells	Review of veterinary manpower needs in the United Kingdom
1990-91	125,198 (Estimate)	(i) Touche Ross	Dairy Crest Foods: continuation of above
		(ii) Deloitte, Haskin and Sells	Relocation of Ministry work: continuation of above
		(iii) Mr. R. S. Crespi	Intellectual Property Rights and their exploitation
		(iv) Prof. Righelato (Ashbourne Biosciences)	LINK programme on agro-food quality
		(v) K. P. M. G. Peat Marwick McLintock	Training needs analysis

The outcome of such studies is not recorded centrally. This information and data for earlier years can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Earth-banked Slurry Compounds

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will make a statement outlining the effect of BS 5502 on the future use of earth-banked slurry compounds;

(2) whether he has any plans to prohibit the use of earth-banked slurry compounds.

Mr. Curry: The Government have no plans to prohibit the use of earth-banked slurry compounds. The proposals for regulations issued by the Department of the Environment would set minimum constructional standards for new earth-banked compounds and other effluent containment facilities (which the National Rivers Authority could, by notice, extend to include existing facilities where there is a significant risk of pollution). These standards would be based on BS5502 which is a British standard code of practice for the design of buildings and structures for agriculture including earth-banked compounds. The effect of the proposed regulations should be that the facilities are designed and constructed to a standard which minimises the risk of pollution.

EC Surplus Food

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will list the names of the organisations in the Normanton constituency which are involved with the distribution of European Community surplus food;

(2) what organisations are involved with the distribution of European Community surplus food in the area of the Wakefield metropolitan district council.

Mr. Curry: More than 500 applications to participate in the 1990 EC surplus food scheme have been received from charitable and other non-profit-making organisations throughout the United Kingdom. These applications are currently being considered and I will make a statement once a decision has been reached.

Ewe Premium

Mr. Robert Hicks: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he hopes to pay the ewe premium; and if he will explain the reasons for the delay in making this payment to farmers.

Mr. Curry: We cannot make payments of sheep annual premium until the rates are published in the *Official Journal* of the European Communities. The final rate of premium in respect of the 1989 scheme was published on 19 May 1990 and we have paid over 98 per cent. of claims received. The small number of outstanding cases are those for which our administrative checks have not been completed.

Suckler Cows

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any plans to raise the premium on suckler cows.

Mr. Curry: Ministers are currently considering the rate of suckler cow premium which should apply in the 1990-91 scheme year and will make an announcement in due course.

Flood Relief Scheme, Maidenhead

Dr. Glyn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress has been made in implementing the flood relief scheme for Maidenhead.

Mr. Curry: The proposed scheme is planned to commence in mid-1992, although consideration is being given to ways of bringing this date forward. The National Rivers Authority (NRA) Thames region is currently consulting interested parties with the aim of reaching agreement prior to seeking planning approval early in 1991. This timetable has been agreed with the planning authorities. Detailed design of the scheme will be completed once planning consent has been obtained. The NRA also proposes to apply for grant from the Department towards the costs.

Salmonella

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will obtain a copy of the report by the Institute of Economic Affairs, "Chickengate—an independent analysis of the salmonella in eggs scare"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: My hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) has kindly sent me a copy of the book "Chickengate" and I have noted its contents. The Government's policy in relation to salmonella in eggs and poultry has been set out in evidence provided to the Agriculture Select Committee.

Pigs

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by county, for each week, the number of pigs slaughtered as a result of contaminated feed since the present incident was first discovered.

Mr. Maclean: This information on a week-by-week basis is not readily available.

North-east Drift Net Fishery

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has yet received the report of the inquiry into the north-east drift net fishery; and when he now expects to publish this report.

Mr. Curry: I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply that I gave him on 26 April at col. *317*.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what specific research was considered by the Southwood committee into the transmissibility of BSE to household pets through pet food;

(2) what specific research further to that considered by the Southwood committee into the transmissibility of BSE to household pets through pet food *(a)* has been undertaken, *(b)* was in progress and *(c)* was under consideration by his Department (i) before the first suspected case of BSE-related disease in a cat and (ii) since.

Mr. Maclean: No specific research into the transmissibility of BSE to household pets through pet food was considered by the Southwood committee. No such research has been undertaken or is planned by my Department. Investigations are being carried out into the cause of the recent cases in cats. This includes the cats' breeding and feeding history. There is no evidence at present that the source of the recent cases of spongiform encephalopathy in cats was pet food or that the disease is related to BSE.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 19 June 1990

TRANSPORT

M1/M6 Junction

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to publish the consultants' reports on the proposal to add an extra lane in each direction to the M1 immediately north of its junction with the M6.

Mr. Atkins: The study I announced last December was of existing conditions and the feasibility, in general terms, of a range of widening options.

The next step will be the appointment of consultants to prepare and design a scheme for particular lengths of the motorways to be widened.

Bids have been invited for a design commission covering the section referred to by my hon. Friend. I hope that that will enable us to publish firm proposals during the summer of 1991.

Environmental Damage

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies have been published in each year since 1980 by his Department identifying means of *(a)* transport for passengers and *(b)* manufactured goods from Britain to Europe by the least environmentally damaging means; and what specific criteria have been used in order to make such assessment.

Mr. Atkins: We have not published any specific studies on the movement of people or goods from Britain to Europe by the least environmentally damaging means. However, a number of Government publications include information on the environmental aspects of different modes of travel.

Bus Companies (Subsidies)

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the present annual cost to public funds of subsidies to bus companies.

Mr. Freeman: In 1988-89 fuel duty rebate of £157 million was paid to operators of local bus services, and rural bus grant of £13 million to operators of rural services (this grant has now been phased out). In addition, support for London bus services and local authority support of individual local services outside London came to £345 million.

Automobile Fire Risks

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he is able to make any assessment of the fire risk in automobiles and as to whether lead-free petrol is safer or less safe in the event of such incidents.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The difference in fire risk between leaded and unleaded petrol is negligible. The performance of certain fire-fighting foams can be affected by the amount of alcohol used in either type of fuel. Petrol blended in the United Kingdom does not contain any added alcohols. Small quantities of imported petrol may contain alcohol up to the levels permitted in British standards. They pose no problems for the current generation of fire-fighting foams.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the road research laboratory has undertaken research into the possible relationship between different forms of fuel, including lead-free petrol, and post-accident fires; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The transport and road research laboratory's work on car fires has concentrated on their immediate causes, such as electrical systems. There is no evidence to suggest that the severity of these fires is dependent on whether the fuel is leaded or unleaded.

British Rail (Investment)

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether he will take steps to ensure that British Rail assess all new investment schemes for external benefits which would attract funding by Government grant;

(2) whether any of the approved investment by British Rail will be met by Government grant in recognition of benefits to the users of improved services.

Mr. Freeman: InterCity no longer receives subsidy from the taxpayer. Its investment programme and that for channel tunnel services will be determined by normal commercial criteria.

As far as provincial and Network SouthEast are concerned, there is no case for subsidy for investment for which passengers are willing to pay and which meets the normal financial criteria. However, the new objectives for British Rail set out in my right hon. Friend's letter of 19 December to the chairman make it clear that where investment to increase the capacity of the system cannot meet the normal financial criteria, a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out so that a decision can be taken on whether capital grants would be justified on wider social and economic grounds, such as relief of road congestion. The majority of the provincial sector's investment is like for like renewal which is not required to earn any return and is effectively met from revenue grant.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he will take to ensure that, in the period after the channel tunnel is opened and before a high speed rail link is constructed, there is no reduction of local rail services in south London owing to inadequate track capacity.

Mr. Freeman: This is an operational matter for British Rail. British Rail gave an undertaking to Parliament during the passage of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 that existing domestic rail services would not be curtailed in consequence of the need to find capacity for through channel tunnel services. I understand that British Rail stands by its undertaking.

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether, in the construction of the road links to

the channel tunnel, an assessment has been included for the cost of increased congestion and accidents resulting from greater volumes of traffic on other roads.

Mr. Atkins: The assessment of all trunk road schemes includes an appraisal which takes account of costs associated with delays—that is congestion, accidents and changes in vehicle operating costs, for the road in question and the surrounding network.

Assessments have been made of the extra traffic expected to arise from the opening of the channel tunnel. This extra traffic is expected to be quite small when compared with the forecast growth of traffic generally. For appropriate schemes, such as those on the M20, relevant channel-related traffic has been added to predictions of general traffic growth.

Disabled People (Railway Station Access)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will discuss with British Rail the provision of station access for disabled people.

Mr. Freeman: The provision of facilities for disabled people at stations is the responsibility of British Rail. They pursue an active policy of making rail travel as accessible as possible to all who wish to use it. I shall be meeting the board's adviser on disability on 26 June.

Traffic Area

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has reached any decisions regarding the future of the Traffic Area organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Extensive consultations have been held with interested parties about the future number and pattern of Traffic Area offices and Traffic Area boundaries.

In view of the reducing workload for the organisation, I have decided that the Traffic Area offices in London, Nottingham and Newcastle should be closed, and that the following changes should be made to the present Traffic Area boundaries:

The North Eastern Traffic Area will be extended to include Nottinghamshire and will be administered from the existing Traffic Area office in Leeds.

The North Western Traffic Area will be extended to include the whole of Derbyshire and will be administered from the existing Traffic Area office in Manchester.

The Eastern Traffic Area will lose Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and will be extended to include Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and the whole of Essex. It will be administered from the existing Traffic Area office in Cambridge.

The Western Traffic Area will be extended to include Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and will be administered from the existing Traffic Area office in Bristol.

The remainder of the present South Eastern Traffic Area will be combined with the remainder of the Metropolitan Traffic Area to form a new Traffic Area consisting of London, Surrey, Kent and Sussex. The new area will be administered from the existing Traffic Area office in Eastbourne.

There will be no changes to the West Midlands, South Wales or Scottish Traffic Areas and offices.

These changes will yield worthwhile savings and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation as a whole.

I have been particularly concerned to create opportunities for staff in the offices being closed. I have agreed that staff in the Traffic Area offices at Newcastle and Nottingham will be given the opportunity, so far as practicable, to transfer to the new posts being created in those cities by the Driving Standards Agency.

The Department will consult those concerned about the implementation of these changes and the transitional arrangements. We will aim to complete the bulk of the work by the middle of 1991.

As required under sections 3(2) and (4) of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 my right hon. Friend will in due course lay an order before the House setting out the Traffic Area boundary changes.

A1/M1

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when he now expects that each stage of the A1/M1 road in Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire will be opened;

(2) when he expects to let the contract for each of the remaining stages of the A1/M1 road in Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire.

Mr. Atkins: The following is the information requested. Start of work on contracts 2, 3, 5(N), 8 and 9 is dependent upon the outcome of outstanding statutory procedures.

	Actual Start of works	*Programmed Start of works*	*Programmed completion*
Contract 1: Catthorpe Interchange:	February 1990	—	Summer 1990
Contract 2: Catthrope to Rothwell:	—	Spring/Summer 1991	Spring/Summer 1993
Contract 3: Catthorpe to Rothwell:	—	Spring/Summer 1991	Spring/Summer 1993
Contract 4: Rothwell to Kettering:	March 1990	—	June 1991
Contract 5(N): Kettering Northern Bypass:	—	Summer 1991	Winter 1992/3
Contract 5(S): Kettering Southern Bypass:	Febraury 1990	—	February 1992
Contract 6: Kettering to Thrapston:	May 1989	—	May 1991
Contract 7: Thrapston to Brampton:	November 1989	—	July 1991
Contract 8: Thrapston to Brampton:	—	Spring 1991	Autumn 1992
Contract 9: Thrapston to Brampton:	—	Summer 1991	Summer 1993
Contract 10: Advance works for Railway Bridge on Kettering Northern Bypass:	April 1990	—	November 1991

ENVIRONMENT

Housing Action Trusts

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much expenditure was envisaged under the Government's expenditure plans in each of the years from 1988-89 to 1992-93 on housing action trusts; how much expenditure has been incurred to date; and what are the latest estimates of likely expenditure over the current and next two financial years on housing action trusts.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Details of planned expenditure were given in the 1988 public expenditure White Paper (Cm 288-11). These were revised in the 1990 public expenditure White Paper (Cm 1008) in the light of the Housing Act 1988 requirement for tenants to be balloted. No expenditure has been incurred so far.

Radioactivity (United Kingdom Coast)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from Greenpeace concerning radioactivity around the United Kingdom coast.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has received no such representations from Greenpeace this year.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will make an order under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 confirming the charge caps on those local authorities which neither accepted the caps he proposed nor put forward alternative amounts within the statutory period of 28 days of their being designated for capping.

Mr. Chris Patten: I cannot make an order under section 106 of the 1988 Act unless a draft of it has been laid before and approved by resolution of the House of Commons. I have today laid before the House a draft section 106 order confirming the caps of the three authorities which did not respond to the caps which I proposed. As required by the statute, the amount of the cap is the same as that which I proposed for each of the authorities concerned. The authorities and the caps are as follows:

	£	*Implied reduction in budget* £ *million*	£ *per adult*
Basildon	23,700,000	4·2	35
Bristol	56,600,000	7·6	26
Doncaster	178,500,000	11·6	53

This will be welcomed by the charge payers concerned.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from local authorities and other interested bodies regarding *(a)* the new requirement for debt payments from capital receipts and *(b)* advanced leasing arrangements.

Mr. Chope: Since publication in July 1988 of the Government's proposals for a new system of local authority capital finance my Department has received numerous representations from local authorities and other interested bodies on many aspects of the new system. No detailed analysis is available of all the points raised.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by local authority, the cost of collecting the community charge per individual.

Mr. Chope: I have today arranged for the available information on budgeted costs for 1990-91, as shown on returns made by local authorities, to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the overall increase in rateable values in the 1990 rating valuation list as compared with the rateable values previously in use for the categories of *(a)* shops, *(b)* factories, *(c)* hotels and boarding houses, *(d)* offices and *(e)* mines and (i) in total for England and (ii) by economic regions.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Revaluation factors indicating the increase in rateable values shown in the lists deposited with local authorities on 20 December 1989 for the property types requested are given in the table.

Region	*Property type* *Shops*	*Factories*	*Hotels and boarding houses*	*Offices*	*Mines*
Northern	8·89	5·31	12·75	6·69	11·16
Yorkshire and Humberside	9·95	6·54	13·18	7·41	22·28
East Midlands	8·73	5·78	14·38	6·89	15·65
East Anglia	10·46	6·94	12·89	8·53	—
Inner London	9·62	7·17	12·95	6·96	—
Outer London	9·41	6·32	11·99	7·24	—
Rest of South East	10·64	7·09	14·44	10·23	10·89
South West	11·10	7·18	10·90	9·80	5·96
West Midlands	7·22	4·53	12·91	6·47	18·22
North West	8·36	5·17	12·31	6·61	14·59
England	9·52	6·10	12·85	7·47	16·81

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the overall increase or decrease in the total rates paid by non-domestic rate payers in each local authority in England, by authority, between 1989-90 and 1990-91 *(a)* including the effects of transitional arrangements and *(b)* excluding the effects of transitional arrangements.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Estimates of the information requested by my hon. Friend, based on the

rateable values shown in the lists deposited with local authorities on 20 December, have been placed in the Library today.

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table showing the relationship of community charge to rates in both gross and net terms in each band of equivalent net income in *(a)* pounds per week and *(b)* as a proportion of net income in each band of equivalent income in 1990-91.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* The table provides the information requested on the same basis as the figures placed in the Library on 15 February 1990. Equivalent income has been calculated using the McClements scale factors.

Ranges of 1989-90 equivalent net household income (£ per week)

	Under 75	*75-100*	*100-150*	*150-200*	*200-250*	*250-300*	*300-350*	*350-400*	*400-500*	*500+*	*All Households*
Domestic Rates											
Gross	7·45	7·96	8·16	9·07	9·71	10·40	10·67	11·57	12·13	14·13	9·47
Net	2·46	3·01	5·59	8·67	9·56	10·34	10·67	11·54	12·12	14·13	7·99
As a percentage of net income in each range											
Gross per cent.	9·8	9·3	6·8	4·3	3·6	3·2	2·9	2·8	2·7	2·0	4·0
Net per cent.	3·2	3·5	4·7	4·1	3·6	3·2	2·9	2·8	2·7	2·0	3·3
Community Charge											
Gross	8·83	8·15	8·46	10·31	10·81	11·04	10·62	10·40	10·01	9·98	9·67
Net	2·34	2·76	5·58	9·15	10·08	10·46	10·18	10·06	9·76	9·72	7·71
As a percentage of net income in each range											
Gross per cent.	10·9	8·9	6·5	4·5	3·7	3·1	2·7	2·3	2·0	1·3	3·7
Net per cent.	2·9	3·0	4·3	4·0	3·4	3·0	2·6	2·3	2·0	1·3	3·0

Notes:
1. Rates are 1989-90 actuals.
2. Community charges are 1990-91 settlement assumed charges.
3. Equivalent net household income is calculated using the McClements scale.

Double-Glazing

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received concerning proposals to make double-glazing a requirement in the planning of all new houses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Double-glazing is one of the thermal insulation measures which can be used to satisfy the requirements relating to the conservation of fuel and power in the amended Building Regulations which came into force on 1 April 1990. My Department receives many representations concerning the conservation of energy in new houses and some of these call for the installation of double glazing to be made a mandatory requirement under the Building Regulations. But we consider that the designer and builder should be given the flexibility to choose the most appropriate insulation to suit the particular circumstances.

Right to Buy

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any proposals to review the right-to-buy provisions of the Housing Act 1980; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The right-to-buy legislation is kept under constant review; there have been a number of changes to it since its introduction in 1980.

Leeds Development Corporation

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out in 1990 prices the level of funding for the Leeds Development Corporation for 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Moynihan: The actual amount of grant in aid provided to Leeds development corporation was £2·743 million in 1988-89 and £8·75 million in 1989-90. £14 million is available in 1990-91.

Langland Bay

Mr. Couchman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make available the results of the epidemiological study carried out in 1989 at Langland bay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Today I have placed in the Library copies of a comprehensive report prepared by the Water Research Centre on the findings of studies to test methodologies for assessing the risks of contracting illnesses from sea bathing. The report is based on research carried out at Langland bay last summer with the assistance of Swansea district council.

Two types of study were carried out. The first study involved interviewing bathers who were on the beach of their own volition, and obtaining information of any perceived symptoms by means of a questionnaire and, subsequently, by telephone.

The second study used two groups of healthy volunteers. One group was asked to swim in water meeting EC standards while the other group did not swim. The volunteers were examined medically both before and after the day at the beach. Ethical clearance was obtained for this work which is the first of its kind to examine participants medically so as to provide an objective assessment of symptoms.

Water quality during the studies was good and well within European standards. As found in previous surveys higher proportions of bathers reported ear and throat symptoms than non-bathers but unexpectedly fewer

bathers reported gastro-enteritis than non-bathers. No significant association was found between reported symptoms and clinical diagnosis.

The studies demonstrate that both approaches with minor modification appear capable of yielding statistically reliable conclusions if carried out at a larger scale.

The contract with the Water Research Centre will be extended to provide for further studies in the coming summer.

Insulation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of *(a)* dwellings completed under the energy conservation programme and *(b)* grants paid under the homes insulation scheme in (i) the London borough of Camden and (ii) the London borough of Islington for each year from 1979, including the current year so far.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* Figures for the number of grants paid under the homes insulation scheme and the number of local authority dwellings benefitting from works under the energy conservation programme are published in "Local Housing Statistics" (Nos. 66, 70, 74, 78, 82, 87 and 90) for the years 1979 to 1988. In 1989 the London borough of Camden reported two grants paid and Islington reported nil.

Homelessness

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current rate of growth of homelessness in the United Kingdom per annum; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* Between 1988 and 1989 the estimated number of households accepted by housing authorities under homelessness legislation increased by about 8 per cent. It should be stressed that there are people for whom accommodation has been found.

City Grants

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total allocation for the current financial year of money for city grants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The total resources available for city grant in 1990-91 are £49 million, including expenditure on previously approved urban development grant and urban regeneration grant schemes. Payments made in any year relate mainly to projects approved in previous years.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many houses, and of what type and anticipated rents, he has requested to be incorporated into the West End Development scheme application for city grant; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* It is not our practice, for reasons of commercial confidentiality, to reveal details of developers' proposals.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what stage has been reached in the consideration of the application for city grant by 3Ds Ltd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* 3Ds Ltd has submitted details of its proposals for the West End development scheme and discussions continue with the Department on what further information may be needed.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the largest grant so far made of city grant; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The largest city grant approved so far is £6·3 million for a project at St. Helens to reclaim a derelict and contaminated 50 acre site.

M2 Widening

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the proposed widening of the M2 motorway in Rochester, Kent; and what was his response.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* None.

Hawkshurst Moor (Coal Mine)

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received the inspector's report on the planning inquiry on British Coal's Hawkshurst moor proposal for a new coal mine in Berkswell near Coventry.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Yes. The report has recently been received and I shall announce a decision in due course.

County Hall, London

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to make an announcement on the future of the County hall, London SE1.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 21 May *Official Report*, Volume 173, column *28*.

Football (Arrests)

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the 92 Football League clubs together with the total season's attendance for football league matches, total number of arrests made at such matches and the number of arrests as a percentage of the total attendance, for the seasons 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90;

(2) if he will publish a table showing the total attendance at Football League matches in England and Wales, the total number of arrests at such matches, and the number of arrests as a percentage of the total attendance, accurate to four decimal places, for the seasons 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I have been asked to reply and will do so shortly, when figures for the 1989-90 season become available from the Association of Chief Police Officers.

NATIONAL FINANCE

VAT

Mr. Haselhurst: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of value added tax refund claims under Customs and Excise notice No. 719, "Refund of VAT to Self Builders", processed during the fiscal year 1989-90.

Mr. Ryder: The total number of claims processed under this relief during the fiscal year 1989-90 was 9,817.

Mr. Oppenheim: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new businesses registered for value added tax in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* On the basis of Customs and Excise data on registrations, the number of businesses registered for value added tax in the 12 months ended 31 March 1990 was 266,084.

European Investment Bank

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply of 11 June, *Official Report*, column *21*, if he will publish a table showing the number of loans made by the European investment bank to companies and to other bodies, respectively, in the United Kingdom in each of the past five years; and if he will further indicate how many of these loans, in each year, were guaranteed by Her Majesty's Government and by other bodies, respectively.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* A table listing this information follows:

Table: Number of EIB loans, per year since 1985, to companies and other bodies, with breakdown by Her Majesty's Government or other guarantee.

	Number of loans				
	1985	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
Companies					
with Her Majesty's Government guarantee	3	5	3	3	0
with other form of guarantee	10	16	6	23	47
Sub-total	13	21	9	26	47
Other bodies					
with Her Majesty's Government guarantee	8	16	16	1	0
with other form of guarantee	27	25	34	1	0
Sub-total	35	41	50	2	0
Total number of loans	48	62	59	28	47

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will discuss with the Governments of France and West Germany the means of continuing taxonomic support for teams working in Malaysia and Cameroon in the light of staff reductions at the natural history museum;

(2) what assessment he has made of the implications of reductions in the Heteroptera section of the natural history museum for work sponsored by his Department *(a)* in Surinam on shield-bugs as transmitters of agricultural diseases and *(b)* coccid research and its agricultural implications for United Kingdom supported agricultural development programmes.

Mrs. Chalker: I am investigating the possible implications for our programmes of the planned staff reductions at the natural history museum and will give a full reply as soon as I have the information.

ENERGY

Nuclear Power Stations (Decommissioning)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what decommissioning cost the Government have approved for British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.'s present plant; and if he will give a breakdown of this expenditure as between the plants at Sellafield, Springfields and Capenhurst.

Mr. Baldry: Estimates of the cost of decommissioning British Nuclear Fuels plc's plant are matters for the company.

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.'s investment in the next 10 years is planned to be financed by debt; and whether this debt will be guaranteed by the Government.

Mr. Baldry: I understand from British Nuclear Fuels plc that it is envisaged that between 5 per cent. and 10 per cent. of the company's currently projected capital investment programme over the next 10 years will be financed by additional borrowing. The majority of these loans are likely to be supported by Government guarantee.

THORP

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the latest expected cost of the THORP reprocessing plant at Sellafield in 1989-90 prices; and whether this capital sum is inclusive of the costs of waste effluent discharge plant, and any other ancillary constructions that arise as a consequence of building the THORP plant;

(2) what is the capital cost of planned investment in reprocessing and waste management at Sellafield other than that which is required for the THORP plant.

Mr. Baldry: The expected capital cost of the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield is some £1·8 billion making due allowance for future inflation. This capital cost includes the receipt and storage facility and an appropriate share of the facilities for converting highly active wastes into vitrified form. The other facilities used in association with THORP include storage ponds that have already been constructed, and facilities for the treatment of less active wastes and effluents. The capital costs of these supporting facilities are estimated at some £0·9 billion.

Ministerial Visit

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy during his visit to North America this month, what proportion of his time he intends to devote to the promotion of the nuclear and oil industries, and what proportion of time to the energy conservation and renewable fuels industries.

Mr. Wakeham: I visited Canada and the United States from 5 June to 13 June. My visit to Canada was mainly to support the United Kingdom offshore oil and gas industry in its attempts to win business in Atlantic Canada, particularly offshore Newfoundland. I met senior members of the provincial government and oil industry representatives. In Washington, my talks were concerned primarily with energy policy in the context of climate change; that concerns all our energy-related industries. I signed a memorandum of understanding on collaboration in energy research and development, covering non-nuclear energy R and D, with Admiral Watkins, United States Secretary for Energy. While in Washington I opened the offices of BNFL Inc.—the United States subsidiary of British Nuclear Fuels plc.

Electricity Prices, South-West

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the increase in the price of electricity supplied to domestic householders by the South Western electricity board in each of the last five years.

Mr. Baldry: This is a matter for South Western Electricity.

Diatoms

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what research his Department has undertaken into the importance of diatoms in maintaining the world's atmosphere, through their production of oxygen.

Mr. Peter Morrison: None.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the effect of the reductions made in the diatom and palaeo-botany sections of the natural history museum on the international deep sea drilling project and research into petroleum and other fossil fuels.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department no longer maintains an interest in the international deep sea drilling project. I do not believe that our interest in the other matters will be affected by the reductions at the natural history museum referred to.

PRIME MINISTER

United Nations

Q10. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to the United Nations.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will visit the United Nations for the general assembly in September.

European Parliament

Q61. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next intends to visit the European Parliament.

The Prime Minister: During the British presidency of the Community in the second half of 1992.

Commercial Fishermen

Q146. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister if Her Majesty's Government have any proposals to provide compensation for commercial fishermen when they are prevented from landing and selling their catches because of health requirements initiated by local authorities or Her Majesty's Government; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. The recent warnings against the consumption of shellfish from the north-east coast of Britain were in response to the threat to public health posed by the natural and temporary phenomenon of algae blooms. Such blooms have been known to occur periodically along this stretch of the coast for many years.

It is in the interests of fishermen that the public is properly protected. Their present and future receipts depend upon public confidence in the quality of British fish products.

Global Warming

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister how many letters she has received in the past four weeks on the dangers of global warming, ozone depletion and associated matters; and if she will make a statement on any further initiative the Government is considering taking with regard to these issues.

The Prime Minister: I have received numerous letters on both these and other environmental issues in the last four weeks. I announced on 25 May 1990 the part that the United Kingdom is ready to play in international action to tackle global warming. At the meeting of the parties to the Montreal protocol in London next week we will urge all countries to join the protocol and press for strengthening of its terms. We will be publishing a White Paper this autumn on the whole range of environmental issues.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister what discussion she has had with President Gorbachev on article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty during her visit to the Soviet Union.

The Prime Minister: The question of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty did not arise during my talks with Mr. Gorbachev, but our discussions included a number of arms control issues such as the talks on conventional forces in Europe (CFE) and the conference on security and co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

North Sea

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Prime Minister what actions have so far been taken by the United Kingdom to develop a programme to end sewage sludge dumping, promised at the North Sea Conference at the Hague on 7 to 8 March 1990.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has asked the water companies concerned to submit to him by the end of the year their detailed plans and programmes of work for phasing out disposal of sludge to sea.

Film Industry

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what proposals she has for the British film industry; and if she will make a statement on her proposals to meet leaders of the film industry.

The Prime Minister: I met leading figures from the film production industry on Friday 15 June to discuss their proposals for taking advantage of the opportunities now facing the industry. The Government agreed to provide £5 million over the next three years to provide pump-priming finance to support European co-production; the Department of Trade and Industry would set up a working party to examine the structure of the industry and how to attract greater private sector finance into film production, and to report back in the autumn; the industry would explore what changes it suggests to the tax regime for film production and report to Treasury Ministers over the next few months; we would continue discussions in Europe on how best to support the film production industry, notably through the media programme; we would study proposals from the industry for a films commission to improve the promotion of British films in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Islington (Official Visit)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what is the involvement of Vallin Pollen International in the arrangements for her official visit to Islington.

The Prime Minister: None for which the Government have responsibility.

German Unification

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the procedures for incorporating a united Germany within the EEC; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I expect this subject to be discussed at the European Council in Dublin on 25 to 26 June.

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what proposals she has to promote *(a)* indentification programmes for scientific and popular use, *(b)* the development and management of the European plant data base and *(c)* the British plant data base and other research based at the natural history museum of relevance to the study of climatic change.

The Prime Minister: These activities flow from the priorities and objectives set out in the natural history museum's corporate plan 1990-95, which was unanimously approved by the museum's trustees in April. The Government increased the museum's grant-in-aid by 16·5 per cent. this year to over £25 million.

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 June.

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 June.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 19 June.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including the Director General of the International Atomic Agency and the Foreign Ministers of Angola, Bangladesh and Somali. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with Mr. Attali, president-elect of the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development who has his headquarters in London.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Film Production

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will provide initial financial support as seed money to enterprises to simulate the growth of transnational film production, training and distribution within Europe.

Mr. Forth: We announced on Friday 15 June that the Government would provide £5 million over three years to provide pump-priming finance to help support European co-productions. We also announced that we would pursue discussions in Europe on how best to support the film production industry, notably through the MEDIA programme. The Economic Community's proposals for this programme include assistance for trans-national training and distribution.

Enterprise Scheme

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies in Lancashire have been helped by the enterprise scheme; and if he will provide a statistical breakdown on the types of help provided.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Assistance to companies in Lancashire under the enterprise initiative since its inception in January 1988 comprises:

Consultancy Initiative
Business Reviews conducted 1,313
Consultancies commissioned 1,288
(of which completed as at 31 May 1990) 419
Regional Initiative
Regional Selective Assistance: 143 projects assisted; grants paid £14·39 million, 2,685 jobs created and 823 jobs safeguarded.
Regional Enterprise Grants (wef 1 April 1988)
For Investment: offers made: 47 (£354,043)
For Innovation: offers made: 6 (£140,815)
Research and Technology
SMART awards: 1988 Round, Stage 1:1
1989 Round, Stage 2:1

Enterprise and Education
The three advisers in Lancashire have contacted 1,226 local employers, resulting in 3,893 offers of work experience for pupils and 716 secondment opportunities for teachers.
Export Initiative
Approximately 1,000 companies are in regular contact with DTI-NW staff providing export assistance. Four hundred and twenty-one company representatives attended 13 export-related seminars.

EC Legislation

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the short title of each of the 86 legislative Acts for which European Community member states must take national implementing measures by 31 December 1989; and what action each state has taken by 1 June in relation to each.

Mr. Redwood: The short titles of the 86 legislative acts for which European Community member states must take national implementing measures by 31 December 1989 are set out in the answer to your question of 9 January 1990, *Official Report* columns *600-8*. Information on the action taken by each member state by the end of June is not available. However, the latest report on the implementation of single market measures is to be found in the European Commission's fifth progress report on completion of the internal market. This lists the measures due for implementation by end February 1990, and sets out the action taken by each member state. I am glad to say that the report shows that the United Kingdom has the best record on implementation, with only nine measures out of 90 remaining unimplemented. I have arranged for a copy of the report to be placed in the Library of the House.

Instant Coffee

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to complete its report on instant coffee prices.

Mr. Redwood: The Commission has been asked by the Director General of Fair Trading to report on the supply of soluble coffee in the United Kingdom by 8 January 1991.

Limited Liability Status

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions a request for registration as a company with limited liability status was rejected in each of the last three years.

Mr. Redwood: The number of applications which were rejected in 1987, 1988 and 1989 were respectively 11,300 (estimated), 9,846 and 7,953.

Regional Assistance

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the amount of regional assistance in 1989 per head for *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* north-east England, *(c)* north-west England, *(d)* the west midlands, *(e)* east midlands, *(f)* south-west England and *(g)* south-east England.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The amount of regional preferential assistance per head in the most recent year for which figures are available is as follows:

Expenditure per head of civilian working population, 1988-89

	£
(a) Scotland	61·4
England—Regions	
(b) Northern	92·3
(c) North West	27·7
(d) West Midlands	9·6
(e) East Midlands	4·5
(f) South West	7·0
(g) South East	nil

Export Credits

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received concerning his Department's adoption of the portfolio management system in assessing the Export Credits Guarantee Department cover.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* My right hon. Friend has received many representations from both Parliament and the exporting community about ECGD's portfolio management system. We will be giving these representations careful consideration before the portfolio management system is introduced.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the current premiums charged by the export credit agencies of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, including the premiums levied by the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The export credit agencies of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development members do not as a rule publish the premiums which they charge. Premium rates are determined on a case-by-case basis by most agencies. Although the agencies periodically exchange details of their premium rates for individual countries, this is done on a strictly confidential basis. It is not practicable to try to list all the premium rates of all the OECD countries.

Industrial Development

Mr. Crowther: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions since 1980 expenditure has been incurred under section 3(2)(a) of the Industry Act 1980 to acquire securities of a company; and if he will give, for the last five occasions, the name of the company concerned, the sum of money involved, the date of the payment and the nature of the security acquired.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* Since 1980 section 3(2)(a) of the Industry Act 1980 has been used to purchase securities on 13 occasions. The last five occasions were:

Company	*Sum £ million*	*Date of payment*	*Nature of Securities*
BL plc	80	17 December 1982	Ordinary shares of 50p each
BL plc	110	28 March 1983	Ordinary shares of 50p each
BL plc	90	1 November 1983	Ordinary shares of 50p each
Rover Group plc	680	30 March 1987	Ordinary shares of 50p each
Rover Group plc	547	12 August 1988	Special security ("the Instrument")

Financial Reporting Council

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will provide a list showing those members of the Financial Reporting Council who have any connections with the accountancy firms or their successors sued by the Government for negligence.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* So far as I am aware, none of the members of the Financial Reporting Council has any such connection.

WALES

Special Educational Needs

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many children in each local education authority in Wales were placed in a non-residential special school following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year;

(2) how many children in each local education authority in Wales were placed in a special unit following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year;

(3) how many children in each local education authority remained in mainstream schools following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year;

(4) how many children in each local education authority in Wales were placed in a residential special school following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year.

Sir Wyn Roberts: No information is held centrally on the number of children who are newly statemented each year by type of placement.

Dyslexia

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what new measures he intends to undertake to help dyslexic children in the schools of Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The benefits of the national curriculum, which has now been introduced into schools, will apply to all children, including, as far as is practicable, those with dyslexia.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many dyslexic children are educated in each of the counties of Wales; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many specialist teachers of dyslexic children there are in each of the local education authorities of Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Wyn Roberts: This information is not available centrally. The Education Act 1981 abolished the categorisation of children by particular disability.

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many children aged under 16 years received free eye tests in each county in Wales *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90;

(2) how many people on family credit or income support received free eye tests in each district health authority area in Wales in each quarter of 1988-89 and in each quarter of 1989-90;

(3) what percentage of children aged under 16 years received free eye tests in each county in Wales *(a)* in each quarter of 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mr. Grist: Estimates of numbers of sight tests for different types of patient are based on a 2 per cent. sample. This sample is not sufficient to make robust estimates by patient types within county or district health authority areas.

Housing

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what initiatives he intends to take with respect to the problem of housing in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The Department has announced a number of initiatives directed to the problems of housing in Wales. In particular, last autumn we announced for the current year a 40 per cent. increase in the provision for Housing for Wales, a 15 per cent., increase in the gross local authority provision for housing and generous provision to support home renovation grants. Details of current policies and plans for housing programmes are given in chapter 4 of "Public Expenditure in Wales: 1990-91 to 1992-93 A Commentary by the Welsh Office."

Bathing Beaches

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 13 June, on bathing beaches, if he will extend the testing of water quality to all bathing beaches in Wales by including those which are not currently subject to European Community designation.

Mr. Grist: This is a matter for the National Rivers Authority.

GP Budgets

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many general practitioners or general practitioner practices have expressed an interest in becoming practice budget holders within each authority in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Health authority	Number of general practitioners	Number of GP practices
Clwyd	34	6
East Dyfed	15	4
Gwent	12	3
Gwynedd	6	2
Mid Glamorgan	59	10
Pembrokeshire	11	2
Powys	14	3
South Glamorgan	26	5
West Glamorgan	47	9

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish the names of the general practitioners or practices which have expressed an interest in becoming practice budget holders in Wales.

Mr. Grist: It would not be right to reveal the names of individual general practitioners or practices which have expressed an interest in practice fund holding. There is in any event no commitment on either side at this stage.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many general practitioners and general practitioner practices will be eligible to become practice budget holders within each health authority in Wales.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many general practitioner practices are now eligible to become budget holders; how many have expressed an interest in budget holding; if he will name those practices.

Mr. Grist: It is not possible to place a figure on the number of practices meeting the eligibility criteria for fund-holding status. While each practice fund will require a minimum of 9,000 patients, smaller practices are enabled to group together to attain this number. In addition to its patient list size, each practice will need to demonstrate its ability to manage a practice fund.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Family Law

Mr. French: To ask the Attorney-General if he will introduce legislation to provide for indexing of maintenance payments in divorce proceedings to the retail price index.

Mr. Patten *[pursuant to the Attorney-General's answer, 2 February 1990, c. 400]:* Our review of the wider arrangements for assessing collecting and enforcing maintenance payments is still in progress. It is, however, clear that measures to improve the ability of the courts to ensure that payments ordered are received, are practicable and desirable. We accordingly intend to bring forward legislative proposals when an opportunity permits which would give the courts in England and Wales power to prescribe the method by which maintenance payments are made and to order the attachment of earnings without having to await evidence of arrears or default.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Turkey

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Turkish Government on behalf of prisoners of conscience on hunger strike in Turkish prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We understand that the hunger strike referred to by the hon. Member ended earlier this month.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations through the European Community for the repeal of articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish penal code; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Turkish Government are aware that we expect them to adhere to the human rights conventions to which they are a party. They are now actively reviewing the future of articles 141 and 142.

Western European Union

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been done to examine the potential of the Western European Union as a vehicle for assessing possible threats to member countries and for research into the prospects of an all-European security area in respect of *(a)* defining a sufficiency threshold in defence matters, *(b)* analysing the concept of shared security and *(c)* developing means of arbitration, confidence-building measures and disarmament.

Mr. Waldegrave: We believe that NATO remains the right place in which to assess threats to WEU member states. The question of future security arrangements in Europe, together with arms control and confidence-building issues, have been extensively discussed within the WEU. The need for sufficiency rule is part of the western position in the CFE negotiations.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response Her Majesty's Government will be making to the Western European Union Assembly's proposals that the Western European Union Council should *(a)* use the modified Brussels treaty as a juridical basis for the presence of forces of member states on the territory of other member states and *(b)* convene regular meetings of chiefs of staff of member countries to examine European armaments requirements.

Mr. Waldegrave: Formal responses to recommendations in reports of the Western European Union assembly are the responsibility of the WEU permanent council. We have no plans to make a separate response.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the date on which a member country can use the right fixed by article XII of the Western European Union treaty to give notice to the depository government of its desire to cease being a party thereto.

Mr. Waldegrave: After 25 August 1998—that is, 50 years after the date on which the Brussels treaty entered into force—each of the high contracting parties has the

right, under article XII of the modified treaty, to cease to be a party thereto, provided that it has previously given one year's notice of denunciation to the Belgian Government.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is Her Majesty's Government's policy to use the Western European Union to guarantee the permanency of member countries' frontiers and to ensure respect for the commitments entered into by its members in the context of agreements limiting forces or armaments or the non-production of certain weapons.

Mr. Waldegrave: The inviolability of the frontiers of WEU member countries among others is affirmed by the Helsinki final act, of which all WEU member countries are signatories. We are confident that all WEU member countries respect, and will continue to respect, their international commitments.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the consequences of a devolution of the Federal Republic of Germany's commitments to a unified Germany for the application of the Western European Union treaty with regard to *(a)* co-operation between the Western European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation under article IV, *(b)* military assistance under article V, specified in paragraph III.4 of the Hague platform, *(c)* article VII and *(d)* implementation of article VIII, paragraphs 2 and 4 and protocols Nos. II, III and IV.

Mr. Waldegrave: We remain in close touch with the Federal German Government and other allies on these and other aspects of future European security.

Falkland Islands

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on how many telephones were disconnected for non-payment in each of the last five years on the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am told that records go back only as far as October 1989 when the new telephone network came into operation. Thirty telephones were cut off in that month. The number fell sharply in ensuing months and in May only two were cut off.

German Reunification

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been done to ensure that countries participating in the conference on the external aspects of German reunification are fully informed of the guarantees offered by the modified Brussels treaty for the security of both Germany and its neighbouring countries and for the establishment of a new peaceful and secure order in Europe; and what has been the response of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Waldegrave: The modified Brussels treaty is a public document. We are not aware of any recent Soviet statements relating to it.

Mr. Hill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is Her Majesty's Government's policy that the commitments entered into by the Federal Republic of Germany under the modified Brussels treaty shall also be valid for a unified Germany.

Mr. Waldegrave: We support the principle, mentioned in the Helsinki final act, that participating states have a right to be or not to be parties to treaties of alliance. We welcome the FRG's intention to go on playing a full part in western security arrangements. We support the expressed view of both German Governments that a unified Germany should be a member of NATO. The two German Governments have yet to express their views on WEU membership.

Hong Kong (Vietnamese Refugees)

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the status determination procedures used to decide whether or not Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong shall be returned to Vietnam; and how many and what percentage of people submitted to such procedures have been *(a)* screened in as refugees and permitted to stay and *(b)* screened out, so that they must return to Vietnam.

Mr. Waldegrave: Hong Kong's status determination procedures were designed, in conjunction with UNHCR, to apply the criteria of the 1951 convention and the 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees as follows:

(a) all new arrivals are briefed on the screening process on arrival in Hong Kong;

(b) under the Statement of Understanding between the UNHCR and the Hong Kong Government, the UNHCR accepts responsibility for providing legal advice and assistance to asylum seekers at all stages of the screening and review procedure. UNHCR has unrestricted access to the asylum seekers for this purpose;

(c) asylum seekers are interviewed by immigration department staff to record their personal data and their claim to refugee status. The interviews follow a questionaire designed in agreement with UNHCR. Interpreters are provided by the Hong Kong Government. Legal counsellors of the UNHCR have unrestricted access to all screening interviews;

(d) the first instance decision on the claim to refugee status is notified to all persons after screening. If refugee status is granted, the person concerned is moved immediately to a refugee camp to await resettlement. If refugee status is not granted, the person concerned is advised that he or she has a right to seek review of the decision;

(e) at the same time as the asylum seeker is notified of the first instance decision, a copy of the immigration department file, including a record of the interview and the reasons for the decision, is given to the UNHCR, with a separate copy to the legal consultants who on behalf of the UNHCR will assist asylum seekers in applying for a review of the decision. An asylum seeker must apply for review to the refugee status review board within 28 days of being notified of the first instance decision;

(f) the refugee status review board is headed by a former judge, and comprises four panels of two members each, drawn from both the civil service and the community at large. Their task is to review the facts of the case and the immigration department's decision, in the light of the asylum seeker's claim as recorded at the original interview, and any further representations made to the review board. The board may, where it considers it necessary, interview either the asylum seeker or the immigration officer conducting the interview;

(g) the decision of the review board on the application for review is notified to the asylum seeker as soon as possible after it is made.

As at 11 June 1990, the director of immigration had completed screening for 13,647 people, of whom 1,460 were screened in (10·7 per cent.) and 12,187 screened out

(89·3 per cent.). The RSRB has considered 9,872 cases. The director of immigration's decision was upheld in 9,026 cases and overturned in 846. This gives an overall post-appeal total of 2,306 screened in (16·9 per cent.).

EC Enlargement

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received concerning further enlargement of the European Community.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have received no formal representations concerning further enlargement of the EC in recent months.

Republic of Ireland

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek compensation from the Government of the Republic of Ireland for the damage caused to the economy of the United Kingdom as a result of the 48-hour restriction on shoppers visiting the United Kingdom.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. But we are at present considering the implications of the European Court of Justice judgment in the 48-hour rule case and whether other action may be necessary.

Poland

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the United Kingdom is a signatory to the treaty setting out Poland's present frontiers; and whether Poland's western frontier will be discussed within the four plus two talks on German unification.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Potsdam protocol contains provisions relating to Poland's borders, but the United Kingdom is not a party to any of Poland's treaties with its neighbours concerning borders. The Polish Foreign Minister has been invited to attend the two plus four ministerial meeting in Paris on 17 July, when borders will be discussed.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Identity Cards

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in which Council of Europe states identity cards are *(a)* compulsory and *(b)* voluntary.

Mr. John Patten: Identity cards are compulsory in Belgium, Cyprus, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Spain and Turkey; and voluntary in Austria, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Portugal and Switzerland.

There is no system of identity cards in Denmark, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden or the United Kingdom.

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in which European Community states identity cards are machine readable; and how much information can be contained on the cards of the states which use machine-readable cards.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that the identity cards issued in the Federal Republic of Germany are machine readable. They contain details of the bearer's name, birth, description, address and nationality, together with the date and place of issue of the card, its number and its expiry date.

Data Protection

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which countries have acceded to the Council of Europe convention on data protection.

Mr. Mellor: Austria, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Police Statistics

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police force areas in rank order according to the number of notifiable offences of violence against the person per 100,000 population in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is given in the following table:

Notifiable offences of violence against the person recorded by the police per 100,000 population
England and Wales 1989

Police force area	*Number of offences per 100,000 population*
Lancashire	206
Dorset	214
Hertfordshire	224
Thames Valley	228
Sussex	233
Warwickshire	236
Surrey	237
Gloucestershire	245
Hampshire	245
Norfolk	245
Kent	247
North Yorkshire	253
Devon and Cornwall	259
Essex	263
Cheshire	269
Suffolk	271
West Mercia	296
Dyfed-Powys	312
Lincolnshire	317
Leicestershire	318
Cambridgeshire	328
South Wales	348
North Wales	350
Avon and Somerset	352
Derbyshire	355
Merseyside	355
Wiltshire	357
Cumbria	362
West Midlands	364
Greater Manchester	371
Northamptonshire	371
South Yorkshire	375
Northumbria	380
Bedfordshire	401
Durham	405
West Yorkshire	435
Gwent	444
Cleveland	445
Metropolitan Police District and City of London	451
Staffordshire	501

Police force area	Number of offences per 100,000 population
Humberside	678
Nottinghamshire	716
England and Wales	351

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police force areas in rank order according to the number of notifiable offences per 100,000 population in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is given in the following table.

Notifiable offences recorded by the police per 100,000 population by police force area
England and Wales 1989

Police force area	Number of offences per 100,000 population
Dyfed-Powys	3,817
West Mercia	4,903
Surrey	4,542
Hertfordshire	4,975
Wiltshire	4,978
Suffolk	5,016
Cheshire	5,016
North Yorkshire	5,017
Devon and Cornwall	5,196
Warwickshire	5,234
Derbyshire	5,284
Essex	5,299
Sussex	5,330
North Wales	5,370
Kent	5,501
Cambridgeshire	5,668
Gwent	5,672
Staffordshire	5,748
Cumbria	5,762
Hampshire	5,942
Norfolk	5,995
Dorset	6,077
Lincolnshire	6,102
Thames Valley	6,180
Leicestershire	6,185
Lancashire	6,507
Gloucestershire	6,671
Northamptonshire	6,837
Avon and Somerset	7,087
South Yorkshire	7,305
Bedfordshire	7,704
Durham	7,723
West Midlands	8,749
South Wales	9,079
West Yorkshire	9,178
Merseyside	9,381
Nottinghamshire	10,484
MPD and City of London	10,595
Humberside	10,742
Cleveland	10,984
Greater Manchester	11,414
Northumbria	12,684
England and Wales	7,681

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police force areas in rank order according to the number of police per 100,000 population in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information requested is set out in the table.

Officers per 100,000 of population[1]

	Number
City of London	[2]
Metropolitan Police	396·7
Merseyside	324·6
Greater Manchester	273·2
Cleveland	271·6
West Midlands	263·4
West Yorkshire	256·7
Northumbria	248·1
South Wales	243·3
Cumbria	240·2
Humberside	236·0
Nottinghamshire	232·6
South Yorkshire	231·9
Lancashire	231·6
Durham	230·4
Gwent	226·5
Surrey	222·8
Gloucestershire	220·7
Avon and Somerset	218·1
Staffordshire	213·2
Sussex	209·2
North Wales	209·1
Warwickshire	207·8
Lincolnshire	205·5
Leicestershire	204·7
Bedfordshire	202·0
Dyfed Powys	201·8
Northamptonshire	200·1
Hertfordshire	198·9
Kent	198·5
Cheshire	197·5
North Yorkshire	197·4
Wiltshire	197·1
Essex	195·6
Derbyshire	194·0
Dorset	193·8
Devon and Cornwall	193·2
Hampshire	189·7
Norfolk	189·2
Thames Valley	188·7
West Mercia	188·7
Suffolk	188·5
Cambridgeshire	184·9

[1] Based on mid-1988 population figures from OPCS (latest available) and latest 1990 establishments.
[2] Resident population of City of London is 5,000.

Football Matches

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the total charge made to the 92 Football League clubs for police attendance at league matches in England and Wales during the 1989-90 season; and what is the change, in percentage terms, from the 1988-89 figure.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information on charges made to Football League clubs by the police are not collected centrally by the Government. I understand that the Football Trust has published a figure of £4,136,000 for the season 1988-89, but has not yet published a figure for the season 1989-90.

Immigration

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the application for British citizenship, Home Office reference S444754/5(S), is still unresolved; when he expects a decision to be made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend expects to make a decision in this case soon.

National Lottery Bill

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received concerning the National Lottery Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Between 18 April, when the current private Member's Bill to make provision for a national lottery for the benefit of the arts, sport and the environment was introduced, and 18 June, we received a total of six letters about the Bill, all from the same member of the public, who in that period also copied to us other correspondence about his support for the measure.

Child Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, further to his answer of 12 June to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North, what consideration he has given to Commander Monk's speech on child abuse; and if he will make a statement on action which he will institute in the Department arising from it.

Mr. John Patten: We are considering Commander Monk's speech and will take his views into account in the development of our strategy for the treatment of sex offenders.

British Refugee Council

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what public assistance is given to the British Refugee Council.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Home Office has agreed to pay grant of £685,400 to the refugee council in the current financial year. The council also receives significant income from other public sector sources including the employment training scheme, the European social fund and the hostel deficit grant system.

Livestock Thefts

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes were reported in 1988 and 1989 involving the theft of farm livestock.

Mr. John Patten: The information collected centrally does not enable thefts of farm livestock to be distinguished from other thefts.

Mrs. Pat Dale

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the result of police investigations into the claim of Mrs. Pat Dale of Middlesex that she and her family had been subjected to harassment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that all incidents reported by Mrs. Dale to the police have been fully investigated. The police have found no evidence to substantiate the allegations or on which to base further inquiries.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Special Needs

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many children in each local education authority were placed in a special unit following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year;

(2) how many children in each local education authority were placed in a residential special school following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year;

(3) how many children in each local education authority were placed in a non-residential special school following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year;

(4) how many children in each local education authority remained in mainstream schools following the completion of a statement of educational needs for each year since April 1983; and what this is expressed as a percentage of *(a)* the total number of children with statements in the local education authority and *(b)* the total number of statements made by the local education authority in that year.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information is not available in the form requested.

Student Loans

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the total cost to public funds of the Student Loans Company to date; and what is his estimate of the total cost for the whole of the current and the next financial year.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend will make a statement shortly on the administrative costs of the student loans scheme.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assistance his Department or the Student Loans Company has enlisted from consultants in *(a)* management, *(b)* information technology, *(c)* advertising, *(d)* marketing and *(e)* public relations, in respect of the student loans scheme in the current year; and at what cost.

Mr. Jackson: Relationships between the Student Loans Company and its suppliers are commercially confidential. The Department has not separately received consultancy advice on the student loans scheme in the current year.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate how long after application students can expect to wait until they receive a loan from the Student Loans Company.

Mr. Jackson: The Student Loans Company's objective will be to make the great majority of loan payments within 21 days of receipt of correctly completed eligibility certificates and application forms. The company's success in meeting that objective will depend upon the speed with which students return the loan agreement forms which they will be sent once their application forms have been processed.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what communications will take place between the Students Loans Company and the bank branch holding an individual student loan applicant's current account; and for what purpose.

Mr. Jackson: The Student Loans Company will make loan payments into students' bank or building society accounts by electronic transfer, through the bankers' automated clearing services and will receive repayments by direct debit from borrowers' accounts. The company will have no other contact with banks or building societies holding students' current accounts.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list *(a)* the banks which have participated in any discussions with the Student Loans Company in the current year, *(b)* those banks which have not yet participated and *(c)* those banks which have refused to participate.

Mr. Jackson: Discussions between the Student Loans Company and other financial insitutions are strictly and mutually confidential.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if a student in agreeing to the terms and conditions of a student loan authorises the Student Loans Company to make future searches on their income, via employers and banks.

Mr. Jackson: The terms and conditions of a loan agreement will not authorise the Student Loans Company to investigate borrowers' incomes through their employers or banks. Borrowers wishing to defer repayments will be required to produce evidence that their income falls below 85 per cent. of national average earnings.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consultations his Department has had with the National Union of Students in respect of administration of the student loans scheme.

Mr. Jackson: The National Union of Students has been kept informed of developments in the student loans scheme. Officials will be meeting shortly to discuss the scheme.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how the Student Loans Company proposes to ensure that student loan applicants' referees maintain regular contact between the Student Loans Company and the student over the repayment period;

(2) if a student loan applicant who fails to find a referee will be refused a loan.

Mr. Jackson: The Student Loans Company will not ask loan applicants to nominate referees. The company will ask applicants to nominate on the applications form two individuals, one of whom should be a relative or guardian, who can be contacts in the event of the company losing touch with the borrower. If the application forms are not fully completed, applicants will not receive a loan.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if his Department has yet agreed a system of student certification for the purpose of a student loan application with institutions of higher education.

Mr. Jackson: The duties of academic institutions are set out in regulation 10 of the Education (Student Loans) Regulations, laid before Parliament on 13 June. Representatives of the Student Loans Company and the Education Departments will be holding a nationwide series of meetings with the higher education institutions in the next two weeks to help the institutions prepare for their role in the scheme.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if his Department will be reimbursing the total administrative cost of student certification for the purpose of a student loan application; and if he will estimate that cost in the current and the next financial year.

Mr. Jackson: The Student Loans Company will make a payment to academic institutions of £3·50 for each eligibility certificate which is correctly completed on its first submission to the company. The total administrative cost will depend upon the number of students who seek certification of eligibility and on the number of correctly completed certificates.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the itinerary of visits to be undertaken by the three higher education liaison officers appointed by the Student Loans Company.

Mr. Jackson: The role of the academic liaison officers is to help institutions fulfil their responsibilities under the legislation governing the student loans scheme. To that end, the liaison officers have already visited a wide range of institutions; are meeting representatives of institutions at regional meetings in the next two weeks; and will, on request, visit any institution with eligible students.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guarantees have been offered to staff of the Student Loans Company in the event of a change of Government policy on student finance.

Mr. Jackson: None. Staff of the Student Loans Company are employed under arrangements which reflect current practice in the commercial sector.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when students can start to apply for a loan from the Student Loans Company.

Mr. Jackson: Students will be able to apply for a loan as soon as they have been certified as eligible by their academic institution.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when is the deadline for application for a loan from the Student Loans Company; and whether students who apply for a loan which is less than that to which they are entitled can later apply for the remainder.

Mr. Jackson: For the academic year 1990-91, the Student Loans Company will issue loans in respect of loan agreements received by the company by 31 July 1991. Eligible students may make one application for a loan each academic year; they may draw down the loan in up to three instalments.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions the Student Loans Company has had with the clearing banks in respect of the payment and repayment of student loans.

Mr. Jackson: The Student Loans Company will make loan payments and receive repayments through the bankers' automated clearing services. These arrangements have been discussed with the company's bankers.

Mr . Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his latest estimate of student take-up of the student loans scheme.

Mr. Jackson: For planning purposes, the Government continue to assume an 80 per cent. take-up rate of student loans.

Access Funds

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he plans to publish details of how institutions of higher education will administer access funds.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffihs) on 21 May 1990, *Official Report*, column *46*.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will have any power to alter the criteria adopted by an institution of higher education in respect of access fund disbursement.

Mr. Jackson: Provided that an institution of higher education complies with the conditions of payment under which it receives an allocation from the access funds, the determining of criteria to be adopted for the disbursement of money from the funds to students is entirely a matter for the institution itself.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if individual students refuse an access fund award by their institution will be able to appeal against the decision.

Mr. Jackson: Institutions will be entirely responsible for the administration of their share of the access funds including the handling of appeals from individual students.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance he will be issuing to institutions of higher education in respect of the disbursement of access funds; and what will be the nature of any such guidance.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) on 21 May 1990, *Official Report*, column *46*. I understand that the Universities Funding Council and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council will be issuing guidance to the institutions for which they are responsible by the end of June.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if students will have any powers of appeal in respect of the criteria adoped by an institution of higher education for the disbursement of access funds.

Mr. Jackson: It will be for the higher education institutions themselves to decide what criteria to adopt for the disbursement of the access funds and whether to consult their students about those criteria.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance he is giving to institutions of higher education in respect of disabled students' needs when access funds are distributed.

Mr. Jackson: The Universities Funding Council and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council will be responsible for giving guidance to institutions in their sectors on the distribution of the access funds. Paragraph 1 of the conditions of payment of the access funds to the two funding councils (a copy of which was placed in the Library on 21 May) make it clear that physical and other disabilities are among the possible reasons for financial difficulties which the access funds are intended to address.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what account will be taken of variations in regional housing costs in respect of the distribution of access funds to institutions of higher education.

Mr. Jackson: It will be for the two funding councils to determine how the access funds are to be distributed to institutions in their sectors. The factors which my right hon. Friend has invited the funding councils to take into account are set out in paragraph 5 of the notes of guidance for the UFC and the PCFC a copy of which was placed in the Library on 21 May. One of the factors is

"the particular needs of students in private accommodation in areas where the cost of accommodation is especially high, eg London and the South East."

Universities and Polytechnics (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will give the figures for the revenue and research monies received by each individual university and polytechnic, expressed in terms of funding per student.

Mr. Jackson: Information on universities' incomes and student numbers are contained in tables 1 and 12 respectively of volume 3 "University Statistics—Finance" published by the universities statistical record.

Available data on polytechnic expenditure and students are published by the Department in table D15 of "Statistics of Education—Finance and Awards".

Copies of both publications are available in the Library.

HEALTH

Adoption

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what procedures exist to enable adults, adopted early in life, to make contact with siblings.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Adoption Act 1976 gives adopted adults the right, after counselling where required,

to the information which will enable them to obtain a certified copy of their original record of birth. Some adopted people may wish to use this information as a starting point in an effort to trace the whereabouts of their natural relatives and sometimes to contact or meet them. The Registrar-General is usually prepared to note on a person's adoption record that there is a natural relative, including a sibling, who would welcome contact; and, if the adopted person applies for information about his birth record, to tell him about his relative's wishes. The Children Act 1989 provides for an adoption contact register to formalise these arrangements; we plan to implement the Act next year.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the costs of the consultancy management team study of waiting lists in Newcastle, Durham and East Cumbria referred to in the reply given to the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), *Official Report,* 20 March, column *555*; where such costs are accounted for in national health service budgets; what conclusions this study reached; what actions have been taken as a result; and if he will place a copy of the consultancy team's report in the Library.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Waiting lists in these three districts are among 100 specialty lists being investigated by Inter-Authority Comparisons and Consultancy (IACC) in 1990-91. The costs are not separately identified by district, but amount to £420,000 for the national programme of studies and are met centrally from the waiting list fund.

The aim of the studies is to investigate why waiting times for treatment are so long, and to draw up contracts with the districts for agreed workload levels and reductions in waiting time in return for additional funding. A total of £12 million from the waiting list fund has been earmarked to fund the recommendations of the studies. So far £45,000 has been allocated to Durham to reduce the number of patients waiting over a year on the general surgery/urology list, and £121,000 to East Cumbria to reduce the wait for general surgery. Newcastle's plastic surgery list is still under consideration.

A copy of IACC's summary report "Examining some of England's longest waiting lists" is in the Library. This describes IACC's work in 1989-90, which by March 1990 had resulted in a reduction from 29,580 to 15,042 in the number of patients waiting over a year in 43 key specialties. A full-year report is in preparation.

Family Planning

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to improve the family planning service provided by *(a)* general practitioners, including women doctors and *(b)* health authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The day-to-day management of family planning services is a matter for individual health authorities since they can best judge local circumstances and priorities. The Government continue to regard family planning as an important preventive service. Guidance issued by the Department of Health makes clear that health authorities should ensure that full use is made of family planning services and that a proper balance is struck between services provided by specialist clinics and those provided by GPs. This guidance was recently reiterated in a letter to regional general managers by the director of operations and planning on the NHS management executive. The Government also remain committed to encouraging and helping women doctors to enter general practice. The new contract which came into force from 1 April 1990 benefits women doctors in a number of ways:

—capitation-based system encourages partnerships to offer the patients the choice of both men and women doctors.

—women doctors will be particularly attractive to partnerships if they offer one of the specialties for which the new fees are being paid, for example, minor surgery, child health surveillance.

—arrangements for part-time working and job sharing are being formalised.

—qualifications for locum cover during confinement have been eased.

Head Lice

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence he has received linking lindane, or gamma benzene hexachloride, to leukaemia and kidney damage; and if he will consider taking action to prevent them being used in head lice treatment.

Mr. Dorrell: Lindane, also known as gamma benzene hexachloride, is an insecticide which has been available for a number of years in low concentrations in licensed medicinal products for external use. The Committee on Safety of Medicines has received no reports of leukaemia or kidney damage associated with lindane treatment.

Lindane is an effective treatment for scabies. As a consequence of the emergence of resistance it is no longer commonly used for the sole treatment of head lice. Low concentrations of lindane when used topically and as recommended have a good safety record over many years of extensive use.

Community Health Councils

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the level of funding of community health councils in England and on the role of his Department in ensuring adequate levels of funding for individual community health councils.

Mr. Dorrell: The expenses of community health councils are met by and form part of the total expenditure of the health authorities concerned. It is for health authorities to decide on the level of funding that they provide to community health councils.

Toxic Shock Syndrome

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of toxic shock syndrome there have been in each of the past five years; of those cases, how many proved to be fatal; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: Information received by the public health laboratory service (PHLS) indicates that from 1984 to 1989 there were around 15 confirmed cases a year of toxic shock syndrome in the United Kingdom and that around three cases a year proved fatal.

Transplant Service

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health where the new special health authority to manage the United Kingdom transplant service is to be situated; what staff and budget it will have; and when it will be operational.

Mr. Dorrell: We will take decisions on these questions in the light of the implementation study to which I referred in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) on 11 June at column *35*.

Optician Services

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the most recent impact of prescription charges on the take-up of opticians' services *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by national health service region.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The independent survey of sight tests, carried out by NOP and commissioned by the Government, considered demand on both a national and standard region basis. The information was not, however, analysed by national health service region. The survey found that sight test uptake during the first three months of 1990 was well in line with projected trends over the 10 years up to 1987. It implied that there was no evidence to suggest that people were being deterred from visiting their optician because they now had to pay a modest private charge. Copies of the full NOP report along with an analysis of the findings by the Government statistical service have been placed in the Library.

Larynx Cancer

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department has conducted or commissioned any research into cancer of the larynx resulting from asbestosis, explosives or industrial substances.

Mr. Dorrell: No such research has been commissioned by the Department. The Medical Research Council (MRC) is the main agency through which the Government support biomedical and clinical research in the United Kingdom. The MRC receives its grant in aid from the Department of Education and Science.

Child Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress which has been made on each of the projects of research on child abuse listed in his answer of 27 January 1989, *Official Report*, column *798*.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The current position on the projects on research on child abuse listed in the reply that my hon. and learned Friend the then Minister for Health gave the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 27 January 1989 at column *798* is as follows:

Intervention in child sexual abuse: project extended to 30 September 1990.
Normal sexual knowledge in children: continuing.
A study of co-ordination in child abuse: continuing.
Decision making intervention and outcomes in respect of children at risk of abuse: continuing.
Parental perceptions in child abuse: commissioned. Period of support, 1 October 1989 to 30 September 1992.
Feasibility of prevalence study: under consideration.
Parental participation in child protection case conferences: commissioned. Period of support, 1 October 1989 to 31 March 1992.
A study of the patterns of use of child protection registers: commissioned. Period of support, 1 October 1990 to 31 December 1992.
Computer-based techniques in diagnosis: pilot study commissioned. Period of support, 1 January 1990 to 30 April 1990.
Evaluation of inter-disciplinary training: under consideration.
Perpetrators of child sexual abuse: under consideration.

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people on family credit or income support received free eye tests in each district health authority area in England in each quarter of 1988-89 and in each quarter of 1989-90.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Statistics prior to 1 April 1989 were not broken down by patient group. Since then family practitioner committees have collected data on sight tests paid for under the general ophthalmic services on a six-monthly basis. District health authorities do not collect such information. The table gives estimated numbers by patient group and regional health authority for the period in question:

NHS sight tests paid for during April-September 1989

Regional health authority	*Adults (IS-FC)*
Northern	40,000
Yorkshire	39,360
Trent	51,880
East Anglia	16,050
North West Thames	34,030
North East Thames	34,980
South East Thames	39,010
South West Thames	23,510
Wessex	29,390
Oxford	13,510
South Western	46,310
West Midlands	74,690
Mersey	27,810
North Western	60,160

These figures are based on a 2 per cent. sample of NHS sight test application forms processed by family practitioner committees. They do not take into account sight tests paid for after 1 April 1989 but conducted before that period.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people with glaucoma and diabetes received free eye tests in England *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* Statistics prior to 1 April 1989 were not broken down by patient group. Since then family practitioner committees have collected data on sight tests paid for under the general ophthalmic services on a six-monthly basis. A total of 114,210 NHS sight tests for diabetes and glaucoma sufferers were paid for in England during the period 1 April to 30 September 1989. This figure is based on a 2 per cent. sample of NHS sight test application forms processed by family practitioner committees. It does not take into account sight tests paid for after 1 April 1989 but conducted before that period.

Abortion

Mr. Duffy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the total number of abortions, under the terms of the Abortion Act 1967, in the Sheffield health authority area for each of the last three years for which figures are available; how many of these abortions were performed *(a)* on ground four and *(b)* ground five; and how many of these abortions were notified in the national health service sector, and how many in the private sector.

Mr. Dorrell: Abortion data by district of termination are not released on grounds of confidentiality; data for usual residents of Sheffield district health authority are shown in the table:

Number of abortions performed under statutory grounds (a) four and (b) five of the Abortion Act 1967, and by category of premises, usual residents of Sheffield district health authority, 1987, 1988 and 1989[1]

Year	Statutory grounds		Total	Category of premises	
	Four	Five		NHS	Non-NHS
1987	28	—	1,485	814	671
1988	15	—	1,507	901	606
[1]1989	12	—	1,503	889	614

[1] Provisional
Statutory ground 4: there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.
Statutory ground 5: to save the life of the pregnant woman.

Performance-related Pay

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which managerial and administrative posts in the Oxfordshire health authority attract performance-related pay; what proportion of their pay is determined by performance; how frequently performance is reviewed; and who is responsible for undertaking the official assessment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We do not hold this information centrally. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of Oxfordshire health authority for the information he seeks.

General Practitioners Budgets

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners or general practitioner practices have now expressed an interest in becoming practice budget holders within each health authority in England.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The programme "Funding General Practice" issued to all GPs in England in December invited practices that were interested in fund holding to return a form to their regional health authority. By the end of February over 850 practices had expressed an interest in this way and others have done so subsequently. The table sets out the position in each region:

Region	Number of practices expressing an interest February 1990
Northern	65
Yorkshire	64
Trent	57
East Anglian	36
NW Thames	78
NE Thames	58
SE Thames	61
SW Thames	58
Wessex	55
Oxford	61
South Western	85
West Midlands	70
Mersey	51
North Western	55
Total	854

Of these 854 practices, around 150 had to be rejected simply because they did not meet the size criterion and did not wish to join with another practice, around 400 are likely to undertake preparatory work to enable them to become fund holders in 1991 and over 150 have indicated that they wish to consider becoming fund holders in 1992.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the names of the general practitioners or practices which have expressed an interest in becoming practice budget holders.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners and general practitioner practices will be eligible to become practice budget holders within each health authority in England.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The criteria for participation in the practice funding scheme will be set out in regulations made under clause 14 of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill currently before Parliament. However, as indicated in the programme "Funding General Practice" issued last December, copies of which are available in the Library, practices which have over 9,000 patients (or group together to meet this criterion), can demonstrate the ability to manage a fund and are adequately computerised are eligible to participate. It is not possible to state how many practices meet all these criteria.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners practices are now eligible to become budget holders; how many have expressed an interest in budget holding; if he will name those practices; and if he will give the information by region.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my replies today to the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy).

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implications of the reduction of the Heteroptera sub-section of the natural history museum for research related to bed bugs, as vectors of diseases.

Mr. Dorrell: None. We are not aware of any new problems which would necessitate the Department sponsoring research in this area.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implications of any reduction of research work on fossils and fossil plants at the natural history museum for medical research.

Mr. Dorrell: None. The Medical Research Council (MRC) is the Government's main agency for the promotion of medical and related biomedical research in the United Kingdom. The MRC receives its grant in aid from the Department of Education and Science.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what instructions have been issued by his Department or the national health service management board in relation to the vocabulary or terminology used to promote, describe or present, "Working for Patients" and the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None.

NHS Reform

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have been made since November 1989 to the list of 79 units preparing for self-governing trust status; and if he will give an up-to-date list of those making plans for 1991.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) on 25 April at columns *217-18*. An up-to-date list is as follows:

Northern Regional Health Authority
Freeman Hospital
Newcastle Mental Health Services
Newcastle General Hospital
Northumbria Ambulance Services.
Royal Victoria Infirmary and Dental Hospital

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority
Bradford Acute Services
Leeds General Infirmary and Associated Hospitals
St. James University Hospital, Leeds

Trent Regional Health Authority
Children's Hospital, Sheffield
Doncaster Royal Infirmary and the Montagu Hospital
Lincolnshire Ambulance Service
Nether Edge Hospital, Sheffield
Northern General Hospital

East Anglian Regional Health Authority
East Suffolk Community Services
Great Yarmouth and Waveney Priority Services
Norfolk Ambulances
West Norfolk and Wisbech Community Services
West Norfolk and Wisbech Acute Services

North West Thames Regional Health Authority
Central Middlesex Hospital
Harefield Hospital
Hillingdon Hospital
Mount Vernon Hospital
North West Hertfordshire Priority Services Unit
North Hertfordshire Acute and Community Services

North East Thames Regional Health Authority
City and Hackney (St. Bartholomew's, Homerton, St. Marks Hospital Trust
North Middlesex Hospital
Southend District Services
The London Hospital Group
The Royal Free Hospital
The Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital

South East Thames Regional Health Authority
Brighton Acute Services
Bromley Acute Services
Bromley Mental Health (Ravensbourne)
Guy's and Lewisham Hospitals and associated Mental Illness Services
St. Thomas's Hospital and associated Community Services

South West Thames Regional Health Authority
Croydon Mental Handicap Unit
Croydon Community Unit
Kingston Hospital
Mid-Downs West Unit
Mid-Surrey General Unit
North West Surrey Mental Handicap and Mental Health Units
South West Surrey Acute Unit
St. Helier and Sutton Hospitals

Wessex Regional Health Authority
Lymington Hospitals
Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases
West Dorset Acute Services
West Dorset Community and General Hospital Services
West Dorset Mental Health Services

Oxford Regional Health Authority
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford

South Western Regional Health Authority
Bristol
Cornwall Mental Handicap Services
Cornwall Community Services
East Somerset
East Gloucestershire NHS Trust
North Devon
Plymouth Acute Services
South Devon Health Care Trust
West Somerset
Weston

West Midlands Regional Health Authority
Alexandra Hospital
Mid Staffordshire Mental Health Unit
Mid Staffordshire Community Unit
Rugby District Services
Walsall Acute Services

Mersey Regional Health Authority
Arrow Park and Clatterbridge Hospitals
Broadgreen Hospital, excluding Mersey Regional Cardio-Thoracic Unit
Crew Acute Services
Halton Community Services
Regional Adult Cardio-Thoracic Unit, Liverpool
Royal Liverpool Children's Hospitals
Royal Liverpool Hospital
Whiston St. Helens Hospital

North Western Regional Health Authority
Central Manchester Hospital and Community Services
Christie Hospital

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether a unit applying for self-governing trust status will be allowed to withdraw their application *(a)* after it has been submitted to the regional health authority, *(b)* after consultation with the regional health authority and *(c)* after it has been submitted to him.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Applications may be withdrawn at any time before my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State signs the order establishing that particular trust.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the criteria he will use when making decisions about an application to establish a self-governing trust.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will consider applications for national health service trust status individually in the light of all relevant information. We will expect them to meet the criteria set out in the White Paper "Working for Patients".

Health Authority Chairmen

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many district health authorities and family health services authorities there are in each of the three bands for remuneration of chairs; and if he will list the district health authorities and FHSAs in each of the bands.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: For the remuneration of district health authority and family practitioner committee chairmen the number of authorities in each band is as follows:

Band	*District health authority*	*Family practitioner committee*
1	50	15
2	98	61
3	42	14

A list of the district health authorities and family practitioner committees in each band has been placed in the Library.

West Berkshire Health Authority

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total number of beds, broken down by acute and non-acute, in West Berkshire health authority in each year since 1979.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is given in the table:

Average daily available beds West Berkshire health authority

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Acute	1,068	1,021	1,012	1,013	1,021	977	967	946	897	846
Non-acute	1,919	1,799	1,746	1,691	1,605	1,512	1,457	1,389	1,306	1,241

The numbers of patients treated in all specialties rose from 44,000 to 50,000 between 1979 and 1987-88. Figures for 1988-89 patient activity are still provisional.

AIDS

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children in the United Kingdom were born with AIDS in 1989; what were the figures for the previous three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* There are no reports to the public health laboratory service communicable disease surveillance centre or to the communicable diseases (Scotland) unit of children being born with AIDS. The cumulative total of reports of children born with HIV antibody, to end 1989 is 144. Most of these children are not infected but acquired HIV antibody from their mother. If the child is not itself infected this maternal antibody disappears within the first 18 months of life. There have been 23 reports of children developing AIDS, whose parents were HIV-infected or at risk of infection.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in the United Kingdom will be infected with the AIDS virus by the year 2000 if the current rate of growth is maintained.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* It is not possible to predict how many cases of AIDS or HIV-infected individuals there will be by the year 2000. The Day report "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in England and Wales to end 1993", published in February 1990, projected that there would be 4,980 cases of AIDS at the end of 1993, and up to 46,450 people infected with HIV by the end of 1990.

The Day report made it clear that predictions beyond 1993 are subject to great uncertainty. A copy of it is available in the Library.

Gamete Intra Fallopian Transfer

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to seek the views of the President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists on the procedure known as gamete intra fallopian transfer which may result in higher order multiple births; and what reply he has received.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: On 14 May I wrote to Sir George Pinker KCVO FRCOG FRCS (Ed) the President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. I am publishing as follows the text of my letter and of his reply of 15 June. This makes it clear that the council of the college does not favour the statutory regulation of such procedures. Instead, it proposes to issue professional guidance to fellows and members about procedures which may result in higher order multiple births once the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is enacted.

Sir George Pinker CVO FRCSEd FRCOG
President
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
27 Sussex Place
Regent's Park
London
NW1 4RG

14 May 1990

Dear George,

MULTIPLE PREGNANCY RESULTING FROM INFERTILITY TREATMENTS

Now that continuation of research on the early human embryo has been agreed by a Committee of the whole House of Commons, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is being considered in detail by a Standing Committee in the usual way. At its first session the Standing Committee

discussed an amendment which, if accepted, would have brought the GIFT procedure under the control of the Statutory Licensing Authority.

The view of the Council of your College, which you kindly provided for me last month, was made available to members of the Committee. There was a lengthy debate which, of course, was reported in Hansard (copy enclosed). You will see that the concerns expressed about GIFT related entirely to the possibility that it can result in triplets or higher order multiple births, just as could IVF, if too many eggs are replaced. However, as I explained, such multiple pregnancies also result from the use of superovulatory drugs alone in the treatment of infertility. To introduce legislative control of GIFT for this reason would thus point to a need to regulate superovulatory therapy in general which would indeed take us well on to the slippery slope of wider regulation of medical practice—something which in the long run would not, it seems to me, to be to the advantage of patients or doctors.

As you will see, the Committee rejected the amendment, but in view of the concerns expressed about the difficulties which may be experienced by women carrying and giving birth to triplets or more, I promised to write to you to ask that the College give consideration to ensuring that its Fellows and Members are fully aware of the Parliamentary concerns about high multiple pregnancy. The problems associated with this have been well documented in recent research by Frances Price of the Child Care and Development Group in Cambridge, whose research has been supported by the Department and which will be published by HMSO soon.

Clearly it would be most reassuring to those members of Parliament who have expressed concern about triplets and higher order multiple pregnancies resulting from infertility treatments if the College were prepared to convey this concern, perhaps with some advice, to its Fellows and Members.

Yours ever
Virginia

Mrs. V. Bottomley, MP
Minister of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2NS

15th June 1990

Dear Mrs. Bottomley

Re: Multiple Pregnancy Resulting from Infertility Treatment

Thank you very much for your letter of 14th May regarding the concern of the Members of Parliament about procedures such as GIFT resulting in higher order multiple births.

As you know, the Council of the College has on occasions discussed this and felt that regulation of procedures such as GIFT will not only set a precedent in terms of regulating medical practice but also that, as these forms of treatment are still evolving, any framework regulating the current practices may restrict further development. Therefore we feel that GIFT and similar procedures should not be included in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. I think your point that legislative control of GIFT could also lead the way to regulating other treatments for infertility, such as the use of gonadotrophins for ovulation induction, is extremely important.

We have in the past relied on the ILA, which as you know evolved from the VLA set up by the RCOG and the MRC, to issue guidelines to those of our Fellows and Members involved in the management of infertility patients where treatment such as IVF and GIFT were provided. The College would certainly be willing to reinforce this advice by circulating guidelines to Fellows and Members. We are now working on these and they will cover the following areas: counselling, the use of gonadotrophins in induction of ovulation, number of embryos or eggs to be transferred and other matters relating to the practice of GIFT. Once the Bill receives Royal Assent these will be put in their final form and circulated.

I look forward to receiving as soon as possible a copy of Frances Price's paper.

Yours sincerely,
George D. Pinker.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Violent Deaths

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total number of deaths caused by violence in Northern Ireland in the years *(a)* 1984, *(b)* 1985, *(c)* 1986, *(d)* 1987, *(e)* 1988, and *(f)* 1989 respectively, and how this was subdivided by the number of (i) Catholics, (1) civilian, and (2) Irish Republican Army or paramilitary groups (ii) Protestants (1) civilian, and (2) Ulster Defence Regiment or other paramilitary groups (iii) security forces (1) local or (2) British and (iv) others.

Mr. Cope: A total of 427 deaths arose from the security situation in Northern Ireland during the period 1984-89. The data collated do not differentiate between Catholic and Protestant, or civilians or paramilitary groupings. The table sets out the available information:

Deaths in Northern Ireland arising from the security situation

	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
RUC	9	23	12	16	6	9
Regular Army	9	2	4	3	21	12
UDR	10	4	8	8	12	2
Civilians[1]	36	25	37	66	54	39
Total	64	54	61	93	93	62

[1]category includes known or suspected terrorists.

Condoms

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will make representations at a meeting of the Anglo-Irish ministerial conference to have the present prohibition on the sale of condoms in the Virgin Megastore in Dublin removed.

Mr. Brooke: The matter is not one which it would be appropriate to raise at a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference.

Replacement Dwellings

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he proposes to introduce conditions requiring the demolition of the building to be replaced to be attached to grants of permission for replacement buildings.

Mr. Needham: No. Each application is treated on its merits.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the average size of approved replacement dwellings in amenity areas of special control in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Pensioners' Christmas Bonus

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has any plans to increase the Christmas bonus for pensioners in December 1990.

Mr. Needham: I have no plans to do so.

Beef Premium

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many farmers applied for special beef premium between 1 April 1989 and 31 March 1990; and, of these, how many were accepted and payment made.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Between 3 April 1989 (the commencement date of the scheme) and 31 March 1990, 23,375 farmers submitted 37,595 applications for beef special premium. Of these, 36,761 have been accepted and paid to date; 337 applications have been disallowed.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reasons were given for disallowing claims in respect of special beef premium between 1 April 1989 and 31 March 1990.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The reasons for disallowance of claims were:

(a) Failure to comply with the on-farm retention requirement.
(b) Inclusion in claims of animals on which premium had previously been paid.
(c) Inclusion in claims of female cattle.
(d) Inclusion in claims of animals below the minimum eligible age of 8 months at date of lodgement of the claim.
(e) Producers making more than three claims (the maximum permitted) in a calendar year.

Reduced Earnings Allowance

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons in Northern Ireland receive reduced earnings allowance; and what were the total sums paid out in Northern Ireland during the last two financial years for which figures are available.

Mr. Needham: At 8 May 1990 4,191 persons in Northern Ireland were receiving reduced earnings allowance.

Over £13 million was paid in benefits (including reduced earnings allowance) under the industrial injuries scheme in Northern Ireland in each of the 1987-88 and 1988-89 financial years. Separate figures are not available for reduced earnings allowance.

Teachers

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total amount of teaching time taught by part-time teachers and in the form of additional hours for full-time teachers in the North Eastern education and library board area additional hours budget, broken down by college.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The hours taught by part-time teachers and the additional hours taught by full-time teachers vary throughout the year depending on demand. However, all FE colleges make a standard return each year to the Department of Education in respect of the position in the third week of October. In the week ending 20 October 1989 the following hours were worked in colleges in the North-Eastern Board area.

	Part-time hours	*Additional hours*
Antrim	209·9	27·4
Ballymena	376·42	130·50
Coleraine	169·5	100
Larne	109	13
Magherafelt	129·07	68·68
Newtownabbey	489·96	44·46
North Antrim	85	55
Northern Ireland Hotel and Catering College	41·16	2·66

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total number of part-time lecturers employed in each further education college in the North Eastern education and library board area, broken down by college.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The use of part-time lecturers is reported to the Department of Education annually to show the position in the third week of October. In the North-Eastern Education and Library Board area the following numbers of part-time lecturers were employed in the week ending 20 October 1989.

	Number
Antrim	48
Ballymena	78
Coleraine	40
Larne	24
Magherafelt	23
Newtownabbey	140
North Antrim	28
Northern Ireland Hotel and Catering College	5

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Department of Education has approved the 24 redundancies announced by the North Eastern education and library board.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The North-Eastern Education and Library Board has assessed the number of full-time lecturers which each of its further education colleges will require to deliver the youth training programme courses under the new block funding arrangements and has decided that the existing number of full-time YTP posts should be reduced. The revised number of YTP posts has been agreed with the Department of Education.

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what specific measures have been taken by the North Eastern education and library board to avoid redundancies.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The board has examined the possibility of redeployment within each college and to other colleges and schools in its area. It has also identified a number of full-time lecturers who wish to take early retirement. These steps have reduced the number of compulsory redundancies to a minimum.

Further Education Colleges

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken by the North Eastern library board to avoid religious discrimination against Catholics in further education colleges.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The North-Eastern education and library board has published an equal opportunities policy statement indicating its commitment to the principle of equal opportunity in relation to both persons seeking to be employed by the board and persons already so employed. The board has recently made its statutory monitoring return to the Fair Employment Commission and will be reviewing its current position to determine if any corrective action is required to redress any imbalances that might be shown to be present.

Training

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the staff/student ratio for each YTP course in the North Eastern education and library board area.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The information requested is not available in respect of each individual YTP course. However, the staff/student ratio in respect of the YTP provision in each college in the North-Eastern education and library board at 31 December 1989 was as follows:

	Ratio
Antrim	7·7
Ballymena	13·7
Ballymoney	6·6
Coleraine	7·7
Larne	10·1
Magherafelt	11·1
Newtownabbey	8·5

SOCIAL SECURITY

Bishopbriggs Resettlement Unit

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will provide a breakdown by age of the residents in the Bishopbriggs resettlement unit in the last full year for which figures are available;

(2) if he will provide a statistical breakdown of the length of stay of residents in the Bishopbriggs resettlement unit in the last year for which figures are available;

(3) what was the total number of people who used the Bishopbriggs resettlement unit in the last full year for which figures are available;

(4) if he will list the agencies which have referred individuals to the Bishopbriggs resettlement unit in the latest 12-month period for which figures are available, and the number of individuals referred to each agency.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is not available.

The resettlement agency does not collect detailed statistics of individual residents because resettlement unit residents, who by definition are a transient population, are often resentful of detailed questioning. When admitting people the aim is to provide warmth, shelter and food and to restrict questions and statistics to the absolute minimum.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the total number of bed spaces available for use at the Bishopbriggs resettlement unit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The number of bed spaces available at Glasgow resettlement unit (Bishopbriggs) is 77.

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing unemployment benefit, including earnings-related supplement, as a percentage of average earnings for the years *(a)* 1972, *(b)* 1979, *(c)* 1982, *(d)* 1987 and *(e)* 1989 for a single person and a married man with two children, both on average earnings.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is in the table.

	Single person			*Married man with 2 children*		
Year	*1 Average weekly earnings (£)*	*2 Standard rate unemployment benefit[1] (£)*	*3 Benefit as a percentage of net income[3]*	*4 Average weekly earnings[2] (£)*	*5 Standard rate unemployment benefit[1,2] (£)*	*6 Benefit as a percentage of net income[2,3]*
October 1972	39·70	13·75	47·7	40·60	22·10	68·0
November 1979	114·10	31·79	39·8	122·10	54·64	59·7
November 1982	160·60	25·00	23·3	172·30	52·75	42·5
April 1987	224·00	31·45	20·2	238·50	65·35	36·8
April 1989	269·50	34·70	18·1	284·00	70·60	33·1

[1] Earnings-related supplement is included with the rate of unemployment benefit up to and including November 1979.
[2] The amounts at columns 4, 5 and 6 include family allowance/child benefit.
[3] Net income used in columns 3 and 6 is income after deduction of tax and national insurance contributions.

Social Fund

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will be making extra staffing available for social fund duties to improve the rate of unprocessed applications.

Mr. Scott: Compared with the year 1989-90, the share of the total staff resources allocated to social fund increased by 1,615 posts for the year 1990-91. These resources, available to local offices from April 1990, reflect the ongoing review of resource requirements carried out by the Department. Both the resource needs and organisation of the social fund in local offices will continue to be kept under review by departmental officials.

National Insurance

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps are being taken by his Department to improve the collection of outstanding national insurance contributions from employers and employees; and what are the specific staffing, computerisation and time resources committed to collection.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) on 21 May at columns *80-81* about improving the collection of national insurance contributions.

At present some 1,600 inspectors are employed. There will be better training for these inspectors and in the first instance there will be 100 more of them to perform the tasks.

A fully computerised national insurance records system is used for recording contributions and providing information in relation to benefit claims. It also identifies potential underpayment and non-payment of contributions in relation to employed people and employers. It is the intention to develop further the information technology support available, to record such contributions and to assist the inspectorate.

Student Benefits

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many representations he has received concerning the proposals to remove students from income support, unemployment benefit and housing benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Representations have been received from a number of individuals and organisations, including the National Union of Students and other organisations representing students' interests, the all-party disablement group, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, the British Dyslexia Association and the Dyslexia Educational Trust.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the circumstances in which he would consider reinstating student entitlement to housing benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The Government's view is that students should generally be supported by the educational maintenance system and not social security benefits, although students in vulnerable groups will retain eligibility for housing benefit and income support. The introduction of student loans and the creation of the access funds will result in an increase in student support of well over £100 million in the 1990-91 academic year. The operation and adequacy of these new funding arrangements will be kept under review.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to monitor the impact the withdrawal of entitlement to housing benefit will have on the income of students attending institutions of higher education in areas of high-cost rented accommodation.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The Government are considering a further survey of students' income and expenditure following the introduction of student loans and withdrawal of benefits from most full-time students. In addition, we will be monitoring the operation and adequacy of the access funds.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when the Social Security Advisory Committee reports on Government proposals to withdraw student entitlement to social security benefits are to be published; and when the Government plans to respond to the reports.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We are giving careful consideration to the report of the Social Security Advisory Committee on draft regulations to implement our policy on students' benefit entitlement. The report will be published when that consideration has been completed.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what external advice his Department has received on the legal status of his proposals to withdraw entitlement to unemployment benefit for students who have made national insurance contributions.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We are satisfied, following legal advice, that we have the necessary statutory powers.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he plans to publish the regulations cancelling student entitlement to housing benefit and social security.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We are currently considering the implications of amendments to the Social Security Bill carried in the House of Lords, and we will make an announcement about timing of regulations in due course.

Pensions

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the cost to the national insurance fund of incentives to take up contracted out personal pension plans in the financial years 1989-90; and if he will provide estimates for 1990-91 and succeeding years.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The cost to the national insurance fund in 1989-90 of the 2 per cent. incentive payments to personal pensions was about £680 million; this represented payments of incentives in respect of both of the years 1987-88 and 1988-89.

By the end of the year 1989-90 a little over 4 million personal pensions were in force. Assuming that the number in force remains constant through to 1992-93 the estimated cost in 1990-91 is £500 million (relating to year 1989-90) and in the years 1991-92 to 1993-94 (relating to years 1990-91 to 1992-93) the estimated cost can be expected to rise in line with general increases in earnings.

Family Credit

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will estimate the latest figure of the number of people claiming family credit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest information about the family credit caseload, to include backdated awards, is a provisional figure for the end of March 1990 of 308,000.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will extend mobility allowance to children under five years of age.

Mr. Scott: We have no plans to do so.

SCOTLAND

Animal Cruelty

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will seek to extend the sentencing provisions of the Protection of Animals (Penalties) Act 1987 relating to the penalties for those found guilty of animal cruelty and in particular those involved in dog fighting, so as to cover Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: The Government intend to seek to increase the maximum fine available to the Scottish courts in respect of offences of cruelty to animals at the next suitable legislative opportunity.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the total number of bovine spongiform encephalopathy cases which have been confirmed, by covenient geographical area within Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Bovine spongiform encephalopathy was made notifiable on 21 June 1988. Records kept from November 1986 to 8 June 1990 show 456 confirmed cases have been recorded in Scotland. The incidence by region is as follows:

	Number
Borders	15
Central	17
Dumfries and Galloway	79
Fife	30
Grampian	104
Highland	29
Lothian	14
Orkney	6
Shetland	2
Strathclyde	125
Tayside	35
Western Isles	—

Estate Agents

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to introduce legislation to regulate the activities of estate agents in Scotland.

Mr. Forth: I have been asked to reply.

The Estate Agents Act 1979 and its subordinate legislation already regulates the activities of estate agents in Scotland, as elsewhere in the United Kingdom. I announced on 19 April my intention to make, and lay before Parliament, orders under section 3 and regulations under section 18 of the Act to deal with malpractices by some estate agents and to add to the list of offences which can trigger banning action (*Official Report*, columns *1009-10*). Drafts of the orders and regulations, which will apply throughout the United Kingdom, were sent out on 18 June for consultation. It is also the Government's intention, as soon as legislative time is available, to amend the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, which applies to Scotland, to cover misdescription of property.

Drugs

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which organisation will be responsible for paying drug addicts to attend drug dependency units when general practitioners have their own budgets.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Drug addicts are not paid to attend drug dependency services. The introduction of general practitioner practice funding will have no detrimental effect on health care provision for drug misusers. A general practitioner fund will take account of factors such as the profile of the practice list, previous hospital treatment and prescribing patterns, and the number of potentially "high-cost" patients. There will therefore be no financial or budgetary disincentive to general practice fund holders taking on drug misusers as patients and referring them to hospital or community-based services when necessary. In their assessment of the health needs of their resident population and of the range of provision required, health boards will be able to ensure that the needs of potentially vulnerable groups such as drug misusers are properly taken into account.

Handicapped Prisoners

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether there is any extra provision of services and support for prisoners who are physically or mentally handicapped; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Physically and mentally handicapped prisoners are assessed by the medical officer on arrival at prison regarding their general condition, mobility and awareness of their situation. Prison establishments seek to meet the needs of these inmates on an individual basis. The medical officer ensures continuation of any medication in addition to referral, as required, for psychiatric and psychological opinion.

Students

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what level of community charge students in Scotland who pay 20 per cent. of the community charge where they are studying, pay on their own property which is not classified as their sole or main residence, or is empty for three months or more.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Regulation 4 of, and paragraph 4 of schedule 2 to the Standard Community Charge (Scotland) Regulations 1989 prescribe a standard community charge multiplier of 0 (that is, no charge payable) in respect of a dwellinghouse.

(a) in respect of which the standard community charge is, or would be, but for the regulations, payable by a person who is undertaking a full-time course of education or nursing education within the meaning of section 8 of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended; and

(b) which was the sole or main residence of that person immediately before he undertook that course.

Bathing Beaches

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the beaches that meet the blue flag award standards, and those which fail to match the criteria of the scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The blue flag award scheme is organised under the patronage and sponsorship of the European Commission. The criteria for the award of a blue flag relate both to water quality and to the management of the beach and its general facilities. It is for local authorities to decide whether they wish to apply for such awards for beaches in their areas. I understand that currently no Scottish beaches hold a blue flag award.

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the implications of reduction in the Homoptera section of the natural history museum for Scottish agriculture and horticulture.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No implications for Scottish agriculture and horticulture as a result of restructuring within the natural history museum are anticipated.

Fishing Industry

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration he has given to the self-decommissioning plans submitted by one of the United Kingdom's fishing vessel agencies; and whether such a plan would be eligible for European Community aid.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The success of such a scheme would be dependent on the support of the industry itself. When my right hon. and learned Friend met representatives of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation on 8 May he encouraged them to let him have their views on the proposals but they are still considering the matter. The question of European Community aid is a matter for the Commission in the first instance.

Methane Discharges

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he first learnt of the intention by the operators of St. Fergus gas terminal to release a quantity of methane into the atmosphere; if his approval was sought; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Shell UK Ltd. approached HM industrial pollution inspectorate for Scotland in January 1990 to discuss its plans for depressurising the main gas line in order to permit it to comply with the requirements of the Off-shore Installations (Emergency Pipeline Value) Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/1092) introduced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy following the Piper Alpha disaster. The plans included a proposal for venting a quantity of methane to atmosphere.

A consent from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy is required under section 12 of the Energy Act 1976 for any discharge of methane into the atmosphere.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy in respect of treatment of methane discharges resulting from pipe replacements at gas terminals.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Gas terminals are scheduled works under the terms of the Health and Safety (Emissions into the Atmosphere) Regulations 1983. Section 5 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places a duty on the owners of such works to use the best practicable means to prevent the emission into the atmosphere of noxious or offensive substances and for rendering harmless and inoffensive such substances as may be so emitted. This duty applies to the control of hydrocarbon discharges arising from pipe replacements.

All discharges whether by flaring or releasing unignited natural gas into the atmosphere require the consent of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy under section 12 of the Energy Act 1976.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to require the 14,000 tonnes of methane anticipated to be released in the process of pipe work at the St. Fergus gas terminal to be flared off; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Following discussions with Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate, Shell UK Ltd has undertaken to dispose of any gas which cannot be utilised by burning it at the St. Fergus terminal in facilities provided for that purpose. The quantity of gas requiring disposal by this means is not expected to exceed 5,400 tonnes.

There is provision on site to safely vent the gas to atmosphere via an elevated stack but flaring the gas is the preferred environmental option.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has made an assessment of the environmental implications resulting from the release of a large quantity of unflared methane from the St. Fergus gas terminal; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Assessments of the environmental impact of venting methane at the St. Fergus gas terminal have been made on behalf of the company and these have been considered by Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate.

Mr. Saied Ebrahimi

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information was given to the Crown Office about an incident on 5 June on flight PA61; what action was subsequently taken in relation to Mr. Saied Ebrahimi; and what were the circumstances under which the legal action against him was abandoned.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The full information given to Crown Office by the procurator fiscal at Ayr about an incident on flight PA61 is confidential. As has been stated by Crown Office, Crown counsel instructed the release of Mr. Saeid Ebrahimi from custody. The reasons for Crown counsel's decisions are not disclosed.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fur Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he takes to satisfy himself as to the proper dispersal of mink remaining in fur factory farms which close.

Mr. Maclean: Farmers disposing of their mink must inform the local MAFF office, which issued their licence. They must also inform recipients of the mink of the obligation to obtain a licence. Deliberately releasing mink into the wild is an offence.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many mink fur factory farms there are in environmentally sensitive areas.

Mr. Maclean: None.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many chinchilla and fitch fur factory farms there are in the United Kingdom; and in which counties they are.

Mr. Maclean: Farmers do not need licences to keep these animals, and we do not collect this information.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what advice he has given to fur farmers in the light of current market conditions.

Mr. Maclean: It is for the fur industry to decide how to respond to market conditions.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will take steps to ensure that the Council of Europe's welfare standards for animals on fur factory farms which are currently under discussion will take full account of articles 3 and 4 of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes 1976.

Mr. Maclean: Any welfare standards agreed by the Council of Europe will be adopted as recommendations under article 9 of the convention. As such, their purpose is to set out detailed provisions for the implementation of the general principles contained in articles 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the convention.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many licences for fur factory farms on the Isle of Wight he has issued.

Mr. Maclean: One mink farm has been licensed annually on the Isle of Wight since 1986.

Mink

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if there is a feral wild population of mink on the Isle of Wight.

Mr. Maclean: There have been reports of feral mink on the Isle of Wight, but none confirmed.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has as to which species of native fauna aleutian disease may be transmitted by mink.

Mr. Maclean: I am not in a position to confirm the native fauna to which aleutian disease can definitely be transmitted from mink. However I am aware that the disease has been found in ferrets and polecats and that a disease similar to aleutian disease has been observed in otters.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action his officials take once aleutian disease is discovered in mink on farms.

Mr. Maclean: No statutory action is taken once the disease is discovered in mink on farms.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what percentage of mink in farms are infected with aleutian disease; and how many farms this affects.

Mr. Maclean: Since aleutian disease in minks is not a notifiable disease, no official statistics are available on its incidence in mink farms.

Arctic Foxes

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has concerning the incidence of feral Arctic foxes in the United Kingdom; and whether his Department has planned any response.

Mr. Maclean: There is no evidence of feral Arctic foxes in the United Kingdom.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how he proposes to implement the EEC ban on beef exports from herds which have had an incidence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy; whether the ban applies to herds in which were raised and sold cattle subsequently fallen to bovine spongiform encephalopathy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Beef will be exported from the United Kingdom to other European Community member states in accordance with European Community Decision 90/261 of 8 June 1990 and be certified as such. Bone-in beef for export must be derived from cattle which have not come from holdings in which bovine spongiform encephalopathy has been confirmed during the previous two years. Beef derived from cattle from any holding can enter into intra-Community trade in boneless form.

Advisory Committee on Pesticides

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether members of the advisory committee on pesticides have to declare any interest or connections with agrochemical industries; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what information he has as to how many members of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides act as paid consultants to companies which produce or market pesticides; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Members of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides sign a declaration that they have no commercial or financial interest which would be likely to prejudice their work on the committee.

ADAS

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 6 May, *Official Report*, column *468*, if he will provide information for the South Western and Wales regions not included in the table; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The information on regional training on wildlife and landscape conservation for the South Western region and Wales is as follows:

	1987	*1988*	*1989*	[1]*1990*
South Western	2	1	1	1
Wales	—	1	—	2

[1] Planned.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the number of national training courses on wildlife and landscape conservation that have been held for Agricultural Development Advisory Service officers in 1989.

Mr. Maclean: One national training course on wildlife and landscape conservation was held in 1989 for specialist Agricultural Development and Advisory Service advisers.

Emphasis is now placed on regionally based conservation training, and in 1989, 11 courses were held for ADAS advisers.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 6 May, *Official Report*, columns *468-69*, if he will list the location, date and subject matter to be discussed at the six national and eleven regional training courses proposed for Agricultural Development Advisory Service officers in the current year.

Mr. Maclean: National and regional training courses completed or proposed for Agricultural Development and Advisory Service advisers in the current year are as follows:

Location	*Date*	*Subject*
National Courses		
Worcestershire	February	Field margins
London	March	Ponds and lakes
Shropshire	June	Grassland
Shropshire	September	Wetland and woodland
Shropshire	September	Wetland and woodland
Regional Courses		
Yorkshire	May	Species identification
Yorkshire	May	Habitat recognition and landscape appreciation
Warwickshire	May	Habitat recognition and landscape appreciation
Warwickshire	June	Habitat recognition and landscape appreciation
Warwickshire	June	Habitat recognition and landscape appreciation
Somerset	June	Habitat recognition and landscape appreciation
West Sussex	July	Habitat recognition and landscape appreciation
Dyfed	September	Heather and moorland management

Details of the remaining one national and three regional courses have yet to be confirmed.

Farm Animal Welfare

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the expenditure incurred giving the last full financial year by his Department, item by item, on farm animal welfare.

Mr. Maclean: The Department's expenditure in connection with farm animal welfare was estimated at £2·5 million in 1989-90. This comprised £2·4 million staff costs and £0·1 million for Farm Animal Welfare Council expenses. A further breakdown by item is not available.

Census Returns

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the data from each of the 1987, 1988 and 1989 agricultural census returns at parish level will be available at the Public Record Office at Kew.

Mr. Maclean: The dispatch of 1987 agricultural census returns at parish level to the Public Record Office at Kew was completed on 25 May 1990. It is anticipated that the 1988 returns will be sent to the Public Record Office in February 1991.

Due to the rapidly increasing use of census data, and the availability of more powerful analytical tools, a review is currently being carried out of the appropriate level of aggregation for publication of agriculture census data. Until this review has been completed information requested for 1989 returns cannot be supplied.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food why parish level agricultural census returns are no longer available for public inspection at the Ministry censuses and surveys division at Guildford; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Parish level agricultural census returns are now held at the Ministry offices at Guildford for the latest published year only. There is insufficient space at Guildford to retain returns for earlier years and provide adequate facilities for the public to inspect them. Data from the latest published years returns are supplied by Guildford staff to the public by telephone (minor enquiries only) and, more normally, by post upon payment of the pre-determined fee.

Parish level agricultural census returns for earlier years are available for public inspection at the Public Record Office at Kew.

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the implications for *(a)* agricultural research and *(b)* fisheries related research of reductions in the Heteroptera section of the natural history museum.

Mr. Maclean: The Departments' central science laboratory has expertise in entomology and is involved in the identification of storage pests, plant pests and beneficial insects. For this purpose, reference collections of insects are essential and those at the natural history museum are used periodically by visiting MAFF staff. We do not expect the planned changes at the natural history museum to affect our use of these collections. The Heteroptera section of the museum has no practical relevance to the fisheries interests of the Department.

Countryside Survey

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has been consulted by the Natural Environment Research Council on its proposed 1990 countryside survey; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I have been asked to reply.

The 1990 countryside survey is jointly funded by the Natural Environment Research Council and DOE. Officials of my Department have consulted the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Officials during the formative stages of the project and MAFF will participate in monitoring its progress.

DEFENCE

Bush-Gorbachev Summit

13. **Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the defence implications for the United Kingdom of the recent Bush-Gorbachev summit.

22. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the defence implications for the United Kingdom of the recent Bush-Gorbachev summit.

66. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the defence implications for the United Kingdom of the recent Bush-Gorbachev summit.

100. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the implications for British defence policy of agreements on defence matters concluded between the presidents of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Tom King: NATO allies are agreed that our peace and security will continue to depend on nuclear deterrence; for this policy to be effective, nuclear systems will need to be kept up to date where necessary.

48. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress he expects to be made in the removal of nuclear weapons from Europe, following the summit which took place earlier this month between the leaders of the United States of America and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I welcome the progress made at the recent superpower summit on the wide range of security issues that were discussed. With regard to the removal of nuclear weapons from Europe, I look forward to the successful completion of the process of removal of all United States and Soviet intermediate-range forces from Europe provided for under the INF treaty. NATO has also made clear that it endorses the United States intention to begin negotiations with the Soviet Union on short-range nuclear forces shortly after the conclusion of a treaty on limiting conventional forces in Europe.

Nuclear Weapons

18. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if in the light of the recent summit between Presidents Gorbachev and Bush, he has undertaken a review of his policy of retaining nuclear weapons on the Clyde.

Mr. Tom King: We welcome the progress made at the United States-Soviet summit in Washington, and, like both those countries, we intend to retain sufficient strategic nuclear deterrent forces to guarantee our security.

33. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consideration has been given to the deployment of nuclear armed sea-launched missiles.

71. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consideration has been given to the deployment of nuclear armed sea-launched missiles.

86. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consideration has been given to the deployment of nuclear armed sea-launched missiles.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave on 5 April at column *832*.

95. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed the safety arrangements for the transportation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed the safety arrangements for the transportation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Safety arrangements for the transportation of nuclear weapons are kept continuously under review.

Defence Review

19. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to reduce spending on defence in the light of developments in east Europe; and if he will make a statement.

52. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for a full-scale defence review.

57. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the internal reassessment of United Kingdom defence commitments and expenditure currently being undertaken within his Department.

Mr. Tom King: As I made clear in my speech yesterday opening the defence debate, we are examining options for change in the structure and deployment of our armed forces in the light of changing international circumstances.

81. **Mr. Cabora:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received suggesting (i) reduction of the Royal Navy to 32 ships and (ii) reduction of the Army to 32 battalions; and if he will make a statement.

94. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received suggesting *(a)* reduction of the Royal Navy to 32 ships and *(b)* reduction of the Army to 32 battalions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received suggesting *(a)* reduction of the Royal Navy to 32 ships and *(b)* reduction of the Army to 32 battalions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A range of possible changes to the structure of our forces is being considered in the light of the changing international situation. A number of representations have been received from hon. Members and members of the public.

82. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce his proposals following consideration of the forthcoming report on options for change within NATO.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 14 June at column *330*.

West German Defence Minister

20. **Mr. Allen Mackey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his West German counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

38. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his West German counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

111. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his West German counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier to the hon. Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell).

Frigates

21. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to place the next batch of orders for type 23 frigates.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about frigate procurement and the likely needs of the Royal Navy in this field.

Mr. Neubert: As I informed the House during the Navy debate on 5 February, at column 657, we plan to invite tenders for a further batch of type 23 frigates towards the end of this year. A decision on the size and timing of an order will be made once tenders are submitted by shipyards.

START Agreement

23. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the defence implications for Trident and United States supply of the D-5 missile of a START agreement.

60. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the defence implications for Trident and United States supply of the D-5 missile of a START agreement.

63. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the defence implications for Trident and United States supply of the D-5 missile of a START agreement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There is none.

Military Assistance

24. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military assistance programmes his Department has with overseas Governments.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to paragraph 212 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990", Vol. 1 (Cm. 1022-1).

Defence Diversification Agency

25. **Mrs. Peacock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department intends establishing a defence diversification agency.

92. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department intends establishing a defence diversification agency.

107. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department intends establishing a defence diversification agency.

Mr. Alan Clark: No. It is for the commercial judgment of management to decide in which markets its company competes.

Radar Stations

26. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about radar stations in the United Kingdom.

27. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about radar stations in the United Kingdom.

50. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many representations have been received by his Department on the proposed development of the over-the-horizon radar near St. David's in Dyfed.

110. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about radar stations in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies).

Low Flying

28. **Sir David Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to respond to the Defence Select Committee's report of the current session on low flying.

Mr. Neubert: As with all Select Committee reports, the aim is to reply within two months of publication of the report.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about low flying below 250 ft.

39. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about low flying below 250 ft.

46. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about low flying below 250 ft.

Mr. Neubert: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given earlier today to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike).

76. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the report of the Defence Select Committee into low flying.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the conclusions of the Defence Select Committee's report on low flying; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: The report by the House of Commons Defence Committee on low flying (HC 120) is currently

being considered very carefully. There will be a response to all of the report's recommendations in the Government's reply to the Committee.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

29. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations his Department has received from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament since the publication of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990".

75. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations his Department has received from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament since the publication of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990".

109. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations his Department has received from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament since the publication of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990".

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A number of representations have been received since 2 April.

Ulster Defence Regiment

30. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on the level of recruitment for the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The level of UDR recruitment remains sufficient to enable the UDR to carry out its duties in support of the RUC.

Soviet Union (Threat Assessment)

31. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has altered its threat assessment of the Soviet Union.

68. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has altered its threat assessment of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 6 February 1990, at column *600*.

Warsaw Pact

32. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what defence contacts his Department has made over the past 12 months with Warsaw pact countries.

65. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what defence contacts his Department has made over the past 12 months with Warsaw pact countries.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: During the past 12 months there have been regular meetings with representatives of Warsaw pact nations at ministerial and official level. Recent contacts have included a visit by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the Soviet Union last month, and a meeting between my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces and counterparts from Poland, Norway and France in Oslo on 26 May. I recently met the German Democratic Republic State Secretary for Defence, Herr Marczinek in London.

Military Doctrine

34. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution his Department made to the military doctrine seminar held in Vienna under the confidence and security building measures negotiations.

40. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution his Department made to the military doctrine seminar held in Vienna under the confidence and security building measures negotiations.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) on 3 April at column *594*.

Nuclear Test Victims

35. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about the level of compensation for nuclear test victims.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A number of recent representations have been received from right hon. and hon. Members and other regarding compensation for nuclear test veterans.

Armed Forces (Women Employees)

36. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department is taking for the wider employment of women in the armed forces.

59. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department is taking for the wider employment of women in the armed forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Navy is extending the role of the Women's Royal Naval Service to include service at sea in surface ships. The number of posts open to women in the Regular Army is being increased by up to 6,000 and in the Territorial Army by up to 4,000. The RAF has started recruiting women as pilots and navigators and is increasing the number of women in ground trades by 2,000. These developments will offer a wider range of job opportunities to women and we shall continue to explore the possibility of opening further employment areas to them.

Defence Procurement

37. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken in connection with defence procurement costings.

44. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken in connection with defence procurement costings.

12. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken in connection with defence procurement costings.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy).

58. **Mr. Maples:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department is taking to gain value for money in defence procurement.

96. **Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department is taking to gain value for money in defence procurement.

Mr. Alan Clark: As part of our commercial approach to defence procurement we seek value for money through the use of competition wherever possible and the encouragement of the widest possible range of companies to compete for contracts. In the year to 31 March 1990 a record 67 per cent. by value of all contracts and amendments were let competitively, or priced otherwise by reference to market forces.

Soviet Union

41. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about his recent visit to the Soviet Union.

108. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about his recent visit to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Tom King: I visited the Soviet Union from 14-18 May at the invitation of Marshal Yazov, the Minister of Defence. As well as having several useful meetings with Marshall Yazov and his senior colleagues, I called on the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I also visited Soviet army units at Ryazan Leningrad, the Black Sea fleet at Sevastogol and the air force base at Kubinka.

Throughout my visit I was received with great warmth and openness, which indicated the good bilateral relationship that now exists between two countries.

NATO Summit

42. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the defence implications arising from the NATO summit at Turnberry, Scotland on 7 and 8 June.

56. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the defence implications arising from the NATO summit at Turnberry, Scotland on 7 and 8 June.

97. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the defence implications arising from the NATO summit at Turnberry, Scotland on 7 and 8 June.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: NATO Foreign Ministers attended a meeting of the North Atlantic Council at Turnberry on 7 and 8 June. They discussed a range of politico-military issues including German unification and progress in arms control negotiations. A copy of the communiqué has been placed in the Library of the House.

Warships

43. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the average operational availability of frigates and destroyers.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: In 1989-90 an average of 42 out of 48 destroyers and frigates were available for operational deployment either immediately or within a short period.

Bullying

45. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent steps have been taken to counter bullying in the armed forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The armed forces have banned all initiation ceremonies and the subject of bullying is covered on various officers' and NCOs' courses. The Army has made significant progress towards implementing the range of measures announced to the House on 7 June 1988 by my right hon. Friend the Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman). It has been made clear throughout the services that bullyng and ill-treatment will not be tolerated, and that every allegation is viewed most seriously and will be thoroughly investigated.

Military Exercises

47. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he intends to change the arrangements for military exercises in urban areas.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Such arrangements are revised when necessary.

Soviet Navy (Modernisation)

49. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his Department's assessment of the Soviet Navy's modernisation programme.

61. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his Department's assessment of the Soviet Navy's modernisation programme.

121. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his Department's assessment of the Soviet Navy's modernisation programme.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague) on 3 April 1990 at column *600*.

Army Equipment Exhibition

51. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements he has made for accountability of arms sales abroad arising from the British Army equipment exhibition at Aldershot on 3 to 8 June.

93. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements he has made for accountability of arms sales abroad arising from the British Army equipment exhibition at Aldershot on 3 to 8 June.

Mr. Alan Clark: No special arrangements are needed in respect of defence equipment sales arising from the British Army equipment exhibition at Aldershot on 3 to 8 June 1990. No defence exports are permitted unless they are consistent with the national interest and our international obligations.

Radiation

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consideration he has given to the level of radiation exposure of submariners and dockyard workers.

53. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consideration he has given to the level of radiation exposure of submariners and dockyard workers.

79. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consideration he has given to the level of radiation exposure of submariners and dockyard workers.

Mr. Neubert: Radiation exposures are authorised only on the basis that they are justified, comply with MOD and statutory limits and are as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP). They are kept under continuous review.

Trident

54. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current position of the Trident programme.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Trident programme is on time and within budget and continues to make satisfactory progress towards its in-service date of the mid-1990s.

67. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to reduce the number of Trident submarines on order in view of the new international climate.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: While the Government welcome recent positive developments in the international climate, there nevertheless remain considerable uncertainties, and we therefore fully support the view of the NATO alliance that for the foreseeable future the deterrence of war will continue to require the maintenance of strategic nuclear forces. In the circumstances we remain entirely convinced of the need for Trident. We continue to plan on the basis of a four-boat force, which will provide us with the means to ensure that one boat can be kept on patrol at all times.

Air-to-surface Missiles

55. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the proposed sitings of tactical air-to-surface missiles.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo) on 15 June at column *379*.

Fisheries Protection

62. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the vessels assigned to fisheries protection duties by *(a)* type, *(b)* overall length, *(c)* gross-registered tonnage, *(d)* age and *(e)* the estimated dates of contracts for the construction of replacement vessels.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested is given in the table. It is envisaged that, for the foreseeable future, the fishery protection task will be carried out using existing vessels.

Name and type	*Length overall (meters)*	*Displacement (tons)*	*Age (years)*
Alderney Offshore patrol vessel	59·5	925	10
Anglesey Offshore patrol vessel	59·5	925	11
Blackwater Minesweeper	47·5	[1]890	4
Brereton Minehunter	46·6	360	35
Dumbarton Castle Offshore patrol vessel	81	1,427	8
Guernsey Offshore patrol vessel	59·5	925	12
Jersey Offshore patrol vessel	59·5	925	13
Kellington Minehunter	46·6	360	34
Lindisfarne Offshore patrol vessel	59·5	925	12
Orkney Offshore patrol vessel	59·5	925	13
Shetland Offshore patrol vessel	59·5	925	12
Soberton Minesweeper	46·6	360	32
Upton Minesweeper	46·6	360	33

[1] Full load tonnage.

Volunteer Reserve Forces

64. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what success the volunteer reserve forces campaign has had since its launch in September 1988.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Response to the volunteer reserve forces campaign has been most encouraging with pledges of support for the volunteer reserves received from over 1,100 major employers representing well over half of the United Kingdom work force. We are confident that the campaign has widened public understanding of the importance of the volunteer reserves.

NATO Comprehensive Concept

69. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department is still working to NATO's comprehensive concept.

118. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department is still working to NATO's comprehensive concept.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The principles of alliance security set out in the comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament, reaffirmed by the defence planning committee in May, will remain the basis for our further work in taking forward the review of NATO strategy.

Mr. Colin Wallace (Allegations)

70. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will widen the inquiry arising from the allegations made by Mr. Colin Wallace to include new allegations concerning authorisation of dirty tricks by Ministry of Defence staff.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I am aware of no new allegations for which there is substantive evidence which would justify a wider inquiry.

United States Defence Minister

72. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his United States counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

87. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his United States counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

105. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his United States counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend had discussions with Secretary Cheney on a range of current defence issues at the NATO nuclear planning group and defence planning committee meetings in May. He expects to meet him again later this year at NATO ministerial meetings.

Tanks

73. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration has been given to the method of eliminating tanks following a CFE agreement.

88. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration has been given to the method of eliminating tanks following a CFE agreement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Considerable work has been done on establishing an efficient method of destroying tanks following a CFE agreement. The United Kingdom has made a significant and well-received contribution to this, involving disablement by explosives.

Aldermaston A-90 Building

74. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the construction of the Aldermaston A-90 building.

99. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the construction of the Aldermaston A-90 building.

114. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the construction of the Aldermaston A-90 building.

Mr. Neubert: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) on 18 May 1990 at column *578*.

Peacekeeping

77. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the number of countries in which the United Kingdom carries out a peacekeeping role.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to page 23 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990", Vol. 1 (Cm. 1022-1) which gives an account of the United Kingdom armed forces' involvement in international peacekeeping and monitoring operations during 1989-90. The British contingent to UNTAG in Namibia has since been withdrawn on the successful completion of its task.

Emergency Assistance

78. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance his Department has given in the past 12 months to the civil community.

89. **Mr. Dunn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what emergency assistance his Department has given in the past 12 months to the civil community.

Mr. Hamilton: In general, responsibility for providing emergency assistance to the civil community in the United Kingdom lies with the civil authorities. If required the Ministry of Defence is able to provide further assistance through a variety of means. Search and rescue teams are regularly in action and there is frequent small-scale co-operation between civil and military authorities.

In the United Kingdom during the last year, larger-scale service assistance was provided during the periods of severe weather in January and February. The services also provided temporary accident and emergency cover during the civilian ambulance services dispute.

Soviet Conventional Weapons

80. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made concerning Soviet production of conventional weapons over the past 12 months.

104. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made concerning Soviet production of conventional weapons over the past 12 months.

115. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made concerning Soviet production of conventional weapons over the past 12 months.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson) on 3 April 1990 at column *559*, which remains our most recent assessment.

Namibia

83. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution his Department made to the United Nations transition assistance group deployed to Namibia.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes).

BAOR (Nuclear Weapons)

84. **Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the safety of nuclear weapons assigned to the British Army of the Rhine.

90. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the safety of nuclear weapons assigned to the British Army of the Rhine.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock).

Astra

85. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department first met Astra representatives to discuss the proposed alleged Iraqi supergun.

Mr. Alan Clark: In the light of charges laid against individuals and in the light of the continuing investigation by Customs and Excise, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on these matters.

Dutch Defence Minister

91. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to meet his Dutch counterpart to discuss European defence and disarmament.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Mr. Michie).

Personnel Retention

98. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department is taking to retain trained service personnel.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We have taken a wide range of measures to encourage retention of trained service personnel. These include changes in pay and allowances, including the introduction of bonuses in areas where retention is a particular difficulty, and improvements in the quality of service life. We are also examining a range of options for offering service personnel further assistance with housing.

Western European Union

101. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution his Department makes to the Western European Union.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom is fully committed to the Western European Union and its aims. The British Government took a leading role in reviving the Western European Union in 1984. The Ministry of Defence contributes extensively to the work of the Western European Union in discussing defence matters of a specific European interest.

Surface Fleet

102. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his Department's policy on the size of the surface fleet.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Our policy at present is to maintain a surface fleet of about 50 destroyers and frigates, and three carriers. It is not possible to say at this stage how this policy might be affected by our current examination of options for change.

Environmental Protection

103. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department is taking to protect the environment.

Mr. Neubert: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King).

Tain Bombing Range

106. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will report on progress with regard to the noise evaluation survey in the vicinity of Tain bombing range; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The noise survey undertaken last month coincided with a prolonged period of adverse weather conditions. As this prevented collection of sufficient noise data to assess the noise environment a further survey is planned to take place at the beginning of July.

As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement said on 3 April at column 1016, a high priority is being given to this work. This remains the position and we shall endeavour to keep any delay in the publication of the noise report to the minimum consistent with the need to complete a thorough analysis and evaluation of the noise data.

European Fighter Aircraft

112. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the orders for the European fighter aircraft.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) on 26 March at column *24*.

NATO Secretary-General

113. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next intends to meet the Secretary-General of NATO; and what subjects he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend has regular meetings with the Secretary-General of NATO. The last occasion was at the NATO defence planning committee ministerial meeting last month. Their next scheduled meeting is in the autumn. A range of defence issues will be discussed.

RAF Biggin Hill

116. **Sir John Hunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further consideration has been given to the proposed closure of the officer and aircrew selection centre at RAF Biggin Hill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The case for the transfer of the selection centre to RAF Cranwell remains compelling on both operational and financial grounds. Preparations for the move are well in hand.

Mid-air Collision, Hexham

117. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the report on the mid-air collision near Hexham on 9 January to be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: A military aircraft accident summary will be published once the report of the board of inquiry has been completed. This is expected to be within the next few months.

Overseas Disaster Relief

119. **Mr. Fishburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance during the past year his Department has made to overseas disaster relief.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The major contribution made by the services in overseas disaster relief during 1989 was in the aftermath of hurrican Hugo in September. A full account is given at page 30 of the "Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990", Vol. 1 (Cm. 1022-1). In March 1990, a contingent of some 20 Royal Engineers from the garrison in Belize was deployed for four weeks to Western Samoa to help restore services and repair damage in the aftermath of cyclone Ofa.

Thurleigh Airfield

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what criteria he has laid down for permitted development of the airfield at Thurleigh;

(2) what proposals there are for providing road and rail access to Thurleigh airport to facilitate its development;

(3) what proposals there are, in the event of his Department not requiring the airfield at Thurleigh, for the sale of the freehold;

(4) whether development projects other than aircraft-related ones are envisaged for the use of the airfield at Thurleigh;

(5) whether research and development will continue to be undertaken at Thurleigh; and for what period.

Mr. Neubert: The future of the RAE Bedford (Thurleigh) airfield is under consideration as part of a study into the future of the three Procurement Executive airfields. It is too early to say what the outcome of the study might be.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much land, other than the actual airfield, at Thurleigh is owned by his Department;

(2) what acreage of land is involved in the area designated at the airfield at Thurleigh.

Mr. Neubert: The land in the ownership of the MOD at Bedford comprises 1,420 acres, of which the airfield occupies 1,206 acres.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to how many people live within *(a)* 1 mile, *(b)* 3 miles, *(c)* 5 miles and *(d)* 10 miles of Thurleigh airfield.

Mr. Neubert: This information is not held by the Ministry of Defence.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when he proposes to make a statement on the future of the airfields at Thurleigh, Boscombe Down and Farnborough;

(2) what consultation has taken place with local residents about the use of the airfield at Thurleigh.

Mr. Neubert: I hope to make a statement as soon as possible on the outcome of the procurement executive airfields study. There will be full consultation with interested parties.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what proposals have been put to him by United Parcel Services of the United States for the running of the airfield and facilities at Thurleigh;

(2) how many groups have approached him about the possible commercial use of the airfield at Thurleigh for freight movement.

Mr. Neubert: There have been a number of informal, preliminary inquiries about the possible commercial use of the airfield at Thurleigh. This has included an approach from United Parcels Service (UPS). Discussions are continuing. The details are a confidential matter between the parties concerned.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the annual cost of maintaining and administering the airfield at Thurleigh.

Mr. Neubert: The annual cost of operating the airfield at RAE Bedford is approximately £2 million.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what time scale he proposes to privatise the wind tunnels and related facilities at Thurleigh.

Mr. Neubert: There are no plans at present to privatise the wind tunnels and related facilities at Thurleigh.

Military Aircraft (Flying Levels)

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the minimum flying level for military aircraft in Britain and other countries in Europe.

Mr. Neubert: I refer my hon. Friend to the evidence on this subject which my Department presented during the recent Defence Committee inquiry into low flying and which is printed at page 168 of the Committee's fifth report for the Session 1989-90 (HC 120).

Territorial Army

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish recruitment targets for the Territorial army on a regional basis for the next 10 years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We have no plans to set recruitment targets for the Territorial Army on a regional basis.

Air Force Training

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what training role for air force students from Europe or overseas he plans for the period 1992 onward; and what scope he envisages for RAF establishments to train non-service pilots.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The MOD has no present plans post-1992 to relinquish its long-standing role to train students from other NATO or friendly overseas air forces. I would envisage only limited scope, at most, for training of non-service pilots.

Defence Spending

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his plans for future reductions in defence spending outlays.

Mr. Tom King: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) on 24 May 1990 at column *373*.

Military Sites (Environmental Impact)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has any plans to establish an environmental impact report programme at military sites; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert *[holding answer 14 June 1990]:* The MOD well recognises the potential for conflict between defence activities and the environment and the importance of monitoring our practice to ensure that adverse effects are avoided or minimised. Examples of such monitoring are environmental impact assessments, which are undertaken in the case of appropriate new projects, and the programme of noise surveys being undertaken at 40 military airfields.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to review the present safety of all seabed disposal areas used for (i) surplus explosives, (ii) surplus chemical and biological weapons and (iii) surplus radioactive materials arising from defence activities.

Mr. Neubert *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* Ministry of Defence seabed locations were chosen to ensure the safe disposal of the materials concerned. There are no grounds for a further review at present.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 20 June 1990

CIVIL SERVICE

Research and Development

131. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he intends to reply to the report of the Select Committee on Science and Technology entitled "Definitions of Research and Development"; and if he will make a statement.

132. **Mr. Sean Hughes:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he intends to reply to the report of the Select Committee on Science and Technology entitled "Definitions of Research and Development"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The Government welcome the Select Committee's report on definitions of research and development and will be making a considered response in due course.

Disabled People

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what his Department is doing to promote equality of opportunity in the civil service for people with disabilities.

Mr. Luce: A revised code of practice on the employment of people with disabilities in the civil service will be published tomorrow. I have arranged for copies to be placed in the Library.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Smoking

Mr. Ashton: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will take steps to institute a no-smoking regulation in the telephone kiosks and lifts of the House.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Services Committee resolved in February 1987 that smoking should not be allowed in lifts and instructed that notices to that effect should be displayed. The question of imposing such a ban in telephone kiosks has not yet been addressed and I shall arrange for it to be referred to the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sunday Trading

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Attorney-General if he will consider taking up the case brought by Torfaen borough council regarding Sunday trading by B and Q, in the forthcoming appeal.

The Attorney-General: In the event of any such invitation to me from Torfaen borough council my response would have to be determined in the light of the fact that Parliament has made it the duty of local authorities to enforce the provisions of the Shops Act 1950.

Petty Officer John Black

Mr. Latham: To ask the Attorney-General whether, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton on 8 May, *Official Report*, column *22*, he will make a statement on the reasons for the delay in setting a date for the hearing into his application for a fresh inquest into the death of Petty Officer John Black; and when he expects to write to the hon. Member.

The Attorney-General: I have today been informed that the case will be heard tomorrow.

ENERGY

Offshore Oil Industry

140. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment he has made of the potential of the Single European Act and 1992 for the United Kingdom oil fabrication and offshore supply sectors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Two factors have been responsible for the growth of this industry: (1) the enterprise and competitive performance of British companies and (2) the fair commercial opportunity provided for companies operating on the United Kingdom continental shelf. The Single European Act and progress in GATT negotiations should enlarge the opportunities for our competitive companies. We shall continue to ensure fair opportunity in the home and overseas markets after 1992.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Payments for Debt

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to repeal the Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

Mr. Brooke *[pursuant to the reply, 10 May 1990, c. 230-31]:* It is our practice regularly to review the need for these emergency provisions. I have decided, following the most recent review, that the continuation of the Act is not required by present circumstances and I will therefore shortly sign an order declaring the emergency which gave rise to the provisions is now at an end. The Act will cease to be in force after a period of six months. The efficient collection of public debt nevertheless remains a priority and we intend to review procedures for recovering debt owed to public bodies to establish whether further legislative provision has a role to play.

HEALTH

Long-stay Patients

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will commend to all health authorities the Mersey regional health authority's guidelines for use of money held by health authorities on behalf of long-stay patients; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: We do indeed commend the guidelines that Mersey regional health authority has developed. We are currently awaiting a report from regional chairmen on the situation on patients' moneys in each region. When we have reviewed this we will ensure that all regions are conversant with the initiatives that Mersey has taken.

Ambulance Dispute

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer of 23 April, *Official Report*, column *30*, whether the final cost of military assistance in respect of the ambulance dispute is yet known.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The final cost of military assistance was £7·2 million.

Disabled People

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government on whether disabled people should have the right to representation in community care services.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Our draft guidance on assessment and case management instructs local authorities to ensure that their assessment procedures accommodate any communication difficulty due to disability. The National Health Service and Community Care Bill, as amended by the Government in the House of Lords, will allow a person acting on behalf of a disabled person to make representations, including complaints, about the social services that the local authority provides.

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged under 16 years received free eye tests in England *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Statistics prior to 1 April 1989 were not broken down by patient group. Since then, family practitioner committees have collected data on sight tests paid for under the general ophthalmic services on a six-monthly basis. A total of 752,130 or 8 per cent. of children in England received sight tests paid for under the new regulations. A further 1,624,220 sight tests were also paid for in the period but conducted prior to 1 April 1989; an unknown proportion of these would have been for children.

AIDS

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for *(a)* the Mersey region and *(b)* the Wirral health authority the sums for each of the last three years given to groups giving practical and emotional support to people suffering from AIDS.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 6 June 1990]:* The amounts allocated to Mersey regional health authority for the last three years as a contribution towards the costs incurred in helping prevent the spread of HIV infection and providing treatment, counselling and support for those affected by HIV are as follows. Allocations to the Wirral health authority are a matter for Mersey regional health authority to determine.

Mersey Regional Health Authority

Year	*Allocation (£'000)*
1988-89	534
1989-90	3,430
1990-91	3,602

In addition, £588,000 AIDS support grant has been allocated to local authorities in the Mersey area in the last two years towards the cost of care and support for people suffering from AIDS.

The amount within these allocations which has so far been passed to groups giving practical and emotional support to AIDS sufferers is not identified separately. However, reports providing details of expenditure for each health and local authority for 1989-90 will be available by August.

Under-fives Initiatives

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* action has been taken and *(b)* further steps he will take in respect of the van der Eyken report on the under-fives initiatives.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The final report of the national monitoring survey of the under-fives initiative by Willem van der Eyken was sent out in 1988. Copies went to local authorities, health authorities and relevant voluntary organisations.

The Department grant-aids 10 national voluntary organisations active in the under-fives field, including the Pre-school Playgroups Association, National Childminding Association and Home Start Consultancy.

Under-fives groups benefit from centrally funded initiatives such as the small grants scheme, which builds on the one operated during the earlier initiative. They also received funding from the lone parents element of the retail prices index error scheme.

The new under-fives initiative was launched in September 1989. It takes forward some of the recommendations in Mr. van der Eyken's report. Twenty-one national and local voluntary organisations are managing 25 local projects. The projects are intended to help families in temporary accommodation; improve partnerships between local authorities and the voluntary sector; extend knowledge about impact of day care services on the circumstances of lone parents; and improve understanding about ways of supporting carers.

The Children Act will be implemented in October 1991. It introduces provisions for local authorities to regulate private and voluntary day care services and childminding, to have a general duty to provide day care services for children in need and a power to do so for other children. A duty is also placed on local social services and education departments to review and publish a report on day care services in their area. The Department is undertaking extensive consultation on draft guidance on these subjects.

Medical and Dental Education

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the second report of the steering group on undergraduate medical and dental education will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[pursuant to his reply, 18 June 1990, c. 401]:* The answer to the question should read as follows:

The report is published today, and is available in the Library. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and I are sending copies of the second report to all interested parties under cover of a message which reads as follows:

The report from the steering group on undergraduate medical and dental education has been prepared in response to the remit which our predecessors gave the group to consider how the current arrangements for undergraduate medical, and subsequently dental, education can be improved to ensure that the policies and programmes of the bodies concerned are properly co-ordinated and directed. The group was later invited to assess the implications for these matters of the proposed NHS reforms, and to make recommendations. The present report subsumes the interim report which was published in June 1989.

We welcome, and endorse, this new report. We are grateful to the members of the steering group, and to the organisations which have been associated with it, for working effectively together to support the common purpose of the NHS and the universities in maintaining and improving standards of undergraduate medical and dental education.

The organisational and financial arrangements must encourage those responsible in both the universities and the NHS to work together to teach students, advance knowledge through research and provide and develop services for patients. These three functions are integral, something as true in the reformed NHS as it is today. That is why the steering group has emphasised the essential common purpose of the universities and the NHS in the fostering of medical knowledge and skills, an emphasis which we support. The ten key principles proposed by the steering group to underpin jointly agreed working arrangements have already been promulgated with our endorsement. The sense of common purpose will be strengthened by the new provision in the NHS and Community Care Bill regarding university membership of those health authorities and NHS trusts having significant involvement in medical and dental education.

The steering group has given close attention to certain details of finance and management. It has proposed revised procedures for the distribution of the service increment for teaching—SIFT—which again have been promulgated, and are being implemented, with our support. It has made proposals for handling the relationship known as "knock for knock", emphasising the importance of changing only by agreement the balance of expenditure between co-operating institutions. It has also suggested that the flexibility essential to the management of the job plans of clinical academics who are honorary consultants in the NHS might be achieved through a tightly defined package of clinical service commitments, to be delivered by university staff under the management of heads of clinical academic departments in consultation with NHS managers. We endorse these proposals, which encourage an agreed approach to the management of those areas in which the universities and the NHS must engage together in responsibilities which neither can discharge alone.

The steering group's report offers the prospect of a successor group to carry forward further work in these areas, including involvement with the review of SIFT which is to be completed in 1992. It also proposes that the remit of the successor body should be extended to cover "the arrangements for clinical research with service implications, including health services research".

We welcome the establishment of such a successor, and look forward to receiving its advice in due course.

We commend the present report to all those who should be guided by its recommendations and proposals.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

St. Helens

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next plans to visit St. Helens.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have no plans to visit St. Helens in the immediate future.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Manufacturing Industry

133. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the output of manufacturing industries was in 1979 in the north-west; and what the comparable constant value basis figure is for the latest year for which figures are available;

(2) what are the figures in constant value of the output in manufacturing industries in the north-west *(a)* in 1979 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Current prices estimates for manufacturing gross domestic product in the north-west are £6,763 million in 1979 and £12,381 million in 1988; the latest year for which they are available. There is no comparable constant value figure for this year because there are no regional price indices.

136. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest figures on productivity of manufacturing industry in Birmingham and the west midlands.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Regional productivity figures are not compiled.

Exports

134. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average growth rate in the volume of United Kingdom exports of goods and services between 1979 and 1989.

135. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average growth rate in the volume of United Kingdom exports of goods and services between 1979 and 1989.

139. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average growth rate in the volume of United Kingdom exports of goods and services between 1979 and 1989.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information on movements in the volume of United Kingdom exports of goods and services between 1979 and 1989 is available on the CSO database (series HHCX), which can be accessed by the House of Commons Library.

West Germany

137. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the current trade deficit with West Germany.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the three months to April, the "crude" balance of trade with West Germany was a deficit of £2·1 billion.

Inflation

138. **Mr. Oppenheim** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the level of inflation.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend addressed the CBI's annual dinner on 17 May, at which a wide range of topics were discussed.

Mortgages

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average increase in repayments per week on the average mortgage in each region between 1 June 1988 and today.

Mr. Lilley: The figures in the table do not allow for the fact that interest rate payments on many mortgages are adjusted annually and do not reflect each adjustment in the vote. Consequently average movements in amounts actually paid will be less than shown.

The information is as follows:

Region	*Average new mortgage*[1]	*Weekly payment*[2]		*Increase*
		June 1988 9·8 per cent. interest rate	*June 1990 15·3 per cent. interest rate*	
	£	£	£	£
Northern	26,800	37·88	59·14	21·26
Yorkshire and Humberside	30,500	43·35	67·67	24·33
East Midlands	35,900	53·52	83·56	30·04
East Anglia	40,700	62·57	97·68	35·12
Greater London	58,000	95·17	148·59	53·41
South East	53,500	86·69	135·35	48·65
South West	42,700	66·34	103·57	37·23
West Midlands	35,100	52·02	81·21	29·19
North West	33,200	48·43	75·62	27·18
Wales	31,700	45·61	71·20	25·60
Scotland	25,900	36·61	57·15	20·55
Northern Ireland	22,600	31·94	49·87	17·93
United Kingdom	39,000	59·37	92·68	33·32

[1] Building Society mortgages, first quarter 1990.
[2] Assuming endowment mortgage.

PRIME MINISTER

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what actions she has taken in respect of the maintenance of the taxonomic and palaeontological collections in the natural history museum in south Kensington.

The Prime Minister: I understand that within the overall objectives set out in the natural history museum's corporate plan 1990-95, the museum's taxonomic and palaeontological collections will continue to be maintained. These collections are central to the museum's scientific work, and scientific and public visitors will continue to enjoy access to the collections. The Government increased the museum's grant in aid by 16·5 per cent. this year to over £25 million.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Biotechnology

128. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on European Economic Community proposals for ethical standards in biotechnology.

129. **Mr. Lambie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on European Economic Community proposals for ethical standards in biotechnology.

130. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on European Economic Community proposals for ethical standards in biotechnology.

Mr. Jackson: No formal proposals have been made within the European Economic Community for ethical standards in biotechnology. The Government would look carefully at any such proposals on their merits.

Pupil Testing

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how the pilot studies on testing at age seven years are to be evaluated; and when he will inform Parliament of his decision regarding the nature of the test to be used in schools in 1991;

(2) what reports he has received from the organisations using pilot SATs for seven-year-olds; and if he will place them in the Library.

Mrs. Rumbold: The three agencies which developed the standard assessment tasks used in this summer's pilot assessments will shortly submit evaluation reports to the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC). SEAC will in turn advise my right hon. Friend about the outcome of the pilot assessments. In addition Her Majesty's inspectorate, in collaboration with SEAC and the Department, will host conferences later this month for the teachers who took part in the pilot exercise.

In the light of this work, a revised specification for the standard assessment tasks for use in the first national assessments of seven-year-olds in 1991 will be issued in the autumn.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools took part in each of the pilot studies for SATs at seven years of age; and how many children were involved.

Mrs. Rumbold: Just over 21,000 pupils in 619 schools in England and Wales participated in this summer's pilot assessments of seven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science.

City Technology Colleges

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the implications of his announcement of 8 June of changes in the criteria considered in approving city technology colleges on the proposal for a city technology college in Corby.

Mrs. Rumbold: The criteria for establishing city technology colleges have not changed. The plans for a city technology college in Corby are well advanced, and it is on course to open in September 1991.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science at what stage are the plans for a city technology college in Corby; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Plans for the establishment of the city technology college are now well advanced. Detailed designs for the college building have been agreed and submitted to Corby district council for full planning consent. Management contractors have been appointed and a start on site is programmed for early July with completion planned to allow for a September 1991 opening.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the money raised from the private sector for the city technology college in Corby.

Mrs. Rumbold: To date a total of £1·6 million of private sector sponsorship has been pledged; £1·1 million of this is in the form of a donation of land from the lead sponsor, Mr. Hugh de Cappell Brooke. A further £0·5 million has been pledged from other private sector sponsors, who wish to remain anonymous for the time being. The principal sponsor has agreed to underwrite any shortfall in the £1·99 million that is required from the private sector should further sponsorship not prove forthcoming.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the effect of the city technology college in Corby on surrounding schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: A city technology college in Corby will introduce healthy competition for pupils—as will any independent school. However, the sponsors' intentions are that the city technology college's catchment area should be drawn as wide as is practicable to minimise the impact on individual schools.

Student Loans

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the administrative costs of the student loans scheme.

Mr. MacGregor: The Student Loans Company's provisional budget for the financial year 1990-91 is £14·25 million, exclusive of VAT. The figure includes both pre-operational and operational costs. On present estimates, total pre-operational costs will amount to some £10 million, consisting of expenditure of £4·3 million in 1989-90 and £5·8 million in the first five months of 1990-91.

The Government have said throughout the passage of the Education (Student Loans) Bill and subsequently that the administration costs of the loans scheme in the first year of its operation were expected to be in the range £10 million to £20 million. I am pleased to confirm that the outcome is a figure well below the maximum of that range.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Saudi Arabia

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters he discussed during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Waldegrave: During his visit to Saudi Arabia my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had very useful discussions with King Fahd and Saudi Ministers on a wide range of regional and bilateral issues. They agreed in particular on the urgent need for progress towards a settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute. My right hon. Friend signed a bilateral agreement on the confiscation of drug-trafficking assets.

Republic of Ireland

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions at international conferences or meetings within the last five years when Her Majesty's Government have formally rejected or objected to the territorial claim of the Republic of Ireland over the United Kingdom.

Mr. Hurd: I am not aware of any occasions in the last five years where the Government of the Republic of Ireland have raised a territorial claim over the United Kingdom at an international conference or meeting.

United Kingdom sovereignty over Northern Ireland, as a matter of international law, is clear. Our sovereignty is manifested, day by day, by acts of legislation, Government and the courts. Further, in article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, both Governments affirmed

"that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland".

Israel

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, in his message to Mr. Yasser Arafat, conveyed by Her Majesty's ambassador in Baghdad on 8 June, he asked Mr. Arafat to condemn the attempted attack on beaches near Tel Aviv on 30 May; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes. All deliberately planned acts of violence must be condemned unequivocally.

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what protests have been conveyed by Her Majesty's consul-general in Jerusalem to prominent local Palestinians regarding the terrorist bomb explosion in the Mahane Yehuda market on 28 May.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have no reason to associate any prominent local Palestinian with the Mahane Yehuda explosion, which was immediately condemned by one of their number, Mr. Feisal Husseini.

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, at his meeting with Bassam Abu Sharif on 5 June, the Minister of State expressed concern about the reported threat by Abu Al Abbas to carry out more terrorist attacks on Israel; and what further protests are intended by Her Majesty's Government to the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes, I told Mr. Abu Sharif of our deep concern about the PLF raid on Israel on 30 May and urged the PLO to continue to adhere to its commitment to renounce terrorism.

Iran

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what attempts were made by British officials to meet Iranian representatives in Dublin on or about 16 May; and with what result.

Mr. Waldegrave: It was our understanding that the Iranians wanted a meeting. We had told them that we were willing to have a brief contact in Dublin. In the event they did not take up our offer.

Burma

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Burmese Government urging them to respect the results of the recent election there; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: On 29 May we urged the SLORC to give effect to the clearly expressed wish of the people of Burma and called for the early release of the imprisoned leaders of the democratic parties and for the unconditional lifting of martial law. On 6 June the European Community called on the military regime to respect the results of the elections by handing over power to a Government chosen by the newly elected Parliament without delay and to release political leaders in detention immediately.

We are now considering what further representations might be made and when.

Taiwan

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement concerning Government policy towards Taiwan.

Mr. Waldegrave: Since 1950, when we ceased to recognise the nationalist authorities as the Government of China, it has been the policy of successive Governments to have no formal dealings with the authorities in Taiwan. We do, however, seek to promote unofficial trade and cultural links between the United Kingdom and Taiwan.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Disabled People (Aid)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of funds provided by the British Government for development in the third world is given to schemes which promote the interests and welfare of disabled people; and what percentage of the support *(a)* was categorised as (i) medical, (ii) employment, (iii) education and (iv) social improvement and *(b)* is allocated through (1) national Governments, (2) international statutory agencies and (3) voluntary organisations.

Mrs. Chalker: Much of our aid directly and indirectly benefits disabled people along with other groups and it is not possible to quantify the proportion which assists disabled people specifically. Nor is it practicable to divide such aid into medical, employment, education and social categories, as these very often overlap in the same projects.

Under ODA's bilateral programme however there are a number of projects which can be identified as being designed to benefit disabled people specifically; for example, assistance to speech therapy for children and transport for the Disabled People's Association in Fiji was about £20,000 and in India we spent about £180,000 on helping to improve the physiotherapy services provided by local spastics societies and about £70,000 for the benefit of disabled children in slums.

In addition, the joint funding scheme, which helps to finance the work of United Kingdom voluntary organisations in developing countries, provided over £651,000 in financial year 1989-90 on projects designed specifically to benefit disabled people; that was approximately 4 per cent. of the scheme's total expenditure for the year. There are many other JFS projects which benefit disabled people without being specifically targeted on them, because they seek to meet needs of those identified as having special difficulties in life.

Several of the international agencies which we support, such as WHO, UNHCR and UNIDO undertake projects which promote the welfare of disabled people.

TRANSPORT

Jet Cockpit Window Incident

Mr. Bevan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the air accidents investigation branch will conduct a formal investigation into the circumstances in which the forward cockpit window of a British Airways BAe 1-11 was secured by means of non-specified bolts; what information he has as to whether the Civil Aviation Authority intends to investigate the incident; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: The accident is the subject of a formal investigation by the Department's air accidents investigation branch. The role of accident investigation is deliberately separated from that of safety regulation, for which the Civil Aviation Authority has the statutory responsibility, to avoid a conflict of interest.

The AAIB will keep the CAA informed of any relevant findings. On 12 June, as a result of the AAIB investigation, the CAA issued a notice to owners-operators of BAe 1-11 aircraft concerning the windscreen attachment bolts.

Underground Trains

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 22 May, *Official Report*, column *152*, if he will call for a report from the chairman of London Underground Ltd. into the death of Mr.

Raymond Knight and the implications for public safety of one-person-operated underground trains; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: At the recent inquest into Mr. Knight's death, Her Majesty's coroner recorded a unanimous verdict of accidental death and that he intended to send a report to the railway inspectorate. The report has not yet been received but when it is, I will consider any recommendations that may be made. I will also write to the hon. Member.

Smoke Hoods

Mr. Bright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to how many applications to the Civil Aviation Authority for the approval of smoke hoods meeting CAA specification No. 20 are still current.

Mr. McLoughlin: I understand that three applications are still current.

Mr. Bright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many smoke hoods submitted for approval under CAA specification No. 20 are being subjected to development tests; and if he will make a statement on the current position.

Mr. McLoughlin: The CAA does not carry out tests on items submitted to it for approval against a specification. It is for the developer of the item to submit evidence of compliance, which the CAA then evaluates.

I understand that no applicant so far has satisfied the CAA that the specification has been met.

Rail Services

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rail passenger service journey miles there were in England, Wales and Scotland, respectively, in 1979; and what were the comparable figures for 1989.

Mr. Freeman: Statistics of rail passenger journeys are not broken down by geographical area.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many employees of his Department are concerned with *(a)* roads, *(b)* rail transport, *(c)* civil aviation and *(d)* cycling.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* My Department has about 2,300 staff concerned with roads and traffic, 135 with rail transport and 145 with civil aviation; about 40 staff in the Department spend some part of their time on cycling-related work.

The substantially greater numbers concerned with roads reflect the Department's direct responsibility for the national roads programme, whereas provision of infrastructure for other transport modes is the concern of other bodies, for example, British Rail and the British Airports Authority.

ENVIRONMENT

Business Rents

125. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has any plans to introduce measures to curb increases in business rents above inflation.

126. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to investigate the problem of rising business rents; and if he will make a statement.

127. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department will undertake a study on increases in urban business rents and their impact on local communities.

Mr. Chope: The Government have no plans to introduce measures to control business rents. These are matters for negotiation between landlord and tenant. Information about changes in rental levels is already available; in addition we monitor the situation under the main legislation for business tenancies—part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

World Recycling Conference

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department will be represented at the world recycling conference in Baltimore, United States of America, on 27 to 29 June.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No.

Insulating Materials (Waste Disposal)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what guidance he gives on the disposal of *(a)* high-temperature insulating materials such as asbestos, ceramic spray and fibre, and calcium silicate and *(b)* waste from the manufacturing plants which produce such materials;

(2) what guidance he gives on the disposal of *(a)* low-temperature insulating materials such as polystyrene, polyurethane and phenolics and *(b)* waste from the manufacturing plants which produce such materials.

Mr. Trippier: Guidance on the disposal of asbestos is given in "Waste Management Paper 18", and advice on the other materials and the wastes from their manufacture is to be found in a number of other WMPs published by my Department.

Football Trust

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will arrange to have deposited in the Library the minutes of the Football Trust meetings.

Mr. Moynihan: The Football Trust 1990 is a discretionary trust and it is for it to decide whether or not to publish the minutes of its meetings.

Housing, Merseyside

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the median fair rent set by the rent officer service on Merseyside; what is the median for the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The median of the fair rents registered in Merseyside in the last six months of 1989 was £18 per week. The corresponding figure for England and Wales was £25·27 per week.

Land Registers

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the annual cost of maintaining the register of derelict land.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the amount of land currently on the land register; and what is the cost to the taxpayer each year in keeping it up to date.

Mr. Moynihan: Currently some £6,000 per year. This relates largely to the storage of the information on computer. Since the introduction of owners' registers last autumn maintenance of my right hon. Friend's land registers has been concentrated on sites where the use of his powers to direct disposal is in question, for example, in connection with the public request to order disposal scheme.

Opencast Mining

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many applications for opencast development, having gone to appeal, have been refused by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Since April 1987, the first date from which comprehensive data are available, 62 opencast mining appeals have been under consideration with the Secretary of State. During that time, 22 appeals have been upheld and 20 dismissed. One appeal has been withdrawn and 19 appeals have yet to be decided.

Tenants' Choice

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will next meet the chairman of the Housing Corporation to discuss tenants' choice.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has no immediate plans to do so.

Local Government

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received in favour of reintroducing all-purpose county boroughs.

Mr. Portillo: Several: to which we have replied that major structural change in English local government is not on the agenda.

Community Forests

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the establishment of new community forests surrounding urban areas.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My right hon. Friend has welcomed this project launched jointly by the Countryside and Forestry Commissions in July last year. We look forward to the successful establishment of the three forests of this type which the Government have authorised: at Tyne and Wear, south Staffordshire and east London. In due course we will consider proposals for such forests elsewhere in England and Wales.

Water Quality

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the European Court of Justice to present its preliminary verdict on the infringement procedures initiated by the Commission against the United Kingdom Government and other member states concerning the implementation of directive 76/160 on bathing water quality and directive 80/778 on drinking water quality.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Her Majesty's Government have received no indication from the European Court of Justice of when it intends to take further action on the cases currently before the court in relation to these two directives.

Tyneside Enterprise Zone

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what additional contribution to the uniform business rate pool the Government propose to make in respect of the *(a)* Gateshead and *(b)* Newcastle sections of the Tyneside enterprise zone.

Mr. Chope: None. As I explained in my reply to the hon. Member of 7 June, *Official Report*, column *688*, under the new local government finance system business properties in enterprise zones are exempt from rating. A figure broadly equivalent to the amount of rates that would have been paid but for this exemption was added to the revenue support grant for England for 1990-91.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many man years of inspection were devoted to the task of supervising and monitoring licensed radioactive waste disposal sites by Her Majesty's Government's inspectorate of pollution in each of the last five years.

Mr. Trippier: The information is not available in the form requested. Available information on the inspection effort devoted to premises regulated under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution and prior to that by Her Majesty's radiochemical inspectorate in the past five years is contained in the Department's management information system returns MINIS 6-10 available in the Library of the House. The MINIS 11 report covering 1989-90 will be placed in the Library in due course.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the licence holders and sites licensed for radioactive waste disposal under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960, together with the date the licence was issued and the term it has to run.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to the Department's "List of Premises in England and Wales currently authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 (RSA60) to dispose of radioactive waste" a copy of which is in the Library of the House. It is not normal practice for authorisations under RSA60 to have a

termination date although all are subject to periodic review. Information relating to the date of issue of each authorisation can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Water Pollution

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, pursuant to the reply given to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Wray) of 19 March, *Official Report*, column *490*, he will identify those small, localised inshore locations where evidence of eutrophication has been found; what evidence he has of trends in nutrients in coastal and estuarial waters of the United Kingdom; and what examination of fluxes of nutrients, through which estuaries, and by whom, is, or is proposed to be, undertaken.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The inshore locations where evidence of eutrophication has been found are the Norfolk Broads, Langstone harbour, Poole harbour, Tywi estuary, inner Moray Firth and Loch Neagh. Nutrient levels in coastal and estuarial waters have been monitored since 1960 by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea: it reports no sign of a rising trend in levels. Monitoring of nutrients in coastal and estuarial waters in England and Wales is now the responsibility of the National Rivers Authority.

Isle of Sheppey

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to make a decision on the inquiry into the Lionhope scheme on the Isle of Sheppey.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The inquiry will open on 25 September and is expected to last for four weeks. A decision will be issued as soon as possible after the inspector's report has been received.

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the president of the Linnean Society on the effects of cuts in research on palaeontological reference collections at the natural history museum on scientific research to underpin the development of current policies on the environment.

Mr. Trippier: The Secretary of State for the Environment has received no such representations from the president of the Linnean Society.

Housing Associations

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the HOTCHA scheme to provide grants for house purchase for tenants of housing associations ceased; and what plans he has to replace the scheme.

Mr. Chope: The winding up of the home ownership scheme for tenants of charitable housing associations—HOTCHA—was announced on 14 December 1988. No new applications were accepted by the Housing Corporation after that date but existing applications were honoured provided the applicant could secure the necessary approvals and exchange contracts by 31 March 1990.

The Housing Corporation is in the process of introducing a new scheme, known as the tenants' incentive scheme—TIS—under which registered housing associations, whether or not charitable, may give grants to assist their tenants to move out and buy homes of their own. A total of £33 million is being made available for TIS grants in 1990-91 under the Housing Corporation's approved development programme. Of this, £12 million will be for tenants of charitable housing associations who applied under the HOTCHA scheme, but did not complete their purchase in time. The balance of £21 million will be for new applicants for TIS grants. In total up to 2,500 housing association tenants stand to benefit from the tenants' incentive scheme in 1990-91.

Green Belt Areas

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what criteria his Department uses when approving re-designation of green belt land as an employment area.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Planning policy guidance note 2 sets out the Government's planning policy on green belts. Once the extent of a green belt has been established it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances.

Leeds Development Corporation

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has received any representations from the Leeds development corporation about the level of funding for 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 19 June 1990]*: The resource requirements of the corporation are under review as part of the normal annual discussions which form part of the public expenditure survey cycle. No other representation about either current or future financial years have been received.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities responsible for recycling have installed magnetic separators for reclaiming reusable steel.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on Thursday 26 April 1990, *Official Report*, column *296*.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the Government's new legislation on the environment will allow local authorities to enter into index-linked contracts to supply waste to private companies seeking to recycle and reclaim that waste, on a joint venture basis where the private partner is covering all capital costs whilst simultaneously allowing the local authority a minority position on the board of directors of the joint venture company.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* Yes. We expect that local authorities will want to enter into long-term contracts for waste disposal, in which index-linking may well be appropriate. Authorities will also be encouraged to enter into joint ventures with private sector disposal companies, as a means of securing private sources of finance for capital schemes.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will outline the regulations and intentions that govern the consideration of proprietary technologies in a competitive tendering process for the disposal of domestic waste; and how he will assess those technologies that emerge offering the ability to recycle and reclaim domestic waste.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* There are no plans to issue regulations governing the consideration of proprietary technologies for the disposal of waste. Individual disposal authorities will make their own decisions about awarding contracts having regard to the potential of new technologies that are developed for disposal and recycling.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will require disposal or other authorities to give a value to waste recycled or reclaimed, by volume, at the competitive tendering stage; and what steps he will take to ensure that tendering contractors are not disadvantaged by cheap landfilling during the consideration of such tenders.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* Disposal authorities will be encouraged, through the provisions of the Environmental Protection Bill, to maximise recycling and waste minimisation. Contractors will be able to estimate the potential value of waste to be recycled and will adjust their contract price accordingly. It will then be for disposal authorities to consider tenders on their respective merits having regard to environmental factors. There will be no requirement to accept the lowest bid.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will require the real costs of landfill to be considered, as opposed to gate fees, when competitive tenders for waste disposal are made.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The introduction of competitive tendering, under the provisions in the Environmental Protection Bill, will force all disposal contractors to bid on the basis of the full costs of waste disposal, including the restoration and after-care of landfill sites.

Cricket Grounds

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to improve safety at cricket grounds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I have been asked to reply.

All cricket grounds which have been identified as providing accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators have been designated as sports grounds requiring safety certificates under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975. Stands or other accommodation which can hold at least 500 spectators for viewing under cover at grounds which are not designated under the 1975 Act are subject to safety certification by local authorities under part III of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987. Local authorities have, in consequence wide powers to secure the safety of spectators.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Civil Defence

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what measures are available to him to deal with local councils that *(a)* have not submitted a design for an emergency control centre, *(b)* have not identified a site for an emergency control centre and *(c)* have stated that they will not comply with the latest civil defence regulations;

(2) what is the deadline set by his Department for local councils to agree to comply with the latest civil defence regulations; and by what date councils will have to identify a site and complete a design for an emergency control centre;

(3) what reasons have been given by local councils for not implementing the civil regulations set by the Government.

Mr. John Patten: No local authority has refused to discharge its responsibilities under the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983. There are many reasons why individual authorities may not yet have fully implemented the regulations and the planned programme for implementation of the regulations ensures that the Home Office is in touch with them all. The regulations do not provide for the setting of a deadline for compliance.

The Civil Defence (General) Regulations 1949 contain sanctions which are available to the designated Minister if he is satisfied that any local authority has failed or refused properly to discharge any of the civil defence functions conferred on it; alternatively the Civil Defence (Grant) Regulations 1953 provide for the withholding of grant.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a list of local councils that *(a)* have so far failed to comply with the latest civil defence regulations, *(b)* have not chosen a site for an emergency centre and *(c)* have not yet submitted designs for an emergency centre.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) on 10 May at column *198*.

Child Abuse

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to implement the Pigot report on the giving of legal evidence by children in child abuse cases; whether he has received representations on this subject since 10 June; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We are still considering, with the benefit of the favourable comments received upon the Pigot report, what proposals we should make on video-recording children's evidence. We receive occasional letters in support of making it easier for children to give evidence.

Cautions

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is the practice of the Metropolitan police to release to the press details of cautions given under the Attorney-General's guidelines.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Upon request the Metropolitan police will *(a)* make available statistics of cautions given over a period and *(b)* confirm that an unnamed person arrested or reported for an offence has been dealt with by way of a caution. They will not disclose the identity of anyone who has been cautioned.

Poaching

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions there were for poaching in 1988 and 1989; and how many of those convictions were associated with assault.

Mr. John Patten: In 1988, there were 980 convictions for the offence of poaching. The 1989 data will not be available until the autumn. It is not possible from the information held centrally to identify the number of poaching convictions which are also associated with offences of assault.

Immigration

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what action is being taken to trace the 33 Chinese student democracy activists who failed to meet a bus sent by the immigration service to take them for interview at Harmondsworth on 11 May;

(2) if he will reconsider his Department's decision that Panama affords sufficient protection to be considered a country of third settlement;

(3) if it is the intention to return 33 Chinese nationals, formerly members of the student democracy movement, to Panama; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The 33, who have failed to comply with the terms of their temporary admission, are now in this country illegally, and no decision on any aspect of their applications can be made until they report to an immigration officer to regularise their position. Any representations then made on their behalf will be considered fully and carefully. Their representatives have been informed of the position.

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mr. Waddington: Information on management consultancy awarded before 1985, and the outcome of studies conducted over the last 10 years is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The cost of individual management consultancy contracts is a matter of commercial confidentiality which it would not be proper to disclose. For details of studies carried out in 1985 I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary to my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) on 14 July 1986 at column *333* and for 1986 to 1989 to the replies given to my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) on 18 February 1987 at column *643*, 26 April 1988 at column *86*, 4 April 1989 at column *30*, and 3 April 1990 at column *557*. The following studies have been commissioned in the current year:

Price Waterhouse
Financial Advice on the Privatisation of the IBA Transmission Network.

NERA
Advice on the economic regulation of the privatised IBA Transmission Network.

Norton Rose
Legal Advisers on the Privatisation of the IBA Transmission Network.

PA Consultants
Review of the Prison Service Management Information System Requirements.

Jones Lang Wooton
"City Search" for the proposed relocation of the Prison Service HQ.

Peat Marwick McLintock
Nottingham Crime Audit.

BBN Matching
Consultancy on Multi-ethnic name.

PPCR
Survey of Community Safety.

Talisman
Public Relations Consultancy (launch of Rochdale Safer Cities Project).

Reginald Watts
Consultancy Assistance to develop Marketing Plan.

Sudbury Consultants Ltd.
Study of Command, Leadership and Management.

Coopers Lybrand Deloitte
Study and Estimate of Costs of the setting up and running of a Magistrates Courts Agency.

Ernst and Young
Privatisation of the IBA Terrestrial Transmission System: Reporting Accountants.

Greaves and Co.
Accountancy Advice.

Vista Communications
Communication Audit for the Prison Service.

Touche Ross
Assistance with Passport Office Agency.

Police Cells

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give particulars of each escape from police cells in England and Wales since 11 June 1987, including the charges faced by each escaped prisoner; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information is not held centrally.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state his policy on the use of police cells to house remand prisoners.

Mr. Mellor: In present circumstances there is no practical alternative to the use of police cells where prisoners cannot be received into an appropriate prison. My right hon. and learned Friend and I very much regret the need to hold remand prisoners in police cells at all. The current level of use is a result largely of disruptive industrial action or lack of good will on the part of staff in some establishments and I can assure the hon. and learned

Member that every effort is being made to resolve the difficulties. We are most grateful to the police for their assistance.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many remand prisoners are held in police cells in Wales at the latest available date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: By Tuesday 19 June the number of prisoners having to be held in police cells in south Wales as a direct result of industrial action by prison officers at Her Majesty's prison Swansea had been reduced to four. While the dispute has not been resolved, sufficient good will exists to have enabled this reduction to be brought about.

We very much regret the necessity to have recourse to police cells at all.

Summer Time

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the responses to the Green Paper "Summer Time—A Consultation Document," Cm. 722.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: A total of 30,867 responses have been received following publication of the Green Paper, of which 26,029 were in the form of signatories to petitions. Excluding signatories to petitions, 50 per cent. were in favour of moving into central European time—single "summer" time in the winter, double "summer" time in the summer until the beginning of October—46 per cent. were in favour of the status quo, and 4 per cent. were in favour of harmonising summer time along with other EC countries—in effect finishing summer time one month early. Of the signatories to the petitions, 22,684 were in support of central European time and 3,345 were against change. The response in England and Wales was very different from that in Scotland. A total of 59 per cent. of letters and 100 per cent. of signatories to petitions from England and Wales supported central European time; 90 per cent. of letters and 80 per cent. of signatories to petitions from Scotland supported the status quo. Only 10 responses were received from Northern Ireland. A detailed breakdown of the responses is being placed in the Library.

Correspondence

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement in regard to the letter sent to him from Dr. Raine Roberts, the forensic physician and clinical director of the sexual assault referral centre in Manchester, by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe.

Mr. John Patten: Dr. Roberts' concern is that children giving evidence in criminal trials of alleged sexual abuse can be identified by members of the public in court, and could be subject to unwelcome attention from them.

The courts already have power, under section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, to exclude from the court anyone not directly concerned with the case except a bona fide representative of the press, who may be prevented from publishing identifying details of a person under 17 who plays any part in the proceedings. In addition, if there is fear of interference with any witness, the witness's name and address may be given in writing instead of orally.

Use of these powers would seem the appropriate way to deal with the problem.

Naturalisation

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the length of time currently being taken to process naturalisation cases and the expected time scale for new applications.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* Present waiting times for naturalisation cases stem from the exceptional level of citizenship applications of all kinds received at the end of 1987. The increase in naturalisation applications seems to have resulted from a mistaken belief on the part of many applicants that the then ending of certain rights of registration applied also to naturalisation. Many applied after long previous residence in the United Kingdom without apparently experiencing either inconvenience over travelling or earlier desire to assume citizenship. All have been warned that their applications would be subject to considerable delay.

In May 1990, the average waiting time for all citizenship applications completed in that month was 26 months; for naturalisation alone it was 29 months. These long waiting times result from the large number of applications—almost 300,000—submitted in 1987. The number of applications received from January 1988 was much smaller, and when the end-1987 cases are cleared the position will begin to improve.

My right hon. and learned Friend announced on 31 January, in answer to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Sir J. Wheeler), that nationality work would be transferred to Liverpool by 1991. That transfer is proceeding. Earlier forecasts of performance are, however, having to be revised in the light of new information about intake of new applications, the disruption caused by the process of transfer, and lower levels of output on the more difficult naturalisation casework than on registration. It is now clear that we shall not be able to reduce waiting times as quickly as we had hoped, and although we continue to expect an improvement later in this financial year and next, they are likely to remain above 20 months until some time after April 1991.

We regret waiting times of this length and are giving urgent consideration to the priority that should be given to nationality work as against other functions of the immigration and nationality department. Close account will also be taken of the report of the Home Affairs Committee published today. It is, however, relevant to note that those awaiting the determination of citizenship applications are not prevented from continuing to enjoy residence rights or from travelling on the passports of their current nationality.

Prisoners (Disciplinary Offences)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number and proportion of prisoners appearing before disciplinary hearings of boards of visitors who were legally represented in the most recent available year.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* The centrally held data relate to the numbers of offences on which boards of visitors adjudicate. The latest data are for

1988 when applications for legal representations were granted in respect of hearings for 33 offences, that is, 0·8 per cent. of the number of offences on which boards of visitors adjudicated.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were found guilty of disciplinary offences by boards of visitors in the most recent available year; how many were deprived of remission; and what was the breakdown of lengths of remission forfeited.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* The centrally held data relate to the numbers of punishments awarded. From 1 April 1989 the maximum penalty available to boards of visitors was reduced to 120 days' forfeiture of remission. The most recent data were for 1988 when boards of visitors awarded 5,180 unsuspended punishments. A total of 3,108 of these were forfeiture of remission and were broken down as follows:

Number of days remission forfeited	*Number of punishments*
1-7	78
8-14	65
15-28	177
29-30	141
31-60	1,479
61-90	928
91-120	168
Over 120	72

Football Licensing Authority

Mr. Ashton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the reason for the delay in setting up the Football Licensing Authority.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* It has been necessary to review the proposed role of the Football Licensing Authority in the light of Lord Justice Taylor's report on the Hillsborough stadium disaster, and the Government's subsequent decision not to proceed with the national football membership scheme and the Football Membership Authority. As a result of that review, responsibility for the authority was formally transferred to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department in May. It has been necessary to consider carefully how the authority's powers could best be used to bring about all-seated accommodation at football grounds, as proposed by Lord Justice Taylor, and the sort of qualities and experience which would be required among its members and staff to equip it for its revised role. This work has taken longer than had been hoped, but is now largely completed. I hope that an announcement about appointments to the authority can be made before the start of the next football season. In the meantime, my right hon. and noble Friend the Minister of State has already met the football authorities, and officials are in close touch with them, to ensure that there is no avoidable delay in implementing the important safety measures recommended in Lord Justice Taylor's report.

WALES

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mr. David Hunt: The information requested for the years 1988-89 and 1989-90 is given in the table:

Consultant and cost	*Subject*	*Outcome*
1988-89 (£39,187)		
Coopers and Lybrand	Monitoring payment arrangements for Urban Development Grants.	Report accepted by Department and where appropriate recommendations were implemented.
Coopers and Lybrand	Evalution of Regional Selective Assistance.	As at 1 above.
Pieda (Planning and economic development consultants)	An impact study of the development of rural initiative venture and enterprise (DRIVE).	Modifications suggested were adopted in relaunched scheme.
Leslie Hays and Assocs.	Evaluation of Regional Enterprise Grant Scheme.	As at 1 above.
Frank Griffiths	Purchasing in the Welsh Office.	Recommendations implemented.
HMSO	Review of the organisation of Welsh Office Print Room.	Recommendations implemented.
1989-90 (£44,725)		
Leslie Hays Consultancies Ltd.	Evaluation of Regional Enterprise Grant.	As at 1 above.
Price Waterhouse	Training needs Analysis.	Report received in April 1990 Recommendations are under consideration.
Touche Ross	Management Review of NHS Directorate.	All the key recommendations have been implemented.

It would be disproportionately costly to provide the information required for the earlier years.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will list for each area covered by TECs in Wales the payments granted by the Training Agency in Wales for 1990-91 per trainee for each of the courses; and whether such payments included the travelling costs of trainees.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Details of unit costs are confidential to the Training Agency and individual course managers. Payments under YT and ET include trainees' travelling costs in excess of £3 and £4 per week respectively.

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people with glaucoma and diabetes received free eye tests in each district health authority area in Wales *(a)* in each quarter in 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mr. Grist: Estimates of numbers of sight tests for different types of patient are based on a 2 per cent. sample. This sample is not sufficient to make robust estimates by patient type within district health authority areas.

Ferry Services, Fishguard

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met both chairman and chief executive of Sealink to discuss passenger ferry services at Fishguard; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Wyn Roberts: There has been no meeting between my right hon. Friend and Sealink to discuss services from Fishguard. No such meeting has been requested.

Mid-Wales Development Board

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much capital was invested by the mid-Wales development board in Ceredigion in 1989; what were the corresponding figures for the last 10 years: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: Expenditure by the Development Board for Rural Wales in Ceredigion in the financial year 1989-90 was £1·3 million. The corresponding figures for the previous 10 years are as follows:

	£ million
1979-80	0·75
1980-81	0·61
1981-82	0·73
1982-83	0·78
1983-84	1·25
1984-85	1·50
1985-86	1·74
1986-87	0·98
1987-88	0·70
1988-89	0·98

The figures confirm the continuing commitment by the DBRW to sustaining social and economic development within the district of Ceredigion.

Youth Training

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) whether he will list the managing organisations currently operating youth training schemes in each area covered by the TECs; and whether he will list the courses each organisation was running prior to the issuing of new training contracts indicating *(a)* how many places each organisation had contracted for under each course, *(b)* how many places had actually been filled in 1989 and *(c)* what was the total contribution to each managing organisation for the Training Agency in 1988-89 and 1989-90;

(2) whether he will list in each area covered by the TECs in Wales the managing organisations operating youth training schemes under the new contracts issued by the Training Agency indicating (1) how many places have been allocated to each organisation and each course under the new contracts and (2) the percentage increase or decrease in places and financial contribution to each managing organisation estimated by the Training Agency under the new contracts.

Sir Wyn Roberts *[holding answer 8 June 1990]:* The training agencies have now provided the details requested. However, due to the volume and format of this information I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of the reply in the Library of the House.

Bathing Beaches

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 13 June on bathing waters, if he will make it his policy to encourage the display of information on water quality on beaches which do not currently have European Community designation.

Mr. Grist: As I said in my answer of 13 June, we will be encouraging local authorities to make this information more readily available but it is for them to decide where in their areas such notices should be placed.

Flexi-ownership

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he has received concerning the flexi-ownership scheme; how many were *(a)* in favour and *(b)* against the scheme; how many of these representations are from (i) individuals, (ii) organisations and (iii) local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: No representations have been received against flexi-ownership. Seventeen individuals and one local authority have written expressing interest.

The Development Board for Rural Wales, which administers the scheme, has received 116 inquiries from tenants.

Employment Training

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will provide the latest available figures for spending and the number of participants on each of his Department's training and employment measures in Wales in *(a)* the last three years, *(b)* the current year and *(c)* projections for the next three years.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 13 June 1990]*: The information requested for 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 is shown in the table. Actual figures for 1990-91 and projections for the next three years are not available.

Training agency and employment services programmes	*1987-88*		*1988-89*		*1989-90*	
	Volume[3]	*Spend £ million*	*Volume*[3]	*Spend £ million*	*Volume*[3]	*Spend £ million*
Voluntary Project Programme	6,024	0·91	[4]None	0·86	—	—
New Job Training Scheme	4,535	1·1	[4]None	1·1	—	—
Access to Information Technology	1,244	0·05	—	—	—	—
Job Training Scheme	3,959	8·6	1,570	4·43	—	—
Training for Enterprise	6,816	1·03	4,869	0·66	—	—
Local Grants to Employers	8,141	1·79	8,253	1·86	—	—
Enterprise Allowance Scheme	7,062	n.a.	6,865	n.a.	5,489	8·954
Wider Opportunities Programme	[1]5,485	1·78	3,767	1·25	—	—
Community Programme	[1]19,865	75·35	[4]None	40·67	—	—
Residual Adult Training	—	—	—	—	—	1·754
Business Growth Training (Option 2)	—	—	—	—	2,426	0·467
YTS/YT	19,079	51·77	18,758	52·66	17,781	50·746
Employment Training	—	—	17,564	13·67	32,766	32·741
Non-ET Business Enterprise	—	—	—	—	1,398	0·195
RESTART	Data not available due to changes in budget procedures		2,866	[2]2·2	2,602	0·314
Job Clubs			4,768		4,621	1·219
Travel to Interview Scheme			2,168		1,777	0·036
Jobstart			1,015		1,313	0·444
Programme Development Fund			—		286	0·019
Job Interview Guarantee			—		191	0·003

[1] In training at 31 March 1988.
[2] Total expenditure only available.
[3] Key to Employment Service Volume Data:
Restart = numbers completing courses.
Job clubs = number of job entries.
Jobstart = applications accepted.
Programme Development Fund = numbers involved in projects.
Job Interview Guarantee = numbers placed in employment.
For Training Agency Programmes Volume = starts.
[4] There were no starts on VPP, NJTS and CP in 1988-89 as these programmes were replaced by ET. Expenditure relates to residual costs for trainees who had commenced training in the previous year.
n.a.—Not available.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Japan

14. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in manufactured goods with Japan.

100. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in manufactured goods with Japan.

107. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in manufactured goods with Japan.

Mr. Ridley: In the four months to the end of April 1990, the United Kingdom trade deficit in manufactured goods with Japan was £1·4 billion, a decrease of 9 per cent. compared with the same period last year.

Environmental Proposals

15. **Mr. Bell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new proposals to encourage British industry to be environmentally friendly.

62. **Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new proposals to encourage British industry to be environmentally friendly.

88. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new proposals to encourage British industry to be environmentally friendly.

Mr. Forth: I shall continue to encourage British industry to respond positively to the challenges and opportunities presented by environmental isssues. A new environment unit has been established in my Department to focus on the impact of environmental issues on business efficiency and competitiveness and in particular to encourage and advise on the development of improved environmental technology, waste management and recycling.

Patents

16. **Mr. Gregory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the average time for the completion of processing a patent application.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The average time is estimated at three years and 10 months.

Insider Trading

17. **Mr. John Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on plans to improve the detection of insider trading.

Mr. Forth: No. I am not aware that there is a significant amount of insider dealing which goes undetected. If the hon. Gentleman has evidence to the contrary, I should be grateful if he would give it to me.

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to receive the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on an inquiry involving oral evidence on 5 June from Mr. Nigel Harris of the AUEW, Mr. Alan Harris, Mr. Bill Menzies and the hon. Member for Linlithgow.

Mr. Ridley: I expect to receive the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report by 3 August.

30. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many takeover bids have been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: Since 1979, 104 merger situations qualifying for investigation under the merger provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973, and three merger situations between water enterprises qualifying for investigation under the provisions of the Water Act 1989, have been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. In addition, there have been 14 references to the commission under the newspaper merger provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973.

42. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement as to his policy on referring acquisitions and mergers to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission against the recommendation of the Director General of Fair Trading.

Mr. Ridley: Under the Fair Trading Act 1973, the Director General of Fair Trading makes a recommendation to me as to whether a merger should be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It is for me alone to decide whether or not to accept the director general's recommendation. I treat each case on its merits. However, in the vast majority of cases, I agree with the recommendation made by the director general.

Research and Development

121. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will list the levels of Government-funded research and development for *(a)* Japan, *(b)* the United States of America and *(c)* the United Kingdom for the years 1985 to 1989.

20. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will list the levels of Government-funded research and development for *(a)* Japan, *(b)* the United States of America and *(c)* the United Kingdom for the years 1985 to 1989.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Government- funded R and D as a percentage of GDP was between 1·3 per cent. and 1·0 per cent. for the United Kingdom in the period 1985 to 1988. For the United States of America, the corresponding figures were between 1·3 per cent. and 1·2 per cent. For Japan, the percentage was constant at 0·5 per cent. No figures are yet available for 1989.

Debt Advice

21. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase spending on debt advice work.

69. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase spending on debt advice work.

Mr. Forth: None. My Department does not specifically fund debt advice much of which is provided by citizens advice bureaux, as part of their general service. DTI grant in aid to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and Citizens Advice Scotland, which provide the support services for individual citizens advice bureaux will amount to more than £11 million in 1990-91, compared with some £10 million last year. Individual bureaux are funded mainly by local authorities.

Information Technology

22. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he proposes to take to reduce the balance of payments deficit in information technology.

31. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he proposes to take to reduce the balance of payments deficit in information technology.

38. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he proposes to take to reduce the balance of payments deficit in information technology.

Mr. Forth: The Government's policy is to create the right climate for profitable investment. The success of that policy is shown by the substantial investments being made in the United Kingdom by many of the world's leading companies in the IT industry.

Plessey

23. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on the subject of the GEC/Siemens takeover of Plessey.

45. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on the subject of the GEC/Siemens takeover of Plessey.

70. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on the subject of the GEC/Siemens takeover of Plessey.

Mr. Ridley: Ministers have received four recent representations about the GEC/Siemens takeover of Plessey.

Steel Industry

24. **Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the future of the steel industry in the United Kingdom.

99. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received about ensuring the future of the steel industry in the United Kingdom.

106. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the future of the steel industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ridley: I have received a number of representations on the future of the steel industry in the United Kingdom.

91. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to encourage the development of specialised steel making.

Mr. Ridley: It is for the industry to take whatever steps it considers appropriate.

82. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he is taking to ensure that the steel and special steel industries maintain their internationally competitive position.

Mr. Ridley: It is for the industry itself to ensure that it is competitive.

109. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of British Steel; and what subjects were discussed.

44. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with British Steel about its decision to close Ravenscraig hot strip mill.

59. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the Ravenscraig steel plant.

81. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the future of the Scottish steel industry.

Mr. Ridley: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) earlier today.

105. **Mr. Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has received any correspondence from British Steel plc explaining, with financial details, the decision to close the hot strip mill at Ravenscraig, Lanarkshire; and if he will make a statement about the implications for the steel industry in general.

Mr. Ridley: I have received a copy of a letter from the chairman of British Steel to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland concerning the company's proposal to close the Ravenscraig hot strip mill. The contents of the letter are confidential.

Single European Market

25. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of the legislative measures needed to establish the single European market the Council of Ministers has *(a)* now adopted, *(b)* reached a common position on and *(c)* secured agreement in principle to; and what proportion this constitutes of the total programme.

Mr. Ridley: Of the 282 legislative measures set out in the European Commission's White Paper, "Completing the Internal Market", 148 have now been adopted by the Council of Ministers, a common position has been reached on seven, and agreement in principle has been secured on six. Seven measures have also been partially adopted. This constitutes 59 per cent. of the total programme.

Departmental Reorganisation

26. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effect the reorganisation of his Department will have on the regions.

71. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effect the reorganisation of his Department will have on the regions.

68. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effect of the reorganisation of his Department on the regions.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Policy towards the regions is not affected by the reorganisation of my Department.

Manufacturing Industry

27. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the performance of the British manufacturing industry.

65. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussion he has recently had with the president of the Confederation of British Industry about the performance of British manufacturing industry.

76. **Mr. Geoffrey Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has recently had with the president of the Confederation of British Industry about the performance of British manufacturing industry.

112. **Mr. Radice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has recently had with the president of the CBI about the performance of British manufacturing industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Ministers and officials of my Department keep in touch with the CBI on a range of issues relevant to business.

32. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss manufacturing industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have no immediate plans to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry.

66. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will indicate, for each year since 1979, whether the United Kingdom had a surplus or a deficit in manufactured goods with other European Community countries.

Mr. Ridley: The information requested is shown in the table.

Crude balance of trade in manufactured goods

£ million

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
France	−727	−439	−595	−535	−1,082	−1,154	−1,222	−1,510	−1,151	−1,152	−967
Belgium-Lux	−403	−168	−380	−525	−499	−558	−518	−357	−528	−608	−695
Netherlands	84	184	−191	−466	−803	−844	−747	−1,128	−1,117	−1,914	−2,157
FR Germany	−2,523	−2,001	−2,152	−3,314	−4,926	−5,069	−5,833	−6,713	−7,465	−8,676	−9,631
Italy	−796	−368	−498	−826	−1,175	−1,302	−1,387	−1,590	−1,553	−1,787	−2,087
Irish Republic	954	793	690	547	471	495	548	584	484	491	698
Denmark	147	114	−5	−1	−71	−81	−21	−1	−58	−140	−197
Greece	184	140	137	137	172	163	167	149	152	173	222
Portugal	14	79	49	39	−74	−236	−238	−217	−98	−49	−77
Spain	−78	−79	−71	−80	−84	−257	−294	−54	251	257	442

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom.
Manufactured goods have been defined as Sections 5 to 8 of the Standard International Trade Classification Revision 3 (SITC (Rev 3)).

49. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the competitiveness of British manufacturing industry.

50. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the competitiveness of British manufacturing industry.

61. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the competitiveness of British manufacturing industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have received a number of representations on the competitiveness of British manufacturing industry.

Exporters

28. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new plans to help exporters.

55. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to help exporters.

119. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to help exporters.

Mr. Ridley: The volume of United Kingdom exports has continued to grow, reflecting the strong position of United Kingdom industry. Excluding oil and erratic items, the volume of exports in the three months to April was 11 per cent. higher than a year earlier. There is a wide range of advice and support available from my Department to assist United Kingdom exporters and of which many firms make use.

Post Office

29. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has recently had with private companies about the Post Office's letter monopoly.

63. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has recently had with private companies about the Post Office letter monopoly.

78. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has recently had with private companies about the Post Office's letter monopoly.

Mr. Forth: Naturally, the Department has discussions with a wide range of private companies in the areas in which it has an interest. Discussions have been held with a number of companies with postal service interests, but on a basis of confidentiality.

Harrods

33. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if any efforts are being made to recover the costs of his Department's investigation into the Harrods takeover from the present owners.

Mr. Ridley: No. Provision for the recovery of the expenses of and incidental to Companies Act inspections is contained in section 439 of the Companies Act 1985, as amended by section 59 of the Companies Act 1989. These provisions are not applicable in the case of House of Fraser Holdings plc.

Juno Project

34. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to provide sufficient funds to ensure the participation of a British astronaut in the Juno project.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The organisers of the Juno project have requested Government funding. Juno was conceived as a private sector venture to put a British astronaut into space on the basis of commercial and media sponsorship. I could not justify diverting resources from the Government's own space programme which has quite different goals, notably earth observation and telecommunications.

Consumer Affairs

35. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what items were discussed at the European Community Consumer Affairs Council on 13 June.

96. **Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what items were discussed at the European Community Consumer Affairs Council on 13 June.

Mr. Forth: The following items were discussed: the package travel directive, the proposed general product safety directive, the system for the rapid exchange of information on consumer products, the European home and leisure accident surveillance system, and the Commission's three-year plan for consumer policy in the EEC.

102. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of local authorities' trading standards officers to discuss consumer affairs.

95. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of the local authorities' trading standards officers to discuss consumer affairs.

46. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of the local authorities' trading standards officers to discuss consumer affairs.

Mr. Forth: I met representatives of local authority trading standards officers on three occasions in 1989 to discuss consumer matters and my officials have frequent meetings with trading standards officers.

Industry Council

Mr. Buchan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the European Economic Community Industry Council meeting of 28 May.

36. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the European Economic Community Industry Council meeting of 28 May.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown) on 14 June 1990, at column *305*.

108. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last attended a meeting of the European Council of Industry Ministers at which the subject discussed was steel.

Mr. Ridley: I attend meetings of the European Council of Industry Ministers whenever necessary. The last meeting I attended at which steel was discussed was on 14 November 1989.

74. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the outcome of the discussions on steel at the European Industry Council.

117. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the outcome of the discussions on steel at the European Industry Council.

Mr. Ridley: At the 28 May meeting of the Industry Council the European Commission presented its view of the Community steel market over the next five years. There was an exchange of views, but no decisions were taken because the Commission's view is not subject to Council agreement or approval. The Commission also informed the member states that it had started preliminary work examining options for the future of the treaty of Paris which is due to expire in 2002.

Investment

37. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the Confederation of British Industry to discuss investment levels.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Ministers and officials of my Department keep in touch with the CBI on a range of issues relevant to business.

Financial Regulation

39. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he expects to discuss financial regulation at his next meeting with the chairman of the stock exchange.

47. **Mr. Rowlands:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to discuss financial regulation at his next meeting with the chairman of the stock exchange.

86. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to discuss financial regulation at his next meeting with the chairman of the stock exchange.

Mr. Ridley: I meet the chairman of the stock exchange as frequently as necessary for discussion on a range of topics.

114. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's latest assessment of the effectiveness of City regulation.

Mr. Ridley: Regulation of investment business is for the most part the responsibility of the Securities and Investments Board, which is the designated agency under the Financial Services Act 1986. Other aspects of City activity are regulated under other arrangements, such as the Insurance Companies Act 1982 and the Banking Act 1987. I am generally satisfied with this regulatory structure. No regulatory system can prevent all fraud and malpractice.

97. **Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

67. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

72. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

Mr. Ridley: I receive a considerable number of representations on a variety of topics relating to the regulation of financial services. We consider very carefully those which relate to the scope or the framework of the regulatory system or to the powers under the Financial Services Act which the Government retain. Those which relate to matters which are the responsibility of the SIB or another regulatory authority are passed to the appropriate body.

Shipbuilding Industry

40. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received seeking further investment in the shipbuilding industry in the United Kingdom.

84. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received seeking further investment in the shipbuilding industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Various representations have been received relating to investment associated with a resumption of shipbuilding at North East Shipbuilders Ltd's former shipyards in Sunderland. These proposals have not been accepted because of restrictions imposed by the European Communities' sixth directive on aid to shipbuilding.

116. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many vessels, in excess of 500 gross registered tonnes, were built in United Kingdom shipyards in each of the past three years; and what financial assistance was provided for their construction by way of the European Community's shipbuilding fund.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is not available in the form requested. The number of vessels, in excess of 500 grt, built in the United Kingdom during the last three years is as follows:

1987	*1988*	*1989*
14	11	23

Under the shipbuilding intervention fund, assistance is provided to United Kingdom shipyards, for the construction of vessels of over 100 gt, to enable them to quote break-even prices against non-EEC competition. Data are not available specifically on vessels over 500 grt. Total expenditure over the last three financial years is as follows:

1987-88	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
£18·8m	£39·4m	£39·9m

The IF is not an EC fund but a subsidy arrangement operated by the Government in accordance with the requirements of the sixth directive on aid to shipbuilding.

58. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about further Government investment in the shipbuilding industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department has not recently received any significant representations.

Safety-critical Software

41. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made towards the setting up of a standard for safety-critical software.

54. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made towards the setting up of a standard for safety-critical software.

73. **Mr. McWilliam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made towards the setting up of a standard for safety-critical software.

Mr. Forth: The Government are encouraging the development of standards and guidelines for all systems incorporating software, the failure of which might endanger the safety of people or property. This is being done at both national and international levels. The activity is being co-ordinated by a working group of the interdepartmental committee on software engineering (ICSE) on which a number of relevant Government Departments and agencies are represented.

On 8 June 1990 ICSE publicly launched "SafeIT", a consultative document on the safety of computer-controlled systems. This includes a proposed standards framework. The period for consultation lasts until 30 September 1990 and we are actively seeking the views of users and suppliers in industry and academia as well as Government. DTI and the Health and Safety Executive, which jointly provide the secretariat to ICSE, are co-ordinating the consultative process.

One of the main purposes of the document is to influence the standards-making process. The document emphasises that in order to achieve the full benefits of standardisation, sector standards should develop from an overall generic approach. Once such an overall framework is in place, the speed at which sector standards can be developed by the British Standards Institution will be greatly enhanced. Thus draft defence standards 00.55 and 00.56, now available for public comment, are examples of draft sector-specific standards which are expected to fall within the generic framework being developed by the International Electrotechnical Commission.

The SafeIT document also urges United Kingdom companies of all sizes and from all sectors to contribute actively to the development of international and European standards.

Textiles

43. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in textiles.

92. **Mr. Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in textiles.

Mr. Forth: Latest available figures show that imports of textiles exceeded exports by £1,564 million in the 12 months to March 1990.

Devon and Cornwall

48. **Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to promote the level of inward investment in Devon and Cornwall; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department is the major source of funds for the Devon and Cornwall Development Bureau (DCDB), the regional development body for Devon and Cornwall. To assist DCDB in its activities, I announced on 8 March that it would be offered grant of £510,000 in 1990-91. This is an increase of 21 per cent. on the 1989-90 grant of £422,000 and will allow DCDB to devote extra resources towards encouraging inward investment. This grant provides 72 per cent. of DCDB's total funding.

Regional Policy

57. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on regional policy.

98. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on regional policy.

115. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on regional policy.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Government remain committed to an effective regional policy and will continue to make the necessary resources available.

87. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the level of regional development grant and regional selective assistance in *(a)* financial year 1978-79 and *(b)* the last financial year.

53. **Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the level of regional development grants and regional selective assistance in *(a)* 1978-79 and *(b)* the last financial year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In 1978-79 expenditure in Great Britain on regional development grants and regional selective assistance was £416·9 million and £104·5 million respectively while in 1989-90 expenditure was £203·9 million and £197·8 million respectively in current prices.

Inward Investment

52. **Mr. William Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies have announced inward investment projects in the United Kingdom over the past 12 months; and which regions have most benefited from the projects.

123. **Mr. Donald Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on the number of companies which have announced inward investment projects in the United Kingdom over the past 12 months; and which regions have most benefited from the projects.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: According to the latest figures readily available to the Invest in British Bureau, in the 12 months ending March 1990, 304 inward investment decisions were made to locate in the United Kingdom. These included the establishment of a new business, expansion or acquisition of an existing business and involvement in joint venture. The figures are based on information provided by the companies themselves at the time of the investment and do not take into account subsequent developments. The following table sets out the number of inward investment decisions broken down on a regional basis.

Regional breakdown of inward investment decisions in the 12 months to March 1990

	Number
Scotland	35
Wales	31
Northern Ireland	23
North East	36
North West	43
Yorkshire and Humberside	14
East Midlands	12
West Midlands	86
South East	16
South West	6
United Kingdom (undefined region)	2
TOTAL	304

Packaging

56. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to encourage industry to reduce the amount of packaging used for products.

101. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to encourage industry to reduce the amount of packaging used for products.

Mr. Forth: The promotion of waste minimisation in general is a key focus of my Department's environmental programme. The need to minimise packaging and, where essential packaging is concerned, to use materials which lend themselves to recycling, is being promoted through my Department's participation in relevant seminars and conferences and through meetings with representatives from the packaging industry. In March my Department was co-organiser with the Institute of Metals of an international conference which discussed all aspects of the design of products so as to avoid harm to the environment, including the minimisation of packaging. An example of a product designed with reduced packaging in mind is included in the booklet "Design for the Environment" which my Department has produced with assistance from the Design Council.

National Economic Development Council

57. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet the director general of the National Economic Development Council to discuss the impact of Government policies on British industry.

90. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet the director general of the National Economic Development Council to discuss the impact of Government policy on British industry.

111. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet the director general of the National Economic Development Council to discuss the impact of Government policies on British industry.

Mr. Ridley: My Department has frequent contacts with NEDO officials on a wide range of business matters and I last chaired the council on 4 April. I have no plans to meet the director general again at present.

Advice Agencies

60. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the implications of the poll tax on the workload of the citizens advice bureaux and other advice-giving agencies.

85. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the implications of the poll tax on the workload of the citizens advice bureaux and other advice-giving agencies.

Mr. Forth: No such assessment has been made. Independent advice on matters related to the community

charge will be given by local citizens advice bureaux, which are primarily funded by local authorities. My Department provides funding to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) and Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) which provide support services to individual citizens advice bureaux including training and information materials. The Department of the Environment has agreed to provide £36,000 to NACAB this year to help with the costs involved in providing training for bureaux workers on the community charge and the Scottish Office has given CAS £36,000 over the last two years for the same purpose.

North East Shipbuilders Ltd.

75. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many former employees of NESL are currently in work.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Of the 1,755 former employees of NESL and associated British Shipbuilders companies in Sunderland who have registered to date with Sunderland Enterprise and Training Ltd., 1,354 (77 per cent.) are now in new jobs or working on fixed-term contracts of 12 weeks or more. SETL does not monitor casual employment of short duration. A further 105 people are currently on training courses.

Furniture and Furnishings

77. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assurance he has sought from the European Commission that legislation concerning the flammability of furniture and furnishings will meet the highest safety standards for British consumers.

109. **Mr. Ted Garrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assurance he has sought from the European Commission that legislation concerning the flammability of furniture and furnishings will meet the highest safety standards for British consumers.

Mr. Forth: The European Commission is engaged in discussions with member states about a proposed directive on the fire behaviour of furniture and furnishings. The Government will be consulting interested parties on the proposal in the near future.

We will press stongly for our requirement for ignition resistance of foam and other fillings at forthcoming meetings with the Commission and at parallel European standards meetings on the test standards.

West Germany

79. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in manufactured goods with West Germany.

113. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in manufactured goods with West Germany.

Mr. Ridley: In the four months ended April 1990 the United Kingdom trade deficit in manufactured goods with West Germany was £3·1 billion.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

80. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet with the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the future development of the ECGD.

Mr. Ridley: I have no current plans to discuss the future of ECGD with the CBI. The memorandum submitted by the CBI to the Trade and Industry Select Committee—see third special report, 1988-89 Session—shows the CBI to be broadly supportive of the Government's decision on the future status and organisation of ECGD which I announced on 18 December 1989.

Engineering, West Yorkshire

83. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received recently from people engaged in the engineering industry in west Yorkshire about the future of their jobs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None; no.

Competition

89. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has plans to take any new initiatives on competition policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: The recommendations for legislative change in the 1988 review on mergers policy have now been implemented. Mergers policy focuses primarily on competition and I continue to apply it vigorously. We announced last year in the White Paper "Opening Markets: New policy on Restrictive Trade Practices", Cm. 727, proposals for new legislation governing anti-competitive agreements. We also indicated in that White Paper that we are reviewing the provisions in the Fair Trading Act 1973 and Competition Act 1980 dealing with the position of the individual anti-competitive firm.

Mining Engineering

93. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet representatives of the mining engineering industry to discuss exports.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no immediate plans to meet representatives of the mining engineering industry.

Computer Components

94. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the components of computers assembled in the United Kingdom are of *(a)* British and *(b)* European Economic Community origin.

Mr. Forth: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) earlier today.

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the components of computers assembled in the United Kingdom are of *(a)* British and *(b)* European Economic Community origin.

Mr. Forth: Official statistics do not indicate the end uses of electronic components produced in the United Kingdom or the European Community. It is not possible therefore to give the information requested by the hon. Member.

Solvents

103. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to regulate the sale to minors of certain forms of toxic correcting fluid and general solvents.

Mr. Forth: The Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act prohibits the sale of solvent-based products to youngsters who appear to want to sniff them. I am not prepared to go further than this to restrict the sale of these useful products to legitimate users.

Footwear and Textile Industries

110. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a further statement on Government support for the footwear and textile industries.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Companies in the footwear and textile industries are eligible for, and have received, assistance under a range of Government schemes of financial assistance.

Company Legislation

118. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he proposes to make any further changes to company legislation.

Mr. Ridley: I have no plans at present for further primary legislation in the field of company law; but I expect to bring forward a number of items of secondary legislation over the coming months to implement the Companies Act 1989, and to make the necessary provision to implement EC company law directives.

Cars

120. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his European counterparts to discuss the treatment of cars manufactured in the United Kingdom by Japanese-owned companies.

124. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his European counterparts to discuss the treatment of cars manufactured in the United Kingdom by Japanese-owned companies.

Mr. Ridley: I discussed the subject yesterday at the Foreign Affairs Council. I have insisted that cars manufactured in the EC by Japanese-owned companies should continue to enjoy unlimited free circulation throughout the Community, and I believe that this has now been accepted.

Regulatory Bodies

122. **Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to establish any new bodies to oversee particular sectors of industry.

Mr. Ridley: I have no plans to establish any new bodies to oversee particular sectors of industry.

Iraq

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the latest extension of credit of £250 million to Iraq via Midland bank is supported by the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

Mr. Redwood: Yes. The financial protocol for £250 million of new medium-term credit to be guaranteed by ECGD was agreed between the United Kingdom and Iraq Governments in the course of the joint commission held in London in November last year.

Shopping Visits

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what restrictions each of the other 11 European Community members impose on their residents who make day-trip shopping visits to the United Kingdom; and which of these countries have had their restrictions approved by the European Commission.

Mr. Redwood: Restrictions approved by the European Community are contained in the travellers allowances directive (69/169/EEC). They are as follows:

Greece, Denmark and Ireland may exclude from allowances to travellers goods the unit value of which exceeds 310 ecu, 340 ecu and 85 ecu respectively.

Ireland may also exclude from the allowances for travellers under 15 years old goods the unit value of which exceeds 85 ecu.

Denmark may apply the following quantitative limits for the importation of goods by travellers resident in Denmark after a stay of less than 48 hours in another country:

Cigarettes—80

Smoking tobacco where the tobacco particles have a width of less than 1·5 mm—150 gr

Distilled beverages and spirit drinks of an alcoholic strength by volume of more than 22 per cent. volume—Nil

National Front

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations he carried out, and with whom, before he extended limited liability status to the National Front.

Mr. Redwood: No limited liability status has been extended to the National Front as a political organisation.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations, and from whom, he has received following the extension of limited liability company status to the National Front.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* No limited liability status has been extended to the National Front. Representations were received from four Members of Parliament on behalf of constituents prior to the registration of National Front (Printers) Ltd. The local trade unions in Companies House also expressed concern on behalf of their members. No representations have been received subsequent to the registration of the company.

GATT Textile Committee

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the GATT textile committee meeting held in Geneva on 12 June.

Mr. Ridley: Last week's meeting of the GATT negotiating group on textiles and clothing in Geneva

continued discussions on arrangements for phasing out the multi-fibre arrangement (MFA) after its expiry next year. The European Community tabled a paper further elaborating its ideas for the reintegration of the textile trade into GATT. The paper reiterated the Community's support for a solution based on phasing out the MFA and dealt with amongst other things product coverage, the process of phasing out restrictions, and the length and nature of transitional safeguards.

Shoes

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had concerning the importation of shoes from third-world countries, tariffs raised against British shoes in those countries and the Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have been in regular contact with the footwear industry over the past year about the issues raised in the current round of GATT negotiations, and have passed to the European Commission the details the industry has given us of both tariff and non-tariff barriers in all third countries, including a number of third-world countries. We will make every effort to ensure that these issues are properly addressed during the detailed bilateral phase of the negotiations between now and the end of the year.

Computers

Mr. Nigel Griffiths To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps he is taking to ensure that all personal computers pass safety tests prior to sale to the public;

(2) what safety tests his Department requires to be undertaken on personal computers; and who is responsible for carrying out the tests.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The safety of most electrical equipment including personal computers traded throughout the European Community is set by the EC low voltage directive, implemented in the United Kingdom through the Low Voltage Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1989. I would certainly encourage all manufacturers to carry out tests on their products or have them independently tested, and I believe this is the normal practice. However, neither method is mandatory. The fundamental requirement is for the product to be safe.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when his Department first learned about possible dangers of electrocution from personal computers; when it issued a public warning; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Personal computers are required to comply with the requirements of the Low Voltage Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1989. The Department was notified on 29 May of tests carried out by a testing company and subsequently received reports showing, inter alia, that four models did not fully meet the relevant standard. In accordance with normal practice the trading standards authorities responsible for enforcing the safety regulations for electrical equipment including personal computers have been or will be informed of the reports received. It is for them to establish the facts and to take the appropriate action.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to ensure that unsafe personal computers are recalled without delay.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* This is a matter for the local trading standards authorities, which are responsible for enforcing the safety regulations for electrical equipment including personal computers.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in what circumstances his Department permits personal computers to go on sale without testing for safety.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* There is no obligation under the EC low voltage directive, which has for a number of years dictated the safety of electrical products, including personal computers, for products to be formally tested prior to sale. It is the responsibility of the manufacturer to ensure that products are safe and the regulations provide for heavy penalties for those who market unsafe equipment.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure the application of British safety standards to computers and computer peripherals sold in or imported into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* All electrical products including computers and peripherals are required to comply with the EC low voltage directive which is implemented into United Kingdom legislation through the Low Voltage Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1989. One means of conforming with these regulations is through compliance with British standards. This is not, however, the only means of conformity; the fundamental requirement is that they be safe.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to make British safety standards mandatory for computers and computer peripherals used in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* No. Where products fall under the requirements of European legislation as in this case with the EC low voltage directive, individual member states cannot insist on mandatory compliance with national standards as this would be regarded as a barrier to trade.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what checks are maintained to ensure the safety of computers and computer peripherals imported into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The safety of computer equipment marketed to consumers in the United Kingdom is subject to enforcement by the local trading standards authority.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimates he has of computer products being sold in the United Kingdom which do not meet British standards of safety codes; and what steps he is taking to monitor and change this situation.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Records are not kept on the extent to which computer equipment sold in the United Kingdom complies with British safety standards and I do not believe it would be practicable to introduce such a system.

Electrical Equipment (Safety)

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to make testing of electrical products under the Low Voltage Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1989 mandatory before these products are sold.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* No. Any additional requirements in excess of those contained in the EC low voltage directive would be regarded by the European Commission as barriers to trade.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce a system whereby proof of satisfactory testing to recognised standards will be mandatory upon all manufacturers of electrical equipment.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* No. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers I gave to his questions earlier today.

Appointments

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list all beneficial appointments and non-governmental paid positions for which officials and former officials of his Department sought, and were granted, permission to accept since June 1979.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Civil servants are required to seek approval for any paid appointment for which they apply within two years of leaving Crown employment. The rules are centrally laid down by the Cabinet Office. Statistics of applications which have been made by ex-employees of my Department are readily available only from 1987 to date: 337 applications were made; all were approved; of those, 34 were approved subject to certain conditions being met. Details of the positions for which approval was being sought are confidential to the individuals concerned and I regret that I cannot divulge details of specific cases.

Limited Liability Status

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, under what authority he is able to refuse limited liability status, and registration as a company with the benefit of limited liability.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* Decisions on the registration of companies are for the Registrar of Companies, who will consider whether applications meet the requirements of the Companies Acts. However, under section 26 of the Companies Act 1985, the approval of the Secretary of State is required for the registration of certain names.

Toxic Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications have been received for export licences to send toxic waste to Romania since 1987.

Mr. Trippier: I have been asked to reply.

Under regulations in force since 1988, the Secretary of State must be notified of proposed hazardous waste exports for disposal in non-EC countries and he can prohibit the export by raising an objection. No such notifications have been made for exports to Romania or any other non-EC country.

EMPLOYMENT

New Businesses

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what estimate he has of new businesses started up in the past five years; how many jobs have been created thereby; how many businesses have been closed in the same period; what were the comparable figures in 1974 to 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer on 14 May at column *331*.

Tourism

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the top 20 tourist attractions in the north-west in numbers visiting or attending; and if he will indicate *(a)* the attendance in each instance for 1989 and *(b)* the percentage change from the previous year's figures.

Mr. Nicholls: The table gives the information.

Twenty most visited attractions in the North West, 1989

Rank	*Attraction*	*Number of visits (thousands)*	*Change 1988-89 per cent.*
1.	Blackpool Pleasure Beach	[1]6,500	—
2.	Albert Dock	[1]5,100	+46
3.	Blackpool Tower	1,495	+1
4.	Frontierland, Morecambe	[1]1,200	+20
5.	Stapeley Water Gardens	[1]1,270	+27
6.	Chester Zoo	904	+1
7.	Croxteth Country Park	[1]750	—
8.	Chester Cathedral	[1]750	+20
9.	Tate Gallery, Liverpool	687	+37
10.	Granada Studios Tour	600	+158
11.	Sandcastle, Blackpool	[1]580	−17
12.	Liverpool Museum	549	−6
13.	Knowsley Safari Park	501	−2
14.	Heaton Park	[1]500	—
15.	Blackpool Zoo	382	+6

Rank	Attraction	Number of visits (thousands)	Change 1988-89 per cent.
16.	Chester Visitor Centre	[1]380	+10
17.	Lyme Park	[1]350	+17
18.	Merseyside Maritime Museum	302	−26
19.	Etherow Country Park	296	n/a
20.	Cheshire Candle Workshops	[1]269	—

[1] = Estimated attendance.
n/a = Not available.
— = No change.

Sheltered Placement Scheme

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many applications have been received for vacancies on the sheltered placement scheme in each of the last 12 months;

(2) how many vacancies there have been on the sheltered placement scheme in each of the last 12 months.

Mr. Eggar: The Employment Service, which is responsible for the sheltered employment programme, became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service Agency's chief executive will be replying in writing to my hon. Friend.

Social Charter

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what progress has been made on implementations of measures already agreed in the European social charter.

Mr. Eggar: The European Community social charter, which the United Kingdom was unable to agree, was a political statement of intent. The European Commission's proposals for implementing the provisions in the charter are outlined in its social action programme. The first detailed draft proposals under the programme have recently been published. Negotiations on the individual proposals in the programme can now begin in the Council of Ministers in the usual way.

Self-employment

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were self-employed in *(a)* June 1979, *(b)* December 1988 and *(c)* December 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is as follows:

Self Employed Persons in the United Kingdom

	Number
June 1979	1,906,000
December 1988	3,113,000
December 1989	3,311,000

Labour Statistics

Mr. Andrew MacKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current level of unemployment.

Mr. Eggar: In May 1990, seasonally adjusted unemployment in the United Kingdom was 1,611,000, about half the July 1986 level.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table showing *(a)* employment by industry and ethnic origin, *(b)* employment by broad occupation, ethnic origin and sex and *(c)* unemployment rate by ethnic origin for the earliest available date on a comparative basis with tables 4, 5 and 8 in the *Employment Gazette*, March 1990.

Mr. Nicholls: Earlier labour force survey analyses by ethnic origin and industry and by ethnic origin, sex and broad occupation are available for 1985-87 and 1984-86 in *Employment Gazette*, December 1988, pages 637-8 (tables 4 and 5) and March 1988, pages 168-9 (tables 4 and 5). Unemployment rates by ethnic origin are given since 1984 on a consistent basis, using the ILO definition of unemployment with a four-week job search period, in table 8 quoted; but information for 1984, 1983 and 1981, using the previous labour force definition of unemployment with a one-week job search period is given in *Employment Gazette*, March 1988, page 173 (table 8) and June 1984, page 263 (tables 1 and 3). Information for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the most recent unemployment figures for the Colne Valley constituency; and what were the comparable figures in the same month five years earlier.

Mr. Nicholls: In May 1990, on an adjustable basis, there were 1,819 unemployed claimants in the Colne Valley parliamentary constituency, a fall of 2,154, or 54 per cent. compared with May 1985.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest unemployment figures; what were the figures in May 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: In May 1990, seasonally adjusted unemployment in the United Kingdom was 1,611,000, compared with 1,088,500 in May 1979. There are now over 1½ million more jobs than in 1979 and unemployment is about half of what it was at its peak in July 1986.

Benefit Claimants

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether, if a claimant adviser offers a vacancy to a claimant which they have obtained from a local newspaper or other source, other than a jobcentre, the claimant has to show good cause if they do not wish to pursue it, or decide to reject it; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The Employment Service, which is responsible for the claimant adviser service, became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the chief executive of the Employment Service, will be replying in writing to the hon. Lady.

Employment Training

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the chief executive of the Training Agency to discuss the provision of employment training; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend meets the director general of the Training Agency on a regular basis to discuss all of the Department's programmes including employment training. About 700,000 unemployed people to date have taken advantage of the help ET offers them to obtain the skills and experience they need to get jobs.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what number of trainees on employment training had to leave the scheme last year because no suitable training placement could be found for them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available. There is a plentiful supply of work placement opportunities for trainees on employment training. At any one time 72 per cent. of trainees are on project or employer-based placements.

Wages

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of the median wage was received by the lowest paid 10 per cent. of male manual workers in each year between 1986 and 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information is published in table 15 of part A of the 1989 new earnings survey report, a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total number of adult workers earning below £157 per week in each of the years between 1986 and 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The estimated number of full-time adult employees earning below specified weekly amounts are published in table 14 of part A of the 1989 report and in table 29 of part B of the new earnings survey reports for 1986 to 1988. Copies of the reports are in the Library.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many business men have promised to serve on the boards of training and enterprise councils.

Mr. Eggar: Over 1,000 business leaders have been involved so far in setting up training and enterprise councils.

Of the 15 TECs that have now become fully operational, there are 138 private sector board members.

Health and Safety

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proposals the Health and Safety Commission has to increase health and safety protection in the workplace.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission's proposals are set out in its plan of work for 1990-91 and beyond. The plan has been submitted to my right hon. and learned Friend for his approval and it is hoped that it will be published in July.

Clothing Industry

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many jobs have been lost in the clothing industry in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The number of employees in employment in the clothing industry, including hats, gloves and fur goods, in Great Britain decreased by 4,000 between December 1988 and December 1989.

Cancer

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether his Department has conducted or commissioned any research into cancer of the larynx resulting from asbestosis, explosives or industrial substances.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive continues to sponsor programmes of research into aspects of the toxicity and carcinogenity of industrial substances. It has commissioned no specific research into cancer of the larynx.

Ex-offenders

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, further to the answer to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) of 15 May, *Official Report*, column *375*, on training for ex-offenders, whether a report will be produced by his Department presenting the findings of the examination referred to; and whether he intends to consult relevant outside bodies during the course of the examination.

Mr. Nicholls: There are frequent contacts and discussions between the Training Agency, Home Office, probation services and voluntary bodies such as NACRO and Apex Trust about training and enterprise provision for ex-offenders. The recent White Paper on punishment in the community is included in those discussions. My Department does not publish reports on such on-going contacts.

TVEI

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list those local education authorities participating in the technical and vocational education initiative extension and set out their budgets for 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given on 19 June, at columns *463-66*.

Migrant Workers

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to the statement by the Minister of State in reply to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (*Official Report*, 21 May, columns 122-23, regarding the movement of migrant workers among Community countries, what is the expected date of

publication of the relevant directive; if its terms will be decided by qualified majority or unanimity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* Revisions to the Community legislation on free movement of EC nationals are under discussion following proposals put forward by the Commission. It is not yet known when these will be agreed.

The proposed revisions do not cover workers who are non-Community nationals, except as dependants of EC nationals: such workers are not within Community competence.

SOCIAL SECURITY

National Insurance

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) of 21 May, *Official Report*, column *81*, whether he has estimated any cost to business in requiring employers to spend more time with national insurance inspectors.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: There is of course a certain cost to businesses in carrying out the task of calculating and paying the correct amounts of national insurance contributions for their employees; this is an inescapable responsibility for them if their employees are to receive correct amounts of social security benefits and pensions. Most employers carry out this task conscientiously and effectively and thus keep the burden on their business to the minimum. However, there is a minority of employers who, for whatever reason, are performing this task less than effectively and from whom the collection of NICs needs to be improved.

Contributions unit inspectors will be concentrating their efforts on these employers. Their aim will be to help educate such employers (some of whom may be relatively inexperienced). If employers can be assisted to get the task right first time, they will in fact reduce the burden on their business which flows from having to take corrective action. This will help ensure that their employees' NIC records are correct and up to date, and that less staff time in the contributions unit needs to be spent on such corrective activity.

One of the main aims of the contributions unit is to ensure that burdens on businesses are kept as low as is practicable.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the number of *(a)* claimants and *(b)* benefit units, identifying (i) families and (ii) pensioners on supplementary benefit who received (1) one single payment, (2) two single payments, (3) three single payments and (4) four or more single payments in the year 1985-86 expressed in each as a total and as a proportion of supplementary benefit caseload.

Mr. Scott: Information on the number of pensioners receiving different numbers of single payments is in the Library, in table 19.1 of the supplementary benefit annual statistical inquiry, 1986. The other information is not available.

Widowed Mother's Allowance

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many women receive widowed mother's allowance in England and Wales.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available figures show that at March 1989, 64,000 women were receiving widowed mother's allowance in England and Wales.

Social Fund

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was *(a)* the projected and *(b)* the actual value of loans repayments to the social fund in 1989-90; and whether he will make a statement on the practice in many social fund offices of setting repayments rates at or about the maximum recommended level of 15 per cent. of applicable benefit levels.

Mr. Scott: Loan repayments to the social fund in 1989-90 totalled £108 million against the forecast of £104 million. The rate of repayment of a loan depends on the individual's circumstances. Where there are no existing commitments, it may be as high as 15 per cent. of the income support applicable amount. But it could be set at 10 per cent., 5 per cent. or less than 5 per cent. An applicant's ability to repay a loan is taken into account before an offer is made. In appropriate cases, rescheduling is considered and money advice is offered.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether the extra funds allocated to the social fund by recycling from loan repayments to loans and grants budgets between December 1989 and March 1990, are regarded for expenditure purposes as a call on 1984-90 social fund expenditure or on some other budget head; and if he will make a statement on the implications of this for future social fund budgets.

Mr. Scott: Expenditure arising from the additional allocations made to local offices in 1989-90 has been treated as expenditure from the social fund in that year. Account was taken of the additional allocations in December 1989 and January 1990 in calculating the allocations for 1990-91 which I announced on 26 March. Decisions on the allocation of social fund budgets for future years will be taken nearer the time.

Community Care Grant

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many women have submitted claims for a community care grant in the past 12 months; and, of those, how many were turned down due to already receiving widowed mother's allowance.

Mr. Scott: One of the conditions for eligibility for community care grants, (as with the previous single payments system) is being in receipt of income support (supplementary benefit). Receipt of widowed mother's allowance is relevant only in so far as it plays a part in determining eligibility to income support.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many people with severe mental handicap and severe behaviour problems have been refused mobility allowance because their walking problems cannot be attributed to a physical cause;

(2) how many people with severe mental handicap whose behaviour problems interrupt their walking progress are in receipt of mobility allowance.

Mr. Scott: I regret that this information is not available.

Money Purchase Pension Schemes

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he sees any need to amend contracting-out arrangements for money purchase schemes following the European Court of Justice judgment in the case of Barber *v.* Guardian Royal Exchange.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: While there remain uncertainties about the legal implications of this judgment for occupational pension schemes, it is clear that there is a specific problem for contracted-out money purchase schemes (COMPS). This arises from the conflict between the European Court's ruling in the Barber case that such schemes must equalise the age at which pensions come into payment for men and women, and the current requirement that such schemes may contract out of the state pension scheme only if they pay protected rights to their members at the age of 60 for women and 65 for men. We have therefore today tabled in another place an amendment to the Social Security Bill to enable these schemes to pay pensions deriving from protected rights from the date on which the member attains an age not earlier than 60 and not later than 65. This will ensure that such schemes can continue to meet the legal requirements of contracting out while complying with the equal treatment requirements of the European Court of Justice judgment. The same conflict does not arise in the case of schemes based on final salary and therefore they will not be affected by the amendment.

State Pension

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will increase the British state retirement pension in line with other EEC pensions; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* Comparisons with other EC members are highly misleading and are complicated by the wide variety of pension provision in different states.

We will continue to maintain our commitment to increase the state retirement pension fully in line with movements in prices.

DEFENCE

HMS Southampton

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated cost of repairs to HMS Southampton following its collision in 1988.

Mr. Neubert: Following the collision, it was decided to combine the repairs with the ship's 1989 refit. The contract was placed with Swan Hunter Ltd. after a competition. The estimated total cost of the repair and refit (including equipments procured separately by the Ministry) is £45 million.

Pensions

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what adjustments were made to comparator earnings by the armed forces pay review body to reflect its judgment on the additional pension benefit received by members of the armed forces compared with that available for civilian schemes for each of the years from its inception in 1971;

(2) what adjustments were made to comparator earnings by the armed forces pay review body in each of the years since 1971, to reflect its judgment on the additional widows' pension benefit received by members of the armed forces compared with that available for civilian schemes.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Between 1971 and 1980 the adjustments made by the AFPRB in respect of the value of pension benefits (including widows' pension benefits) were based on the adjustments used in the context of negotiated pay in the home civil service: details were not published by the AFPRB. From 1981 to 1985, the AFPRB made a downward adjustment of 11 per cent. to comparator earnings. From 1986 onwards, the downward adjustment was reduced to 10 per cent.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what adjustments were made to comparator earnings by the armed forces pay review body in each of the years *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1986, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1988 and *(e)* 1989 to reflect its judgment on the additional widowers' pension benefit received by female members of the armed forces compared with that available for civilian schemes.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None. Adjustments to comparator earnings are currently made on the basis of male pension benefits only.

Armed Forces Pay

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures operated for each of the years from 1960 to set levels of pay for the armed forces; what consideration was given to pension benefits then available to members of the armed forces in setting such levels in each subsequent year; and what decisions were taken.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Between 1960 and 1968 pay in the armed forces was reviewed every two years. Pay was determined by reference to changes in civil service pay (for officers) and to changes in average earnings in manufacturing and other industries (for other ranks). In 1968, armed forces pay was made the subject of a standing reference to the National Board for Prices and Incomes. The AFPRB was established in 1971 to advise the Prime Minister on pay and allowances in the armed forces. Until 1980 adjustments for pension benefits were linked to those agreed for the home civil service.

Low Flying

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many, and what types of aircraft will take part in overland low-flying activity during Exercise JMC 90/2; on what dates and between which times in what areas any such low flying will take place; and what is the minimum height for overland low-level flights in Exercise JMC 90/2.

Mr. Neubert: The majority of air activity in support of this exercise will be carried out over the sea, but some overland low flying may occur in daylight hours on Friday 22, Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 June, north of Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands and in north-west Scotland. Buccaneer, Tornado, Jaquar, Canberra and Hunter aircraft are expected to participate, as well as some air defence aircraft. The exact numbers of aircraft will depend on prevailing weather conditions and operational considerations. Some helicopter activity is also planned. The minimum height authorised for fixed-wing aircraft over land during the exercise will be 250 ft.

JENOA

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the meaning of the term JENOA in relation to Exercise JMC 90/2; and if he will make a statement on the nature and purpose of the activities to be conducted in the JENOA area in Exercise JMC 90/2.

Mr. Neubert: JENOA is an acronym for general operations area. It is a term used by exercise managers and refers to any one of a series of pre-defined areas of sea forming a grid within the exercise area.

Stornoway Airport

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the vertical separation provided to aircraft operating under the control of Royal Air Force radar controllers at times of military activation of Stornoway airport.

Mr. Neubert: The minimum vertical separation provided to aircraft operating under the control of Royal Air Force radar controllers at times of military activation of Stornoway airport is normally 1,000 ft, but this may be reduced to 500 ft in certain defined circumstances.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what use will be made of Stornoway airport during Exercise JMC 90/2.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is planned to deploy six Tornado F3 aircraft and one Sea King helicopter to Stornoway airport during part of Exercise JMC 90/2.

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to ensure that the facilities at Coulport for the handling and storage of Trident warheads will be adequate to contain any potential plutonium dispersal that could be caused by a nuclear warhead accident.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The likelihood of an accident to a nuclear weapon involving dispersal of plutonium is extremely remote, and safety is fully taken into account both in weapon design and operating procedures at handling and storage depots. Comprehensive plans exist for accident response at naval bases including Coulport; these are kept under review to ensure that they are adequate to deal with all accident scenarios.

MOD Police

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Ministry of Defence police were employed at Royal Ordnance, Bishopton until the disbandment of the police force in June; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: The Ministry of Defence police (MDP) complement for Bishopton provided for a detachment of 39 officers, prior to its withdrawal from 1 June 1990. The present position is as stated in my written answer to the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) on 15 May, at column *392*.

RAF Quedgeley

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether there are any plans to release any part of land currently at RAF Quedgeley for purposes other than his Department's use;

(2) what representations he has received on the potential development of land at RAF Quedgeley;

(3) if he has any plans to hold consultations with local residents about alternate uses for land at RAF Quedgeley;

(4) if he will make a statement on the future use of RAF Quedgeley other than for his Department's purposes.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* We do not yet have any specific plans to dispose of land at RAF Quedgeley. However, as a result of requests from Gloucester city council, Stroud district council, and private sector interests, we have identified some 248 acres as likely to become surplus to defence requirements, and as suitable therefore for inclusion in the local plan currently in preparation.

The future use of any such land would be a matter for consultation with the local planning authority and other interested parties, in line with normal planning procedures.

SCOTLAND

Roads

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has to improve the roads between Glasgow and the Mull of Kintyre.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The road between Glasgow and the southern end of the Mull of Kintyre comprises the A82 and A83 which stretches from Glasgow to Lochgilphead forming part of the trunk road network; and the A83 (non-trunk) from Lochgilphead to Campbeltown and B842 Campbeltown to Keil Point on the Mull of Kintyre which are part of the local road network for which Strathclyde regional council has responsibility.

Major improvement schemes in progress or currently planned relating to the A82 and A83 trunk road section of the route are as follows:

A82 Luss bypass; work commenced in March this year.
A82 Hollybank-Tarbet; the preferred line order for this scheme is expected to be published soon.
A83 Inveraray bypass; a preferred line has yet to be established.

Minor schemes on the A82 involve the installation of central reserve safety fencing between Erskine and Balloch and improvement of the junctions with the A8014 and A814.

On the non-trunk section Strathclyde regional council has three road schemes planned or in progress.

Religious Education

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the total number of responses so far received to his draft circular on religious education and religious observance in primary schools, listing the names of the organisations involved; and when he intends to issue a definitive policy on this matter.

Mr. Lang: Responses have been received to date from the organisations listed. In addition 13 individuals have commented. Further responses will be accepted until the end of June. It is intended to issue a circular when these responses have been fully considered.

Organisations responding to Draft Circular on Religious Education and Observance

The Baptist Union of Scotland.
The Church of Scotland.
The Congregation Union of Scotland.
The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
The Scottish Episcopal Church.
The Professional Association of Teachers in Scotland.
The Catholic Education Commission.
The Association of Teachers of Religious Education in Scotland.
The Scottish Association of Advisers in Religious Education.
Association of Directors of Education in Scotland.
The Educational Institute of Scotland.
The Scottish Joint Committee on Religious Education.
The Scottish Humanist Council.
The Catholic Head Teachers Association of Scotland.
Education Alert.
Christian Education Movement in Scotland.
The Scottish Parent Teacher Council.
The Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum.
The Association of Christian Teachers.
The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Education Expenditure

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the expenditure per pupil in real terms for each year from 1979, by eduation authority, in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools.

Mr. Lang: The information available is given in the table, which has been compiled from local authority financial returns. Expenditure on primary and secondary schools in Highland region was not separately identified in 1979-80.

Expenditure per pupil in primary and secondary schools adjusted to 1988-89 prices using the GDP deflator

Region	1979-80		1980-81		1981-82		1982-83		1983-84	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Borders	1,022	1,366	1,129	1,458	1,182	1,458	1,197	1,476	1,181	1,510
Central	841	1,460	932	1,533	996	1,593	1,051	1,637	1,076	1,670
Dumfries and Galloway	858	1,502	968	1,531	999	1,547	1,055	1,553	1,063	1,635
Fife	918	1,472	1,040	1,568	1,099	1,638	1,071	1,648	1,128	1,675
Grampian	956	1,571	1,003	1,738	1,072	1,729	1,112	1,764	1,123	1,769
Highland	n.a.	n.a.	983	1,546	1,014	1,647	1,074	1,652	1,092	1,687
Lothian	958	1,656	1,091	1,811	1,121	1,855	1,054	1,802	1,085	1,837
Strathclyde	922	1,498	1,010	1,571	1,096	1,663	1,140	1,709	1,174	1,777
Tayside	847	1,532	932	1,627	1,017	1,721	1,043	1,736	1,067	1,803
Orkney	1,376	1,543	1,473	1,519	1,419	1,705	1,327	1,760	1,341	1,908
Shetland	1,022	2,166	1,245	2,404	1,377	2,516	1,521	2,587	1,535	2,459
Western Isles	1,073	1,859	1,201	1,899	1,233	1,907	1,259	2,005	1,304	2,124

n.a.—Not available.

Expenditure per pupil in primary and secondary schools adjusted to 1988-89 prices using the GDP deflator

Region	1984-85		1985-86		1986-87		1987-88		1988-89	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Borders	1,177	1,590	1,169	1,643	1,231	1,807	1,253	1,902	1,333	2,188
Central	1,068	1,687	1,046	1,729	1,085	1,863	1,160	2,039	1,224	2,114
Dumfries and Galloway	1,059	1,715	1,006	1,686	1,068	1,933	1,147	2,112	1,204	2,273
Fife	1,071	1,709	1,095	1,743	1,152	1,925	1,221	2,134	1,302	2,251
Grampian	1,102	1,830	1,074	1,776	1,152	1,947	1,179	2,078	1,192	2,281
Highland	1,107	1,671	1,090	1,700	1,166	1,831	1,257	2,003	1,284	2,095
Lothian	1,080	1,822	1,084	1,885	1,166	2,083	1,192	2,192	1,175	2,282
Strathclyde	1,167	1,837	1,161	1,864	1,203	2,017	1,255	2,157	1,262	2,252
Tayside	1,082	1,782	1,071	1,816	1,115	1,995	1,187	2,177	1,215	2,331
Orkney	1,198	2,315	1,439	2,054	1,410	2,265	1,676	2,276	1,380	2,991
Shetland	1,509	2,554	1,549	2,649	1,570	2,825	1,661	3,079	1,655	3,544
Western Isles	1,241	2,101	1,208	2,193	1,235	2,413	1,502	2,582	1,580	2,814

Water Pollution

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest information concerning the presence of toxic or noxious algae or other such contaminated substances generated by the dumping of sewage sludge and chemicals in the Firth of Clyde; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: There are no reports at present of toxic algal blooms in the Firth of Clyde. Such events are rare and naturally occurring and I am not aware of any scientific evidence to show a connection with the dumping of sewage sludge and chemicals in the sea and toxic or noxious algae or other such contaminated substances.

The dumping of sewage sludge at Garroch Head in the Firth of Clyde is controlled by licences issued by my right hon. and learned Friend and carefully monitored both as a condition of the licence and by detailed surveys by DAFS.

Voluntary Bodies

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement concerning the effects upon grant aid to local voluntary associations of regional and island authorities being unable to recover the level of poll tax expected when preparing their budget.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The collection of community charges and decisions by local authorities to provide funding for voluntary organisations from within their financial resources are entirely the responsibility of the authorities themselves.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures he has adopted to assess the effects of the poll tax on grant aid to voluntary associations; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None. It is for individual local authorities to decide whether to make funding available to voluntary organisations from within their financial resources.

Rural Housing

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any proposals to make additional funds available to local authorities for projects designed to encourage low-cost housing development to meet local needs in rural areas.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Resources for housing capital expenditure in 1990-91 were allocated to local authorities in March on the basis of their relative housing needs and with reference to their capital programmes and housing plans. It is for local authorities to determine their own priorities for the use of these allocations in the light of local circumstances, including the need for low-cost housing projects if this is seen as a priority in their area.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any proposals to secure the release of land for low-cost housing development to meet local needs in rural areas.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Scottish Homes has been asked to formulate a rural housing strategy and ways of making available more low-cost housing to meet local needs is one issue that it is considering. Work on the strategy is well in hand and I look forward to receiving its final report.

Traffic, Gateside

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will pay an official visit to Gateside to inspect the prevailing road traffic arrangements, including the effects of the 40 mph speed limit.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No.

NHS Reform

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his officials have held recent discussions with interested parties regarding the possibility of any part of the national health service seeking self-governing status in the parliamentary constituency of Greenock and Port Glasgow.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: My officials have held discussions with numbers of employees in the national health service throughout Scotland on the implications of self-governing status.

Rents to Mortgages

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many representations he has received concerning the rents into mortgages scheme; how many were *(a)* in favour and *(b)* against the scheme; how many of these representations are from (i) individuals, (ii) organisations and (iii) local authorities; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when he expects the rents into mortgages experiment to be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have had no formal representations about this scheme since I first announced it in May 1989.

Scottish Homes was asked to introduce the scheme on an experimental basis for a trial three-year period beginning in October 1989. This arrangement still stands. During its first eight months of operation, Scottish Homes has received 154 firm applications to purchase. The scheme is being closely monitored and early indications are that it is attracting the interest of the intended target group and others.

Any extension or modification to the scheme which appears appropriate in the light of experience will be introduced as soon as practicable.

Explosives

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will identify those areas in British coastal waters which are designated for the dumping of explosive materials and devices.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 10 May 1990]:* The following areas in Scottish coastal waters are shown on Admiralty navigation charts as dumping grounds for explosive materials:

Area	*Chart*	*Position*
Firth of Clyde	2220	55° 37′ 00″ N 4° 59′ 30″ W
Beauforts Dyke	2198	54° 54′ 00″ N 5° 23′ 00″ W
Beauforts Dyke	2093	54° 35′ 00″ N 5° 05′ 00″ W
Beauforts Dyke	2198	54° 45′ 00″ N 5° 15′ 00″ W
Sound of Mull	2390	56° 30′ 00″ N 5° 37′ 00″ W
Inner Sound	2498	57° 19′ 00″ N 5° 51′ 00″ W
Isle of May, Firth of Forth	734	56° 10′ 45″ N 2° 30′ 15″ W
Isle of May, Firth of Forth	734	56° 11′ 24″ N 2° 29′ 00″ W
East of Aberdeen	1446	57° 09′ 00″ N 1° 58′ 30″ W

None of these dump sites is now used for disposal of explosive material or devices.

Archaeological Surveys (Radar)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what preliminary conclusions he has reached about the usefulness of radar surveys in establishing archaeological data about what went on in the outer precincts of great abbeys; and for establishing archaeological precautions on disburbance of ground levels.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Ground-probing radar has been primarily developed for use on building sites where it has been used to detect voids in standing buildings. It works by bouncing electromagnetic waves off boundaries between deposits of different electrical properties. Thus in suitable conditions it can detect stone walls, volumes of disturbed ground such as pits or wells, and some archaeological layers. Simple large features can be identified and interpreted easily. It will not, however, detect features in completely waterlogged soils, and it shares the limitation with other geophysical techniques that strong surface features can mask underlying ones. An advantage over magnetometry particularly relevant in Scotland is that it is not so vulnerable to igneous and metamorphic rocks with strong magnetic fields. Its advantage over other geophysical techniques is that it gives a three-dimesional picture.

Ground-probing radar has not yet been extensively tested and does have limitations. Thus failure to identify physical evidence of underlying structures does not necessarily mean that such evidence has not survived: it may be merely obscured. It is in the nature of archaeological deposits that intrusive methods of archaeological investigation, that is, excavation, remain the only satisfactory method of determining what lies beneath ground level.

It is clear that many of the great abbeys of Scotland had substantial precincts beyond the main nucleus of church and conventual buildings. In Scotland these are almost entirely unexplored. In managing properties in care, the aim of Historic Buildings and Monuments, Scotland (HBM) is the preservation of archaeological deposits in situ. Where this is not possible, HBM will continue to take advantage of modern technology including techniques such as ground-probing radar. This has been used in Scotland at Wardend of Durris and at Whithorn. Increased experience of comparisons between radar traces and features revealed by excavation should allow sampling strategies to replace full excavation, better planning of full excavation, and reduction in exploratory trenching with greatly increased efficiency and reduced costs.

Metal Detectors

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness or otherwise of legislation relating to metal detectors in areas such as Roxburgh castle.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* The use of metal detectors on scheduled ancient

monuments, and the removal from a scheduled monument of any artefacts recovered by use of a metal detector, require the consent of the Secretary of State for Scotland under the terms of section 42 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. This requirement is being generally publicised through a leaflet recently published by Historic Buildings and Monuments, Scotland. On monuments where there has been a particular problem (in Borders and Dumfries and Galloway regions) signs have been erected warning anyone who might be intending to use a metal detector that the area is protected by law. These vulnerable sites also receive more frequent visits from Historic Buildings and Monuments' monument wardens and the local police have been asked both to monitor the sites and to assist the wardens as necessary.

Training

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what particular requirements he is placing on LECs to ensure that appropriate training opportunities will be made available to mentally handicapped and/or mentally ill individuals; what level of funding he has assessed as being appropriate for such work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Local enterprise companies will be provided with appropriate levels of resources and obliged by the terms of their contract to meet performance targets relating specifically to provision for trainees with special needs including the mentally handicapped and people with mental health problems.

Inverclyde (Development)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what is the latest information he has as to how many jobs in Inverclyde have been created by the activities of the Inverclyde initiative from its inception;

(2) what steps he has taken to assess the accuracy of job creation forecasts for Inverclyde, given to him by the Inverclyde initiative since its inception.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The total number of jobs created by projects which have been assisted by the Inverclyde initiative between March 1985 and May 1990 is approximately 3,840.

This figure is based on information provided to the initiative by the companies it has assisted and its own records of placements under the training and employment grants scheme. The figures have been checked to exclude any element of double counting. Responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of integrated area initiatives led by the Scottish Development Agency is primarily a matter for the agency.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all groups and organisations within the Inverclyde district council area which have received urban aid or programme support in *(a)* 1988-89, *(b)* 1989-90 and *(c)* 1990-91; and if he will identify the level of grant received in each case and the conditions attached to each award.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The information requested is set out in the table. A number of applications for approval of additional expenditure in 1990-91, including some relating to the Inverclyde area, are still under consideration. Details of conditions attached to projects could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Inverclyde district council area:
Urban programme approved expenditure on projects run by local groups

Name of group/organisation	*(a)* *1988-89* £	*(b)* *1989-90* £	*(c)* *1990-91* £
Port Glasgow Community Enterprise Ltd.	30,395	21,276	—
Port Glasgow Upper East Community Council	4,552	5,534	5,811
Glenbrae Advisory Group	76,901	60,643	2,717
Quarrier's Homes	54,979	59,826	15,154
Greenock Employment Action Group	47,002	49,353	30,228
Inverclyde Drugline	26,658	43,879	43,813
Gibshill/Weir Street Community Council	28,136	32,494	34,119
Inverclyde Tutoring Project Executive Committee	34,702	42,480	37,170
Ravenscraig Youth Action Group	49,280	131,424	80,585
Threshold Printing Project Steering Group	—	—	42,759
St. Kenneth's Day Centre Committee	18,410	7,833	8,225
Bow Farm Community Council Caraven Project	41,799	49,288	51,753
South West Greenock Employment Group	41,841	47,426	49,797
Octavia Tenants Hall	81	—	—
Inverclyde Resources Ltd.	6,021	14,127	33,342
Larkfield Youth Action Management Committee	51,616	36,976	64,368
Strone/Maukinhill Forum	43,932	55,787	51,652
Second Chance Learning Management Group	44,126	67,639	68,706
Greenock East Credit Union	36,857	11,900	12,495
Larkfield Community Council	17,664	4,985	5,234
Inverclyde Womens Aid	38,700	43,839	56,441
Venture Group Inverclyde Initiative	11,205	20,932	22,853
The Westburn Centre (Community and Enterprises) Ltd.	60,000	—	—
Gibshill Youth Club	14,029	3,682	—
Larkfield Community Newspaper Group	—	13,247	—
Bluebird Family Centre Parents Committee	—	3,000	—
Port Glasgow Association of Tenants Groups	86,592	109,406	101,737
Inverclyde Targeted Training and Employment Initiative	—	—	46,760

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his current estimate of the cost to Her Majesty's Government of the Inverclyde enterprise zone; broken down into *(a)* rate relief and *(b)* capital allowances.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The initial estimate of the overall cost to the Government of developing the Inverclyde enterprise zone was given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in Greenock on 30 March 1988 when she announced agreement to the designation of the zone. That estimate of £25 million excluded any selective financial assistance. The costs of both rate relief and capital allowances are dependent on the scale, timing and type of developments in the zone during its 10-year life span.

Social Workers

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he is taking to improve social workers' knowledge of social work law and the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* Approval of qualifying training in social work and of training of mental health officers are matters for the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW). The council has reviewed teaching of law to social workers in qualifying training and will be issuing guidance later in the year with a view to improving social workers' competence in this area. The council is at present also monitoring the content and quality of mental health officer training programmes in Scotland.

Bathing Beaches

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities have the resources to maintain accurate information on pollution levels on beaches.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The monitoring of the quality of bathing waters identified under directive 76/160/EEC is the responsibility of the river purification boards. The boards are funded by precept on the regional councils in their areas and their funding already takes account of the need to maintain accurate information for this purpose. I believe that the boards will be willing to transmit their monitoring results free of charge to local authorities.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures he is taking to arrange for the display of information on beaches to show accurately the level of pollution recorded for such beaches; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* I wrote on 15 June to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to seek the participation of local authorities in a voluntary scheme to display, in a standard form and at locations convenient to the public, the results of the monitoring of bathing waters identified under directive 76/160/EEC. The Government believe in making information on the environment more freely and easily available and I hope that the local authorities will be able to help in this way.

GP Budgets

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many general practitioners or general practitioner practices have expressed an interest in becoming practice budget holders within each health board in Scotland;

(2) how many general practitioners or general practitioner practices will be eligible to become practice budget holders within each health board;

(3) if he will publish the names of the general practitioners or practices which have expressed an interest in becoming practice budget holders.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* It is not possible to say how many practices are eligible to become budget holders. The initiative is limited to practices with a list size of at least 9,000 patients, but smaller practices can link together in order to meet the list size criterion. Moreover, eligibility is dependent on the practices being able to demonstrate that they have adequate management skills to administer the fund, and will have suitable computer support systems up and running by the operative date. There are approximately 147 practices which could meet the list size criterion. Expressions of interest have been received from 46 practices to date.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many general practitioner practices are now eligible to become budget holders; how many have expressed an interest in budget holding; and if he will name those practices.

Mr. Rifkind *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* It is not possible to say how many practices are eligible to become budget holders. Practices with list sizes of over 11,000 patients will be eligible, while those with 9,000 to 11,000 patients will be considered on an individual basis. Moreover, it is possible for smaller practices to link together and so meet the minimum list size criterion. In all cases the practice must demonstrate that it has the managerial capacity to administer the fund, and will have adequate computer support systems up and running by the operative date.

To date a total of 46 practices in Scotland have expressed an interest in becoming fund holders. Detailed information on the practices concerned is not held centrally.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Avoparcin

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether Avoparcin can legally be fed to dairy cattle in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Yes. Such use has been permitted since 16 March this year, following a decision by the EC Standing Committee on Additives in Feedingstuffs to extend its authorisation.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will summarise the research evidence that BSE is not transmissible to pigs.

Mr. Maclean: No naturally occurring sub-acute spongiform encephalopathy has been reported in pigs anywhere in the world. Experimental transmission of kuru to pigs has been attempted but failed to result in disease or a spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many dairy herds there are in Britain; and how many of these have been affected by BSE.

Mr. Maclean: There are nearly 41,000 dairy herds in Britain. Up to 15 June, 5,532 of these had at least one confirmed case of BSE.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farms in

Britain have experienced *(a)* one case, *(b)* two cases, *(c)* three cases, *(d)* four to 10 cases and *(e)* over 10 cases of BSE.

Mr. Maclean: The information up to 15 June is as follows:

(a) 4,751; *(b)* 1,428; *(c)* 594; *(d)* 769; *(e)* 62.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will estimate the number of BSE-affected cows that have entered the human food chain *(a)* prior to the introduction of compulsory slaughter of suspect animals and *(b)* since the introduction of compulsory slaughter.

Mr. Maclean: The information is as follows:

(a) This is not known; *(b)* none.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will consider introducing regulations requiring the incineration of all beef offal.

Mr. Maclean: I have no plans to do so.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether any research work has been carried out to allow pigs that have been fed infected meat and bone meal and cattle offal to live their full natural life span to see whether any develop spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: Experiments to determine whether pigs are susceptible to a scrapie like disease as a result of parenteral or oral exposure to brain from confirmed cases of BSE are in progress. The former has been running since February 1989 and so far no clinical or pathological evidence of a scrapie like disease has resulted. It is intended that these pigs will be kept, subject to welfare considerations, for at least five years.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if there is any evidence of hazard arising from the milk of cows with sub-clinical BSE.

Mr. Maclean: There is no evidence and neither is any expected. Scientific studies of natural scrapie have shown that the agent is not found in udder colostrum and milk.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what assessment he has made of the possible dangers of feeding offal from cows with sub-clinical BSE to pigs and poultry;

(2) if he will review the practice of feeding beef offal to pigs and poultry.

Mr. Maclean: There is no evidence to suggest that BSE poses any risk to pigs or poultry.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the possible danger to vermin and birds from the burial of the carcases of BSE-affected cattle in domestic refuse tips; and whether he will make it his policy to require the incineration of all BSE-affected carcases.

Mr. Maclean: It is the Ministry's intention to secure incineration facilities for all BSE-suspected carcases, although progress towards this goal has been slowed by local opposition to most proposals to build incinerators. Until there is sufficient incineration capacity, a proportion of carcases will continue to be buried in accordance with sound veterinary practice and under the supervision of the state veterinary service. These procedures ensure that there is no risk of spreading the disease through this method of disposal.

Meat and Bone Meal

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the meat and bone meal produced by the rendering industry in Britain is used for feeding to *(a)* pigs and *(b)* poultry.

Mr. Maclean: This information is not available.

Scrapie

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if there is any evidence that scrapie can cause spongiform encephalopathy in animals other than cows by direct ingestion of infected food.

Mr. Maclean: It is concluded that at least some outbreaks of transmissible mink encephalopathy were caused by feeding scrapie-infected material and it is probable that five antelope in British zoos contracted a scrapie like disease from eating scapie-infected material.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will introduce higher standards in the rendering industry to prevent the scrapie agent getting into meat and bone meal.

Mr. Maclean: Consideration of such a policy must await the results of research, currently in hand, into the rendering processes required to inactivate the scrapie like agents.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether there is yet any evidence that scrapie can be transmitted horizontally in a flock via *(a)* the faeces, *(b)* bedding and *(c)* scratchings of scrapie-affected sheep.

Mr. Maclean: The information is as follows:

(a) No.
(b) No.
(c) No.

Slaughterhouses

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place the latest reports by his veterinary officers on slaughterhouse standards in the Library.

Mr. Gummer: Advice on individual premises is offered by my veterinary officers, in confidence, to the enforcement authority (district council) concerned. The release of the advice would be a matter for the enforcement authority.

Food Advisory Committee

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the recommendations of the Food Advisory Committee in the past year together with the actions taken by him on each recommendation.

Mr. Maclean: In the past year I have announced our acceptance of the Food Advisory Committee's recommendations for stricter controls on colours in food and proposals for legislation are currently in preparation for public comment and notification to the European Commission. I also announced acceptance of committee advice that the use of potassium bromate as a flour improver should no longer be permitted. Regulations prohibiting this use came into effect on 1 April this year. I published and sought comments on the committee's report on old compositional orders and I shall be considering the responses before reaching decisions.

In the area of labelling, I accepted the committee's revised guidelines on the use of "natural" in food labelling and advertising, which were published in June last year. I also accepted its recommendations for detailed controls on the use of certain nutritional claims for which draft legislation is in preparation for public consultation and notification to the European Commission.

At present I am considering advice from the committee on the use of mineral hydrocarbons on cheese, in chewing gum and on food contact materials and on a request for the use of sodium benzoate as a preservative for grey mullet roe. I shall make separate announcements on these matters in due course.

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make an assessment of the consequences for research underpinning the work of his Department in relation to insect and aphid control and beekeeping, of the reductions proposed by the natural history museum in its collections and research.

Mr. Curry: The Department's entomologists at the ADAS central science laboratory use the extensive and unique collections at the natural history museum in order to solve difficult identification problems.

We have been assured that the natural history museum's entomology collections will continue to be maintained and that access will continue to be provided to us.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 21 June 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Haberdashers' Aske's CTC

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his Department's current estimate of the total capital costs of establishing a Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college; and what part of these costs is represented by the value of the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham schools premises or of the proposed lease under which those premises will be made available for the city technology college.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has agreed with the Haberdashers' Company to contribute at least £4 million to the initial capital costs of the Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college. The Haberdashers' Company has agreed that its contribution will be the value of the sites of the two schools, and that it will also underwrite sponsorship of £1 million. A cash limit for the project will be decided following the completion of detailed building feasibility studies.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if grants will be paid by his Department toward the capital costs of establishing a Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college prior to the advertising of a new scheme for the Robert Aske's Charity and the Charity Commissioners' consideration of any public representations on proposals for such a scheme.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has not yet determined the phasing for his contribution to initial capital expenditure on the Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college. His decision will be made after the completion of current building feasibility studies, in the light of all the circumstances, including the Haberdashers' Company's progress in agreeing a new scheme for the Robert Aske's Charity with the Charity Commissioners.

Inner London (Education Spending)

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what the total expenditure on education by the Inner London education authority was in its final year before abolition.

Mrs. Rumbold: Figures for the outturn expenditure of the Inner London education authority in 1989-90 are not yet available.

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total projected expenditure on education by the 12 inner London boroughs and the City of London for the year 1990-91.

Mrs. Rumbold: According to figures supplied by the inner London boroughs and the City of London to the Department, the current expenditure budgets for education for these authorities in 1990-91 amount in total to £1,068 million.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Private Bills

Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he has any plans to reform the private Bill procedure; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Government have been examining this whole subject following the report of the Joint Committee on Private Bill procedure and the debates on that report held in the House, and in another place, last year. Subject to consultation, we propose to build on the thinking behind the report by establishing new procedures so that railway and light rapid transit works which at present have to be authorised by private Bill could in future be authorised by order. The legislation would also increase the use of orders for amending and extending harbour legislation so that in future very few harbour measures would be promoted by private Bills. These proposals would lead to a reduction of about 50 per cent. in the number of private Bills promoted each year. It is also proposed to legislate so that the order-making procedure could be extended at a later date to other works proposals which would otherwise require a private Bill.

The proposed procedures would involve a tiered approach so that minor matters might be dealt with locally; the majority would come within a ministerial order-making procedure with provision for a public inquiry; while for the most important projects after the inquiry and ministerial stages, the proposal would have to be approved by Parliament, but without further detailed examination. We would thus reduce the volume of private Bills significantly while ensuring that matters of genuinely national importance still came to Parliament for decision. No radical changes are planned for the separate and different system in Scotland—the private legislation procedure—which is generally satisfactory in the particular circumstances there.

Together with my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Transport and for the Environment, I have today published a consultation paper which sets out our proposals in greater detail and invites comments on them. Copies have been placed in the Library of the House. The changes would involve primary legislation and in the light of consultation the Government will look for an early opportunity to bring this forward.

The procedure for those matters which would remain to be dealt with by private Bills will be reformed along the lines suggested by the Joint Committee and as broadly accepted by the Government in the debates on the report.

The Government believe that these proposals, taken as a whole, will provide a more appropriate way to deal with infrastructure projects in the modern age while protecting the interests of all those involved.

TRANSPORT

Smoke Hoods

Mr. Bright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what progress has been made by the EUROCAE working group in developing a European standard for smoke hoods since the group was created in December 1989; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what progress has been made in discussions between the EUROCAE working group set up in December 1989

and the federal aviation authority in the United States of America in developing an international standard for passenger smoke hoods.

Mr. McLoughlin: The initial working draft of the EUROCAE specification is expected to be issued in July. The draft will be sent to the United States Federal Aviation Administration, which is expected to issue its draft specification shortly thereafter. It is not possible at this stage to say how closely the FAA specification will match the EUROCAE specification, but the Civil Aviation Authority does not expect any significant differences.

Ships (Registration)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those ports of registry in independent territories where he is proposing to reduce the ability to register ships or limit their tonnage; and if he will tabulate the proposed regulations port by port.

Mr. McLoughlin: The territories which are to be required to restrict the type and size of ship which they will be allowed to register are the following dependent territories:

Anguilla
British Virgin Islands
Montserrat
Falkland Islands
St. Helena
Turks and Caicos Islands

There is only one port of registry in each territory. The registrations will be the same in each case and will ensure that no new restrictions will be allowed for ships subject to international convention safety standards. The territories concerned are preparing legislation to implement the relevant conventions—so that the Department of Transport's surveyors have a legal basis on which to inspect those few ships currently registered in the territories to which the international convention safety standards apply—and to restrict new registration to non-convention ships.

Driving Licences

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those independent territories whose driving licences *(a)* are and *(b)* are not recognised in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Atkins: Under international agreements, the holder of any valid foreign driving licence is permitted to drive in this country for up to 12 months as a visitor or new resident. In addition, holders of valid licences issued by member states of the European Community and by Australia, Austria, Barbados, Finland, Japan, Kenya, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Cyprus, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, the territory of the British Virgin Islands, the territory of Hong Kong or Zimbabwe may exchange their licences for a United Kingdom licence within 12 months of becoming resident here. Valid Northern Ireland licences may be used indefinitely for driving in Great Britain. Holders of valid Channel Islands and Isle of Man licences may exchange them for United Kingdom licences within 10 years of their date of expiry.

A696 (Improvements)

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects proposals to be finalised for improvements to the A696 south of Ravenscleugh farm, Northumberland.

Mr. Atkins: If there are no land entry problems, improvements could be implemented before next winter. More than one landowner is involved and CPO procedures will be required. Should there be objections to a draft CPO considerably more time may be required for implementation.

Railway Services

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial authority he has given British Rail to order rolling stock to carry passengers on cross-channel railway services to destinations beyond London; when such authority was given; and how many such vehicles have been ordered.

Mr. Freeman: British Rail published its plans for services beyond London on 14 December and I refer to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee) on that date, at column *767*. British Rail has not yet submitted its investment proposals.

London Underground (Police)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to increase uniformed police presence on London underground; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The complement of the division of the British Transport police responsible for the underground was increased in December 1988 to 400 officers. The division is now up to establishment. The increased number of officers will allow the home beat system to be extended throughout the network. This will result in a higher uniformed police presence on the underground. Police response times are being improved by opening new area police stations and by the installation of a new radio system to allow communication below ground. The Department of Transport is considering amendments to the force scheme governing the British Transport police which would allow the introduction of special constables.

Rail Routes (Subsidies)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the current subsidies for rail routes; what were the comparable figures for the previous three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Claims for 1990-91 have not yet been settled. Figures for central Government support paid to the British Railways Board are given in the table. They include both the public service obligation grant under EC regulation 1191/69 and section 3 of the Railways Act 1974, which compensates British Rail for maintaining loss-making passenger services on Network SouthEast and Provincial—InterCity services were removed from the obligation on 1 April 1988—and level crossings grant under EC regulation 1192/69. Final claims for 1988-89 have yet to be agreed; no final claims have been received for 1989-90.

£ million

	Cash	1990-91 prices
1986-87	689	882
1987-88	783	951
1988-89	557	632
1989-90	511	544

Blind Pedestrians

Mr. Dunn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what signals are available to assist blind pedestrians at pelican crossings on dual carriageway roads.

Mr. Atkins: A new type of audible signal—"bleep and sweep"—has been installed at 25 trunk road pelican crossings following successful trials over the past few years. This new signal has been developed to overcome the problem at dual carriageway crossings where the normal "bleeper" sound from one crossing could be mistaken by a blind person as the signal to cross at the adjacent crossing. The new sound units have been welcomed by organisations representing blind and partially sighted people.

Marchioness (Report)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received the marine investigations branch final report into the sinking of the Marchioness; and when he expects to be able to make the report publicly available.

Mr. McLoughlin: My right hon. Friend has received the report of the chief inspector of marine accidents into the sinking of the Marchioness. He is considering publication of the report in full, as soon as is practicable, in the light of the decision to prosecute the master of the Bowbelle.

ENVIRONMENT

National Parks

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of planning appeal decisions *(a)* allowed, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* withdrawn and *(d)* undetermined in each of the English national parks in each of the last two years for which figures are available; and if he will express the numbers allowed and dismissed as a percentage of those determined.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested is as follows:

Section 36-37 Planning Appeals

National Park/Year	Decided	Allowed		Dismissed		Withdrawn	In hand at 31 March 1990
		Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.		
Peak District							
1988-89	47	4	8·5	43	91·5	4	—
1989-90	55	19	34·5	36	65·5	5	42
Lake District							
1988-89	68	22	32·4	46	67·6	15	—
1989-90	104	41	39·4	63	60·6	7	63
Exmoor							
1988-89	10	3	30·0	7	70·0	4	—
1989-90	17	5	29·4	12	70·6	0	2
Dartmoor							
1988-89	46	10	21·7	36	78·3	5	—
1989-90	62	19	30·6	43	69·4	10	46
Yorkshire Dales							
1988-89	28	12	42·9	16	57·1	1	—
1989-90	32	12	37·5	20	62·5	0	16
Yorkshire Moors							
1988-89	22	5	22·7	17	77·3	0	—
1989-90	41	8	19·5	33	80·5	1	11
Northumberland							
1988-89	0	0	—	0	—	0	—
1989-90	0	0	—	0	—	0	—

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning applications were submitted in each of the English national parks in the last two years for which figures are available; how many were determined; and how many of those determined, in numbers and as proportions, were successful.

Mr. Moynihan: The readily available information is given in the table:

Planning Applications Decided and Numbers and Percentage Granted by English National Parks 1987-88 and 1988-89

National Park[1]	1987-88			1988-89		
	Total Decisions	Granted	Percentage[2]	Total Decisions	Granted	Percentage[2]
Lake District S.P.B.[3]	1,013	798	79	702	503	73
Peak Park J.P.B.	901	699	79	961	707	74
North Yorkshire Moors	627	501	82	669	525	80

National Park[1]	1987-88			1988-89		
	Total Decisions	Granted	Percentage[2]	Total Decisions	Granted	Percentage[2]
Yorkshire Dales	498	365	75	585	419	73
Dartmoor	621	490	80	917	683	76
Exmoor	360	306	85	410	348	85

[1] Figures for the Northumberland National Park are unavailable.
[2] Based on total excluding 'other' decisions for which a granted or refused decision is not given.
[3] Figures for 1987-88 are for three quarters only and 1988-89 for two quarters.

Ozone-Destroying Chemicals

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to statutory restrictions of production of ozone-destroying chemicals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on Thursday 14 June 1990 to my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet), at column *295*.

Housing, Merseyside

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make a statement on the future of the Housing Corporation office in Liverpool;

(2) how much revenue deficit grant is paid by the Housing Corporation to Merseyside housing associations;

(3) what capital allocations have been made to Co-operative Development Services (Liverpool) Ltd. and to Pierhead housing association, Liverpool, in 1990-91; and if he will make a statement about the implications of funding arrangements for Merseyside housing associations for their 1991-92 programmes;

(4) when he expects a decision to be made on the funding of the Gable housing association's application to construct a scheme for disabled people in Liverpool;

(5) if he will list the expenditure made by housing associations on Merseyside in 1989-90 and 1990-91; how much has been allocated for the following two years; what are the average figures for regions of England; and if he will make a statement;

(6) what discussions his Department has had with the Housing Corporation about the suspension of the next phase of a Servite housing association project on Merseyside; and if he will consider bringing forward cash from the 1991-92 allocation to enable the completion of the 1990-91 programme.

Mr. Chope: These are matters for the Housing Corporation rather than for this Department. I have therefore asked the Housing Corporation to respond to the hon. Member direct.

Council Tenants (Home Purchases)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the reasons for subsidies for council tenants to buy homes on the private market.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Section 129 of the Housing Act 1988 gives local authorities power to pay grants, under approved schemes, to assist their tenants to obtain homes of their own. Cash incentive schemes provide an important and cost-effective means by which local authorities can help their tenants into home ownership while securing vacancies for reletting to homeless families.

City Grants

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on city grants made up to the most recent practicable date in the current year.

Mr. Moynihan: During the current financial year to date, 23 projects have received offers of city grant totalling £22 million. These projects are expected to lead to some £106 million of private sector investment in inner city areas.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received a copy of the report prepared for the European Parliament's environment committee on the Commission's proposal for a directive on the disposal of polychlorinated biphenyls and terphynyls, document A3—84/90 SYN161, dated 4 April; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I have received a copy of the report mentioned by the hon. Member. The report has been adopted by the European Parliament and it is now for the Commission to decide whether, in the light of this, to make a revised proposal to the Council.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has reassessed the safety of incineration as a means to dispose of polychlorinated biphenyls; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what research his Department has commissioned into the effects of incineration of polychlorinated biphenyl chemicals in *(a)* residential areas and *(b)* non-residential areas;

(3) which specific dangers there are during the process of incinerating polychlorinated biphenyls; which dangerous chemicals can be produced during the incineration of polychlorinated biphenyls and at what level; and what danger they pose to people and the environment.

Mr. Trippier: Uncontrolled burning of polychlorinated biphenyls—PCBs—can produce traces of dioxins and furans. Properly designed and operated incinerators for disposing of PCBs, however, should not produce emissions harmful to the environment. The Department's pollution paper No. 27, "Dioxins in the Environment", published last year, found that in well-managed incinerators used for the combustion of waste, including PCBs, emissions of dioxins and furans were reduced to negligible levels. The paper assesses the health hazards from these compounds and sets out the steps and research undertaken by the Government to reduce human and environmental exposure. Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution is investigating the occurrence of PCBs, dioxins and furans

in soil in urban and rural areas and issued a report in November last year. Copies of these documents are available in the Library.

Sewage Disposal

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the Government fund any research toward clean technology and alternative sewage disposal methods; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Department's environmental protection technology—EPT—scheme offers shared funding for research in defined priority areas which could lead to improvements in environmental standards. Two of the current EPT scheme priority areas concern reduction of polluting substances in industrial waste water. Sewage disposal methods are not at present within the scope of the scheme. The Department has however recently funded research, jointly with the water industry, on sewage sludge treatment processes and the safe disposal of sewage sludge on agricultural land. It is also open to companies and research establishments to come forward with proposals for collaborative research and development in any field of clean technology under the Department of Trade and Industry's research and technology initiatives.

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the responsibilities of the drinking water inspectorate.

Mr. Trippier: The drinking water inspectorate was established on 2 January 1990 under section 60 of the Water Act 1989 which empowers my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales to appoint persons to act on their behalf as technical assessors in relation to their powers and duties concerning the quality and sufficiency of water supplied by water undertakers.

Its principal task is to check the quality of water supplied by water undertakers in England and Wales for compliance with the requirements of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989. If water undertakers are found not to be meeting their statutory requirements the inspectorate will advise my right hon. Friends, as appropriate, on enforcement action and if water is supplied which is unfit for human consumption will advise on possible prosecution.

The inspectorate will also provide advice to my right hon. Friends on objections made to them against enforcement notices served by local authorities relating to private water supplies. It also provides technical and scientific advice to my right hon. Friends on drinking water quality standards and other issues including negotiations within the European Community.

The inspectorate will produce an annual report which will be published.

Threatened Species

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to seek an extension of EEC rules to cover the seizure of threatened species in transit.

Mr. Trippier: Adequate provision exists for the seizure of unauthorised shipments of endangered species whilst in transit through the United Kingdom.

Water Metering

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the report of the water metering trials which have been carried out in various parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Trippier: Information on the national water metering trials has been collected by the water industry. I understand that the national water metering trials co-ordinating committee intends to publish a second interim report on the trials early in July. A copy of the report will be placed in the Library.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to what extent carriers of toxic waste or operators of plants or sites where such waste is disposed of are required to insure themselves against the costs of potential environmental damage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: There are no specific requirements for either carriers of special waste or operators of facilities for the disposal of special waste to insure themselves against the costs of potential environmental damage. However, there are provisions in the Environmental Protection Bill which require the holder of a waste management licence to satisfy his waste regulation authority that he has sufficient resources to meet the obligations of his licence including the costs of remedying any pollution that might occur.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans there are for legislation to ban the trade in toxic waste to and from the United Kingdom following the agreement by EC Environment Ministers on 7 June for each member state to become self-sufficient in waste disposal.

Mr. Trippier: Clause 131 of the Environmental Protection Bill contains powers to prohibit or restrict import or export of waste of any description and the EC Commission is preparing proposals to amend the existing directive on transfrontier shipment of hazardous waste. The United Kingdom is already self-sufficient in waste disposal.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment by what date he expects the London residuary body to have completed its work.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The bulk of the London residuary body's remaining GLC-related property, rights and liabilities were transferred by order to the London boroughs and other functional successors on 30 March. As a consequence of the abolition of the ILEA on 1 April, the residuary body inherited certain of that authority's ongoing responsibilities.

My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Education and Science expect the residuary body to have completed both its GLC and ILEA tasks by 31 March 1993.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what fixtures and fittings have been removed from the principal floor of county hall by the London residuary body.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: None, apart from some fittings that the London residuary body has removed for safe keeping.

New Homes

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new homes were built in 1989; what were the comparable figures for the previous three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Figures for housebuilding starts and completions in England for 1986 to 1989 appear in table 2 of my Department's press release No. 352 issued on 7 June 1990, a copy of which is in the Library.

Water Treatment

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy in respect of the use of aluminium sulphate in water treatment works; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Aluminium sulphate is a very effective coagulant which has been used for many years in the treatment of drinking water. It is listed in the 15th statement of the committee on chemicals and materials of construction for use in public water supply and swimming pools and because of this is authorised for use by water undertakers by virtue of regulation 25(1)(d) of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989. The policy of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is that levels of residual aluminium and sulphate in drinking water shall not exceed the standards set in these regulations.

Councils (Allocation of Seats)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has had any representations about the allocation of committee seats by councils as being contrary to section 15(5)(c) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he intends to take to ensure that councils fulfil their duty under section 15(5)(c)—allocation of seats—of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: If a local authority fails to comply with such a duty, it is for the authority's monitoring officer—under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989—to draw its attention to the failure.

Mortgage Repossession

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the number of people accepted as homeless by local authorities in England due to mortgage repossession for *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988, *(d)* 1989 and *(e)* 1990 (first quarter); for each English region and class of authority;

(2) if he will make a statement on the number of mortgage repossessions being made in Greater London and the effect on the use of expensive temporary accommodation by local authorities.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* Local authorities report the number of households accepted under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act where the main immediate reason for homelessness is mortgage arrears, but do not distinguish those who were actually subject to repossession. Estimates by class of authority are as follows:

	London Authorities	*Other Metropolitan Authorities*	*Non-Metropolitan Authorities*	*All England*
1986	630	3,100	6,340	10,070
1987	600	3,620	6,240	10,460
1988	540	3,320	4,480	8,340
1989	840	3,370	4,150	8,360
1990[1]	350	1,140	1,600	3,090

[1] First quarter.

Corresponding estimates by region are not readily available.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the number of mortgage repossessions being made in Greater London and the effect on the use of expensive temporary accommodation by local authorities.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 13 June 1990]:* Information is not available centrally on the number of dwellings in Greater London that have been taken into possession by mortgage lenders. According to local authority returns the proportion of households accepted as homeless as a direct consequence of mortgage arrears is only some 3 to 4 per cent. of all households accepted in London under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Act 1985. The effect on the use of temporary accommodation is therefore likely to be small.

Boundary Commission Reports

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the local government boundary commission reports he is currently considering, stating the date he received each and setting out reasons for any delay in making a decision.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The reports under consideration are:

Reviews of Counties	*Commission's Report Number*	*Date of Receipt*
Bedfordshire: boundaries with Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire	566	[1]14 November 1988
Berkshire: boundaries with Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey	558	[1]31 August 1988
Buckinghamshire: boundaries with Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire	571	[1]5 May 1989

Reviews of Counties	*Commission's Report Number*	*Date of Receipt*
Hampshire: boundaries with Dorset, West Sussex and Wiltshire	580	1 February 1990
Leicestershire: boundaries with Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire	577	[1]9 October 1989
South Yorkshire: boundaries with Doncaster (North Yorkshire) and Bassetlaw (Nottinghamshire)	585	4 June 1990
Staffordshire: boundaries with Cheshire, Derbyshire, Hereford and Worcester, and Warwickshire	582	[1]12 February 1990
Surrey: boundary with Hampshire	578	19 January 1990
Reviews of Parishes within districts/boroughs		
Chorley	—	1 May 1990
Northampton	—	2 January 1990
Woodspring	—	12 February 1990

[1] Decision to be announced shortly.

Rents into Mortgages Scheme

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authority areas in England which have applied to be considered for any extension of the rents into mortgages scheme to England.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 20 June 1990]:* No such applications have been received.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received concerning the rents into mortgages scheme; how many were *(a)* in favour and *(b)* against the scheme; if he will list how many of these representations are from (i) individuals, (ii) organisations and (iii) local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 20 June 1990]:* My hon. Friend and 25 members of the public have made representations in favour of a rent to mortgages scheme.

Tenants Incentive Scheme

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what plans he has to increase the participation rate in the tenants incentive scheme;

(2) if he will list, for each local authority participating in the tenants incentive scheme *(a)* the amount offered to tenants, *(b)* how many council houses have been vacated and *(c)* the total number of tenants applying to take part in the scheme; and if he will make a statement;

(3) how many local authorities are participating in the tenants incentive scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 20 June 1990]:* The table sets out details of 89 local authorities which have been given approval to operate cash incentive schemes in 1990-91, the maximum expenditure to be incurred, and the grants to be made available to households. Details of vacancies created by these schemes and of grant applicants will be supplied to my Department by the local authorities concerned at the end of the year.

Cash incentive schemes can be very valuable in helping existing tenants to move into homes of their own while releasing vacancies for reletting to homeless families. The Department encourages local authorities whose areas would benefit from a cash incentive scheme to bring forward proposals for approval. Once a scheme has been approved, details are published by the local authority and tenants are invited to make applications for grant.

Local authority cash incentive schemes approved 1990-91
83 schemes; maximum expenditure £40·4 million; maximum number of vacancies 2,597

Local authority	*Maximum expenditure 1990-91* £	*Maximum number of households assisted*	*Maximum grant for each household* £
London			
Barnet	600,000	30	20,000
Brent	1·8 million	150	13,000
Bromley	1·5 million	120	13,000
Camden	200,000	20	20,000
Croydon	500,000	33	22,000
Ealing	2·2 million	140	25,000
Enfield	1 million	55	20,000
Hackney	1 million	50	20,000
Hammersmith and Fulham	540,000	30	18,000
Haringey	1·5 million	100	20,000
Harrow	1 million	50	25,000
Havering	150,000	10	16,000
Hillingdon	2·25 million	150	15,000
Hounslow	150,000	20	15,000
Islington	1 million	50	25,000
Kensington and Chelsea	750,000	70	13,000
Lambeth	400,000	25	20,000
Lewisham	1 million	70	15,000
Merton	2 million	140	15,000
Redbridge	3·92 million	140	28,000
Richmond	300,000	30	10,000
Southwark	300,000	34	10,000
Wandsworth	1·95 million	100	22,000
Westminster	2 million	100	20,000
Eastern			
Aylesbury Vale	400,000	20	20,000
Harlow	150,000	15	10,000
Huntingdon	150,000	12	13,000
Luton	200,000	15	13,000
Maldon	100,000	8	12,000
Peterborough	100,000	20	5,000
Rochford	100,000	9	11,250
South Bucks	40,000	4	11,000
St. Albans	150,000	6	25,000
Watford	200,000	15	13,500
East Midlands			
Charnwood	100,000	10	10,000
East Northants	102,000	17	6,000
South Kesteven	500,000	62	8,000
South East			
Adur	100,000	10	10,000
Arun	50,000	5	10,000
Basingstoke and Deane	250,000	10	25,000
Brighton	301,500	15	20,000
Canterbury	300,000	14	22,000
Cherwell	300,000	25	12,500
Dover	220,000	10	22,000
East Hampshire	100,000	10	10,000
Elmbridge	240,000	12	20,000
Fareham	107,475	5	21,495
Gillingham	70,000	5	15,000
Hart	200,000	8	25,000

Local authority	Maximum expenditure 1990-91 £	Maximum number of households assisted	Maximum grant for each household £
Hastings	200,000	20	10,000
Havant	150,000	10	15,000
Horsham	250,000	14	17,000
Hove	500,000	50	10,000
Lewes	250,000	25	10,000
Maidstone	500,000	20	25,000
Oxford	500,000	33	15,000
Portsmouth	1,000,000	50	20,000
Reading	300,000	15	20,000
Reigate and Banstead	300,000	15	20,000
Rother	400,000	17	23,000
Runnymede	100,000	8	14,000
Rushmoor	100,000	14	8,000
Shepway	200,000	9	21,600
Southampton	200,000	14	15,000
Spelthorne	200,000	8	24,000
Tandridge	252,000	20	12,000
Test Valley	100,000	10	10,000
Tonbridge and Malling	500,000	20	25,000
Tunbridge Wells	250,000	11	24,000
Vale of White Horse	150,000	10	15,000
Wealden	200,000	10	20,000
West Oxfords	100,000	5	20,000
Woking	135,000	10	13,000
Worthing	240,000	16	15,000
South West			
Exeter	50,000	5	10,000
Kennet	100,000	10	10,000
Purbeck	75,000	10	10,000
North Cornwall	45,000	6	7,500
Salisbury	100,000	10	10,000
South Somerset	100,000	10	10,000
Teignbridge	7,500	1	7,500
West Midlands			
Stafford	300,000	40	10,000
Yorkshire and Humberside			
Hambleton	100,000	12	10,000

House Renovation Grants

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the new system of house renovation grants provided in part VIII of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 will be brought into effect in England and Wales.

Mr. Chope *[pursuant to his answer, 22 February 1990, c. 888]:* A booklet "House Renovation Grants" has been issued by my Department today and I am sending a copy to all hon. Members in England. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is sending copies to all hon. Members in Wales. The booklet provides a simple guide for the public on the new grants and assistance which may be available from local authorities towards the cost of home repairs and improvements. Copies of the booklet will be available free of charge from local authorities, citizens advice bureaux and local social security offices. Two circulars containing detailed guidance on the new grants have also been sent to local authorities.

Compulsory Purchase Orders

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many compulsory purchase orders were approved by the Department (i) in the latest year for which figures are available and (ii) five years ago for *(a)* residential property and *(b)* empty residential property;

(2) what proportion of compulsory purchase orders approved by his Department are associated with purchase for rehabilitation and resale *(a)* in the latest year for which figures are available and *(b)* five years ago.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The main compulsory purchase powers for residential properties are contained in parts II and VIII of the Housing Act, 1985. A total of 128 compulsory purchase orders were confirmed in 1989 and 238 in 1984. Orders are considered on their merits and statistics on the numbers of properties affected and their proposed use are not kept.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Insider Dealing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to increase the powers and resources available to those bodies charged with the duty of enforcing legislation aimed at preventing insider dealing.

Mr. Redwood: I am satisfied that the available powers are appropriate at present. The level of resources is kept under review with a view to ensuring efficient operation.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will consider legislation to enable the use of civil remedies by law enforcement agencies and those who can establish loss in alleged cases of insider dealing.

Mr. Redwood: The recent report "Company Investigations" by the Select Committee on Trade and Industry recommended changes in this area. The Government's response will be made in the normal fashion.

Eureka Programme

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the most recent decisions taken at the ministerial meeting in Italy considering the Eureka programme in regard to investment in environmental protection projects.

Mr. Forth: At the ministerial conference in Rome ealier this month, five EUREKA environmental protection projects involving United Kingdom organisations were announced. Their combined value is £66·2 million.

Technology Transfer

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the main components of Government spending on technology transfer in the United Kingdom; how the level of spending has changed in the period 1979 to 1990; and what is the predicted level of spending in the future.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The DTI supports the widespread adoption of new technologies and current best practice through a range of specific technology transfer programmes which currently include advanced information

technology, "open systems" standards for IT equipment and modern materials technology. In addition, the Department provides support for a number of other activities which contribute to technology transfer—particularly technology-based consultancies and the teaching company scheme. Total outturn and planned expenditure figures—which are available on a consistent basis only from 1984-85—are as follows:

Year	*£ million*
1984-85	80
1985-86	74
1986-87	99
1987-88	93
1988-89	96
1989-90	97
1990-91	112
1991-92	114
1992-93	113

Technology transfer is also encouraged in the United Kingdom through the R and D programmes supported by the Department and the European Community.

Development Areas (Innovation)

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the Government's main programmes to promote innovation in the United Kingdom's development areas; what is the current annual level of spend; and how this level has changed in the period 1979 to 1990.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The only scheme to promote innovation projects specifically in the development areas of Great Britain over the last 10 years is the innovation element of the regional enterprise grant scheme which started in April 1988; the expenditure for this scheme in the development areas—DAs—of Great Britain is listed in the table.

A number of other schemes have promoted innovation projects in Great Britain over this period on a national basis.

The product and process development scheme was introduced in 1977. This scheme was renamed support for innovation—SFI—in 1982 and in January 1988 the research and technology initiative was launched. It is not possible to detail expenditure for these schemes in the development areas.

The small firms merit award for research and technology—SMART—was introduced on a pilot basis in 1986. A further competition was held in 1988 and a three-year programme of annual SMART competitions commenced in 1989. SMART is available throughout Great Britain, including the DAs. It is not possible to detail expenditure in those areas in the time available.

Questions concerning Northern Ireland should be referred to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Regional Innovation Grants Expenditure

Year	*£ million*
1988-89	0·3
1989-90	2·1

Tour Operators (Holiday Accommodation)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to ensure that the European Commission's package travel directive will make British tour operators liable for defective holiday accommodation abroad offered to their customers.

Mr. Forth: The European Commission directive on package travel, package holidays and package tours was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 13 June this year. Under this measure, member states are required to ensure that the organiser and/or retailer of packages is liable to the consumer for the proper performance of obligations arising under the contract.

Dunsdale Securities

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date and through what channel his Department first became aware of problems at Dunsdale Securities.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* On the morning of 6 June, when FIMBRA's decision to ban Dunsdale Securities Ltd from carrying on investment business became public knowledge.

Professional Liability

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he has taken, and proposes to take, on the recommendations of the Likierman review of professional liability.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) on 31 October 1989, at columns 106-08. Of the two recommendations of the auditors study team which fall to my Department, the proposal to clarify the law on directors' insurance, to enable a company to reimburse a director for his liability insurance, has been implemented in section 137 of the Companies Act 1989. However, as my statement made clear, we decided against the recommendation that an auditor should, by agreement with a company, be able to limit his liability. As to the recommendation of the other surveyors study team on the implementation of section 22 of the Estate Agents Act 1979, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs stated on 29 November, in answer to a question from the hon. Member for Knowsley, South (Mr. Hughes), at columns 284-85, that we had decided against implementation. Other recommendations are for other Departments and my right hon. Friend has no proposals for further action.

Companies House Agency

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice the Companies House Agency offered to the National Front before extending limited liability status to it.

Mr. Redwood: No limited liability status has been extended to the National Front as a political organisation.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Stamp Issues

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those countries and territories for which stamp issues have been handled by the Crown Agents during the last two years; if he will list the stamp printers used; and if he will tabulate the fees earned from stamp issues.

Mrs. Chalker: This information concerns the Crown Agents' commercial relations with its clients and it would not therefore be appropriate for me to provide it.

Aid Spending (United Kingdom)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of the aid budget was spent within the United Kingdom for each year from 1980; and if he will give details of this expenditure for 1989.

Mrs. Chalker: Data are not collected on the amount of aid actually spent in the United Kingdom. However, an approximation can be obtained for bilateral aid expenditure by reference to the tying status of the original commitment and estimates of local costs. The proportion of tied to total financial aid has been as follows:

Year	*Per cent*
1980	59
1981	59
1982	61
1983	53
1984	46
1985	47
1986	60
1987	52
1988	52
1989	[1]

[1] Not yet available.

Technical co-operation is by its nature mainly tied as its major components are financing of students from developing countries to study in the United Kingdom, consultancies, experts and volunteers from the United Kingdom and research in United Kingdom institutions.

Multilateral aid is not tied to United Kingdom purchases; but those multilateral aid agencies we support procure goods and services from the United Kingdom equivalent to about £1·75 for each £1 we contribute.

Refugees and Displaced Persons (Aid)

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list *(a)* the British level of multilateral aid and *(b)* the level of British bilateral aid to refugees and displaced persons in each member state of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference and South Africa for each year from 1987 to 1990.

Mrs. Chalker: The information is as follows:

(a) British contribution to multilateral aid for refugees and displaced persons in SADCC countries and South Africa

£ million

	1987	*1988*	*1989*	*1990 (to date)*
Angola	—	—	0·71	—
Botswana	—	—	—	—
Lesotho	—	—	—	—
Malawi	0·33	2·6	3·3	3·0
Mozambique	0·69	1·05	0·2	—
Namibia	—	—	0·5	—
Swaziland	0·8	0·5	—	—
Tanzania	—	0·5	—	—
Zambia	0·8	0·5	—	—
Zimbabwe	0·8	0·5	—	—
South Africa	—	—	—	—

(b) British bilateral aid to refugees and displaced persons in SADCC countries and South Africa

£ million

	1987	*1988*	*1989*	*1990 (to date)*
Angola	0·08	0·05	0·045	0·4
Botswana	0·25	—	0·1	—
Lesotho	—	0·004	—	—
Malawi	0·09	0·3	0·4	—
Mozambique	4·31	5·81	1·99	1·83
Namibia	—	—	—	—
Swaziland	0·04	0·02	0·04	—
Tanzania	0·04	—	0·036	—
Zambia	—	—	0·03	—
Zimbabwe	0·02	0·01	0·07	—
South Africa	0·25	0·34	0·17	0·05

CIVIL SERVICE

Agencies

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many agencies *(a)* have been set up over the past two years and *(b)* are currently expected to be set up.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* A total of 31 executive agencies employing 69,000 staff have been set up over the past two years, and a further 25 activities employing some 125,000 staff have been announced as candidates for agency status. Departments are currently considering how "next steps" might be applied to a range of other activities, and I would expect announcements to be made on a number of these in due course. The project manager anticipates a total of around 50 agencies established by the end of July next year, and I expect to see "next steps" applied to at least half the civil service by the end of 1991, with still further progress after that.

THE ARTS

Traditional Music

Mr. Jack: To ask the Minister for the Arts what help his budget afforded to the development and playing of traditional types of British music.

Mr. Luce: Direct support for the arts is the responsibility of the Arts Council and the regional arts associations. I understand that both provide support for traditional types of British music in the form of help with recordings and general education work.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Foreign Courts (Legal Redress)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Attorney-General what assistance the Government provide for British citizens to seek legal redress in foreign courts.

The Attorney-General: The Government provide assistance for British citizens seeking legal redress in foreign courts in a number of ways.

Under the terms of the European agreement on the transmission of applications for legal aid any person who resides permanently in a contracting country and who wishes to apply for legal aid in civil, commercial or administrative matters in another contracting country may submit his application to the legal aid authority in the country in which he resides for transmission to the other contracting country.

Where children are abducted from the United Kingdom to a country which is a party to either The Hague or European conventions of 1980 on international child abductions, the Lord Chancellor's Department acts as the central authority for the United Kingdom and communicates with central authorities in other contracting countries to facilitate the return of or access to the child.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and diplomatic and consular missions hold copies of lists of local lawyers which can be provided to inquirers on request.

DEFENCE

Helicopter Noise, County Armagh

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he received the preliminary report of the noise survey carried out by Dr. Gerry McCullagh of the university of Ulster into noise levels in the vicinity of the helicopter landing site at Bessbrook, County Armagh; when the findings of the survey will be available; what representations he has received from residents of Bessbrook, County Armagh, about noise levels in the vicinity of the helicopter landing site in the village; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The report was received on 1 June and one additional item of data is expected shortly. The report is currently being studied and my noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces expects to be in a position to write to the hon. Member in the near future. We have received very few representations specifically relating to helicopter noise levels from residents in the Bessbrook area since the noise insulation grant scheme was introduced in June 1988.

RAF Flights

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what was the cost to the public purse of taking the Bishop of Ripon on a flight in a Tornado jet fighter from the RAF base at RAF Leeming on 5 June;

(2) what was the cost of taking *(a)* a journalist and *(b)* the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) on flights in Jet Provost trainers from the RAF base at Linton-on-Ouse.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Such flights are undertaken as routine training sorties, and the carriage of a passenger involves no additional cost to public funds.

Air Experience Flights

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list for the last 12 months, and by cost to the public purse, the number of air experience flights given to *(a)* hon. Members of Her Majesty's Government, *(b)* hon. Members of Her Majesty's Opposition and *(c)* other non-armed service persons, excluding those provided at air shows and air displays, in Royal Air Force jet aircraft.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to the hon. Member.

Holy Loch

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the termination date of the current agreement between Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government on the use of Holy Loch as a United States navy submarine facility.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The agreement has no termination date; it will continue for as long as both parties require it.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on what date the Poseidon ballistic missile submarines are due to be withdrawn from the United States navy facility at Holy Loch;

(2) when he last discussed the future of the United States facilities at Holy Loch with the United States authorities.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have nothing to add to the answer given to the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) on 20 March 1990 at column *521*.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are his intentions for the current Fort class Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels following the introduction of the new Fort Victoria class.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The two Fort class Royal Fleet Auxiliary replenishment vessels are planned to remain in service until they reach the end of their useful operational lives. The new Fort Victoria class auxiliary oiler replenishment vessels will provide further support to the Royal Navy in the form of a one-stop liquids-solids replenishment facility.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements exist for anti-submarine warfare helicopter support of Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels following the disbandment of No. 824 squadron.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Anti-submarine warfare helicopter support for Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels continues to be provided by Sea King aircraft of No. 826 squadron. No. 824 squadron was disbanded following the completion of the Sea King Mk 6 trials on which it was engaged. Its aircraft and manpower have been redeployed within the fleet.

Vessels (Decommissioning)

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the planned decommissioning date of *(a)* HMS Valiant, *(b)* HMS Warspite and HMS Churchill.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No decisions have yet been taken on the decommissioning of the vessels to which the hon. Member refers.

Nuclear Depth Bombs

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of plans to replace the Royal Navy's nuclear depth bombs; and when he expects to make a decision on their replacement.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave on 24 October 1989, *Official Report*, column *434*.

Hospitality

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what review his Department is carrying out of the rules under which hospitality can be accepted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Ministry of Defence is currently engaged in a routine review of its hospitality rules involving all interested parties within the Department and in consultation with the trade unions. This review is concerned with clarifying the instructions and guidance which are currently given to all staff within the framework of existing policy.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people associated with his Department have logged, according to the Defence Council instruction, that they have been offered hospitality since the procedure was established; what investigations have, and are currently, taking place that the system has not been complied with; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: It is departmental policy that all offers of hospitality accepted by MOD staff should be registered in hospitality books. These books are the subject of regular review by senior management. The total number of invitations is not collated centrally. There is no evidence to suggest that the procedure is not being followed.

Corruption

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* civil servants and *(b)* armed forces personnel, both current and formerly serving, are under investigation following allegations of bribery and corruption; if he will list the weapons, projects or circumstances involved in each case and the value of each project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: An official of my Department has been arrested and charged with an offence contrary to the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906. A retired Army officer has also been arrested in connection with a similar offence but has not so far been charged. The investigation is still in progress and other individuals will be interviewed as and when the police consider it appropriate.

Air-to-Surface Missiles

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money is currently being spent on research and development for a tactical air-to-surface missile with a range of 400 km, at the atomic weapons research establishment, Aldermaston; and if he will make a statement on the progress of this project.

Mr. Alan Clark: Research and development of missiles does not take place at the atomic weapons establishment.

NATO (Japanese Delegation)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the purposes and terms of reference of a high-level miltary and diplomatic delegation to NATO from Japan.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A Japanese delegation, led by the deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, attended a seminar in Belgium, jointly organised by the NATO information service and the United States delegation to NATO from 17 to 19 June. The subject of the seminar was "Security—North American, European and Japanese Interdependence in the 1990s". Such contact between NATO nations and Japan on security matters of mutual interest is useful, and I welcome the fact that the Japanese were able to participate.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Aquagard

Sir Fergus Montgomery: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recommendations he has received from the Veterinary Products Committee regarding the licensing of Aquagard; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: A product licence for Aquagard sea lice treatment for use in treating farmed salmon was first issued in June 1989, for a period of one year, following advice from the Veterinary Products Committee—VPC. The committee has recently met to review Aquagard in the light of a programme of further research, and has recommended that a two-year extension of the licence be granted subject to some modifications of the label warning and a further environmental impact report from the manufacturers in one year. I have decided to accept this recommendation, and a licence will therefore be issued subject to the conditions set by the VPC being met. Efforts will continue to be made to develop an alternative strategy to control sea lice in farmed salmon within this two year period.

It is however imperative that an alternative strategy to control sea lice in farmed salmon be developed as soon as possible. The Government are determined to meet their commitment at the North sea conference to reduce by 50 per cent. the inputs of certain substances to the marine environment by 1995, including dichlorvos, the active ingredient of Aquagard. Any application for extension to the licence for Aquagard beyond 1992 will need to be considered in the light of this commitment, and the presumption will therefore be to replace it with satisfactory alternative methods of treatment.

The VPC's original recommendation that the licence should be limited to one year's duration took account of the full range of Medicines Act considerations on product safety, quality and efficacy. The further review recently carried out did not therefore address matters on which the VPC was already satisfied, but took into account the following:

(a) target species safety; and
(b) environmental impact

All the aquatic toxicology studies considered by the VPC suggested that lobster larvae were the candidate

species to utilise in calculating a provisional annual average environmental quality standard—EQS—and also to derive a 24-hour EQS. These studies will also be used by the Department of the Environment in confirming EQSs for use by the appropriate water and river authorities. As all sea lochs differ in their tidal flushing characteristics, clearly this factor will also need to be taken into account in the calculation.

Sheep Scab

Mr. Amos: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on control arrangements for sheep scab.

Mr. Maclean: The Government have undertaken a review of their policy for dealing with sheep scab, following a five-year programme involving two compulsory annual dips. As a result, single dips were announced for 1989 and 1990. Sheep scab is a skin condition which, if neglected, may lead to an animal welfare problem but has no human health implications.

Since the industry's rejection of a proposal for the introduction of movement controls in south-west Great Britain, discussions have continued to try to find a solution which achieves our objective of dealing effectively with sheep scab while avoiding unnecessary burdens on the industry. We believe we have now achieved this and we aim to have the new arrangements in place as soon as possible.

Details of the new arrangements are as follows:

(i) The disease will remain notifiable;

(ii) Local Authorities will maintain the right to supervise the annual dip, but the key enforcement measure will be a compulsory declaration by the owner that all sheep on his holding have been dipped;

(iii) When the disease occurs, MAFF veterinary staff wil continue to confirm its presence and place movement restrictions on the infected premises. Restrictions will normally be lifted on the basis of the farmer's own declaration that the action necessary to eradicate the disease has been taken. In cases where a recrudescence of infection occurs, restrictions will not normally be lifted until the farmer's own veterinary surgeon certificates (at the farmer's cost) that no clinical signs of the disease are present in the flock concerned. MAFF staff will have the right to supervise dipping on infected premises. Controls on contiguous premises will be operated flexibly, in accordance with the needs of each case;

(iv) Tracings to find the origin of an outbreak will be initiated in each case, but will be abandoned where they seem likely to involve excessive resources; and

(v) The present arrangements for tracing the potential spread of infection by movements of sheep off infected premises will generally be replaced as follows. A letter will be sent to every recipient of sheep from the infected flock since the end of the preceding national dip, informing the recipient that sheep scab had been confirmed on the premises of origin, reminding him of the need to inspect the sheep and report any suspicion of disease, and advising him to dip his sheep. He will also be advised that if the purchased sheep had been sold on, the information should be passed to subsequent purchasers. However, the State Veterinary Service will retain the option of imposing restrictions on premises which have received sheep from those where infection has been found until the sheep there have been dipped if this is considered appropriate.

These arrangements will come into force as soon as the necessary legislative changes can be made. There will be a further compulsory national dip in 1991 and these arrangements will be reviewed next year to consider options for control measures thereafter.

Financial Services

Mr. Andy Stewart: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the work of the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation in offering financial services required by the agricultural industry.

Mr. Gummer: The Agricultural Mortgage Corporation presently operates within statutory constraints which limit the range of financial services that it can offer. I believe that the time has come to review its position to take account of moves to complete the EC internal market by 1992, and the changing circumstances and needs of the agricultural industry. I am, therefore, starting a process of consultation in order to identify what, if any, changes in present legislation might be desirable.

Animal Imports (Diseases)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the diseases that have been introduced into the United Kingdom by imported animals since 1980; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Apart from caseous lymphadenitis, which may have been introduced by goats imported from West Germany, no diseases are known to have been introduced into the United Kingdom by imported animals since 1980.

Caseous Lymphadenitis

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he is proposing to eradicate caseous lymphadenitis from sheep and goats in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: We are currently considering options for control of the disease. All farms where the disease has been confirmed or suspected have been subjected to movement restrictions and contacts have been traced.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answers of 12 June, *Official Report*, columns *77-78*, whether goats infected with caseous lymphadenitis were imported into the United Kingdom with inaccurate certification documents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The recent outbreak of caseous lymphadenitis appears to be associated with a consignment of goats imported from West Germany. Investigations are continuing and it would not be appropriate for me to prejudge their outcome.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answers of 12 June, *Official Report*, columns *77-78*, whether the goats imported from West Germany with caseous lymphadenitis underwent a period of quarantine; whether they were examined by veterinarians during that period; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: All animals susceptible to foot and mouth disease—FMD—including goats imported from

West Germany are subjected to a period of post-import quarantine as a precaution against FMD, during which they are routinely examined by official veterinarians.

Shellfish

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list *(a)* the dates on which the samples of shellfish were taken, *(b)* the sample points and *(c)* the number of samples which showed danger levels of toxins on which the decision to impose a shellfishing ban was based.

Mr. Curry: Details of the mussel samples on which a decision was taken to issue the warning on 26 May about the consumption of shellfish from the north-east coast are as follows:

Date of sample	*Sample site*	*Units of toxin per 100g*
19 May	Loch Erisor	Not detected
21 May	Whitby	848
21 May	Berwick Harbour	903
22 May	Trow Rocks	19,881
22 May	Redcar	909
22 May	Saltburn	255
22 May	Coquet Estuary	1,119
22 May	Cresswell	5,900
22 May	Holy Island	386
22 May	Montrose	Not detected
22 May	Scarborough	300

The World Health Organisation recommends that action should be taken to protect consumers from consuming shellfish containing more than 400 units of toxin per 100g of flesh.

National Fruit Collection

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on his Department's role in securing the future of the national fruit collection at Brogdale.

Mr. Curry: My first concern has always been to provide a secure and stable home for the national fruit collection. This was the basis on which the decision was made last year to transfer the collection to Wye college, part of the university of London. Moreover, Wye college offers the scientific and academic expertise fully to develop and utilise the collection for educational and scientific purposes.

I was informed last week of the Duchy of Cornwall's interest in purchasing the Brogdale site. The duchy's involvement offers the degree of stability which such a collection demands and I have therefore instructed my officials to look at the possibility of keeping the national fruit collection at Brogdale under Wye college's management.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Irish Residents (Shopping)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has made any representations to the European Community about the proposal by the Government of the Republic of Ireland to impose a 36-hour restriction on its residents shopping in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major: Her Majesty's Government are urgently considering the implications of the proposal which has just been tabled by the Government of the Republic of Ireland. The Government continue to support the Commission's proposals for significant increases to the travellers' allowances in the period up to 31 December 1992.

Scotch Whisky

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total value to the Treasury in each of the last 10 years of *(a)* domestic excise duty levied on Scotch whisky and *(b)* export earnings from Scotch whisky.

Mr. Ryder: Figures are not directly available for Scotch whisky. The estimated excise duty accruing on all whisky, including small amounts produced outside Scotland, and the value of all United Kingdom whisky exports in each of the 10 years, is as follows:

Year	*Excise duty £ million*	*Export value*[1] *£ million*
1980	570	747·5
1981	620	787·2
1982	630	875·4
1983	670	863·9
1984	670	937·3
1985	720	1,001·0
1986	720	1,075·3
1987	700	1,142·4
1988	710	1,297·6
1989	680	1,479·5

[1] Source: Overseas trade statistics; includes bourbon.

Whisky

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what current negotiations he is holding with his European counterparts to ensure equal tax treatment for whisky *(a)* in the European Community and *(b)* in Japan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: There are no current Community negotiations relating to equal tax treatment for whisky. Member states apply their own rates of duty equally to home-produced and imported spirits.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry continues to watch developments in the Japanese whisky market to ensure that the beneficial effects of the tax changes introduced last year are not undermined. The Government will make representations to the Japanese authorities as appropriate about any problems which arise from the remaining tax differentials.

Economic and Monetary Union

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will be putting forward further ideas on ways of moving towards economic and monetary union to his counterparts in the European Community.

Mr. Major: I have deposited in the Library of the House copies of a speech I made yesterday to the German Industry Forum in the United Kingdom, in which I

suggested further practical steps beyond stage 1. These would promote convergence, low inflation and stable exchange rates by building up the Community's existing common currency, the ecu. I will be discussing these ideas further with my colleagues in the European Community in the coming weeks.

Mileage Allowances

Mr. Norris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any proposals for changing the tax rules for motor mileage allowances paid by employers to employees who use their own cars for work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Two new clauses to the Finance Bill are being tabled today, and the Inland Revenue is announcing changes to its administrative arrangements for taxing mileage allowances.

In many cases the Inland Revenue collects any tax due on mileage allowances through administrative arrangements known as the fixed profit car scheme—FPCS. The tax-free mileage rates used under the FPCS to calculate liability are intended to reflect the tax-allowable costs of using a private car for business purposes. But over the years they have got out of line with the relief strictly due under existing law, and have become too generous. The Revenue is under an obligation to apply the tax law Parliament has enacted. Present practice does not achieve that. The Revenue has concluded that it must bring present arrangements into conformity with the law. But changes to bring the FPCS into line with the strict legal position would mean that many employees who receive mileage allowances from their employers would face much bigger tax bills.

The Government have therefore reviewed the present tax regime and has concluded that changes in the law are appropriate to make the statutory tax reliefs more generous. In addition, the Revenue will be changing the FPCS so that it reflects business motoring costs more closely. The proposed new rules will take effect from 6 April 1990, and will produce a fairer system under which employees who use their own cars for work will be able to claim tax relief for the business proportion of all their motoring expenses.

Many employees' tax bills will not be affected by these changes, but some will be reduced and some increased. The reductions will apply from 6 April 1990. But the Government propose transitional arrangements which will ensure that no one who received mileage allowances in 1989-90 has more tax to pay as a result of these proposals for 1990-91; and that any increases as a result of the changes will be phased in gradually over subsequent years.

An Inland Revenue press release is being issued today giving full details of all the proposed changes.

WALES

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many relatives of glaucoma sufferers in Wales received free eyesight tests in each quarter of 1988-89 and in each quarter of 1989-90.

Mr. Grist: The data requested were not collected centrally prior to 1 April 1989, since when they have been collected on a six-monthly basis.

The available information (on an all-Wales basis) is as follows:

	Estimated[1] number of sight tests paid for by Family Practitioner Committees in the six months ending	
	30 September 1990	*31 March 1990*
People with glaucoma or diabetes	5,050	8,860

[1] Estimates based upon a 2 per cent. sample of all such sight tests.

Health Services, Ceredigion

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what new investments and improvements his Department has made to health services in Ceredigion so far in the current year; what were the corresponding figures for the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The East Dyfed health authority is responsible for determining any developments in hospital and community health services in the Ceredigion area which are funded from the authority's discretionary revenue and capital resources. However, so far as centrally funded developments are concerned, the following bids from the authority in respect of developments in the Ceredigion area have been successful in recent years and to date in the current financial year:

	1985-86	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
Day care assistants, Aberystwyth	2,549	2,549	2,549	2,549	2,549	2,549
Area Mental Health Team, Ceredigion	—	10,737	10,737	10,737	10,737	10,737
Team Co-ordinator, Area Mental Health Team	—	5,225	5,225	5,225	5,225	5,225
Residential rehabilitation centre, Rhoserchan	—	—	—	10,200	23,286	[1]—
Area Mental Health Team, Aberystwyth	—	—	—	1,568	1,568	1,568
Peripatetic Care Assistant, Aberystywth	—	—	—	3,600	3,600	3,600
Social Worker, Aberystwyth	—	—	—	8,501	8,501	8,501
IT investment Bronglais General Hospital and Cardigan Hospital[2]	—	—	—	—	63,000	—
Computing Laboratory systems with links to FPC records cervical cytology, Bronglais Hospital	—	—	—	—	31,250	4,460

[1] Unit accepts referrals from Wales and occasionally from England. A new bid for this unit for 1990-91 will be considered by the Welsh Office in September.

[2] This funding is specific to the Ceredigion area. The funding does not reflect the level of investment in district wide developments from which Ceredigion will have benefited nor the investment in all Wales IT systems which are also of benefit to the Ceredigion area.

Welsh Language

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on the number of school children in Ceredigion of primary school age who are fluent in the Welsh language; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Wyn Roberts: At September 1989, there were 2,654 school children in Ceredigion of primary school age who were fluent in the Welsh language.

Teachers' Salaries

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage change there has been in teaching salaries in Wales in 1989-90; what were the comparable figures in the previous three years; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The estimated rise in the salaries of full-time teachers in nursery, primary and secondary schools in England and Wales in the last four years is as follows:

	Per cent.
1989-90	[1]8·9
1988-89	7·8
1987-88	4·3
1986-87	16·8

[1] The 1989-90 increase is estimated to include only the first Phase of the 1990 staged pay award.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average teaching salary in Wales for *(a)* primary school, *(b)* secondary school and *(c)* high school teachers.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Estimates of average teachers' salaries are available only for 1989 on an England and Wales basis, and are as follows:

Estimated average teachers' salary at 1 April 1989[1]

	£
Nursery/Primary Schools	14,100
Secondary Schools	15,240

[1] Refers to all full-time teachers.

Toxic Waste (Welsh Ports)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the Welsh ports that received toxic waste in each year since 1987, the quantity of such waste imported, the composition of the waste and the country of origin and ultimate destination of the waste.

Mr. Grist: The information is available in the detail requested only since the introduction of the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988. Provisional figures for imports of hazardous wastes through Welsh ports in the year to 31 March 1990 are as follows. Figures for types of waste imported through individual ports are not readily available in a concise form.

Imports of hazardous waste 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990 via ports in Wales

By country of origin	*Tonnes*
Holyhead	
Ireland	156
Newport	
Austria	53
Germany	146
Ireland	468
Spain	239
Switzerland	409
Total Newport	1,314
Swansea	
Greece	5
Total	1,475

Imports of hazardous waste 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990 via ports in Wales

Waste disposal authority of destination	*Tonnes*
Holyhead	
Cheshire CC	54
Greater Manchester	92
Torfaen BC	10
Total Holyhead	156
Newport	
East Sussex CC	48
Greater Manchester	357
Hampshire CC	108
Nottinghamshire CC	22
Torfaen BC	779
Total Newport	1,314
Swansea	
Torfaen BC	5
TOTAL	1,475

Imports of hazardous waste 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990 via ports in Wales

By type of waste	*Tonnes*
Organic acids and related compounds	44
Alkalis	116
Toxic Metal Compounds	23
Metal Oxides	182
Inorganic Compounds	83
Organic Compounds excluding PCBs	74
PCBs/PCB contaminated material	484
Polymeric material and precursors	36
Fine Chemicals and Biocides	99
Miscellaneous Chemical Waste	252
Filter Materials, Treatment Sludge and Contaminated Rubbish	9
Interceptor Wastes, Tars, Paint, Dyes and Pigments	63
Miscellaneous Wastes	8
Total	1,475

ENERGY

North Sea Gas

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent permissions have been given for new developments in gas gathering in the North sea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: In May this year I approved a development plan from Mobil North Sea Ltd. to lay a gas export pipeline between the Beryl field and the St. Fergus gas terminal.

Non-fossil Fuel Purchasing Agency

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the establishment of the proposed non-fossil fuel purchasing agency.

Mr. Baldry: The non-fossil purchasing agency is an agent of the regional electricity companies through which they contracted for non-fossil capacity to meet the non-fossil fuel obligation. It has already been established by them.

Sellafield

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what are the estimated quantities of low and intermediate level waste arising from the decommissioning of the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield;

(2) what is his estimate of the cost of decommissioning the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

(3) how the costs of decommissioning the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield will be met.

Mr. Baldry: The work of decommissioning plant operated by British Nuclear Fuels plc and estimates of the costs of that work are matters for the company.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the number and percentage share of wind energy projects to be approved in the first tranche of renewable energy projects to be approved by the non-fossil fuel purchasing agency.

Mr. Peter Morrison: This information will not be available until it is known which projects have been contracted within the non-fossil fuel obligation.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the first tranche of renewable energy projects to be approved by the non-fossil fuel purchasing agency.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend expects to make the first order setting the level of the non-fossil fuel obligation, in respect of renewables-sourced generation projects, in the late summer.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has made any approaches to the Energy Commissioner of the European Commission for approval of contract terms beyond 1 April 1998 for renewable energy projects.

Mr. Peter Morrison: No. The legislation provides the public electricity suppliers—PESs—with a sufficient degree of flexibility to enable a significant number of renewables projects to be contracted within the non-fossil fuel obligation.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Concessionary Television Licences

49. **Mr. Kilfedder:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide concessionary television licences for all pensioners living on their own or with another pensioner in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Mellor: No. We have no plans to extend the present concessions.

Community Service Orders

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community service orders have been made by the courts in England and Wales in each of the last five years; and if he will break down the figure in the last available year according to the number of hours of service specified in the order.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is given in the tables. The figures for court orders differ slightly from the figures published in probation statistics because they are compiled on a slightly different basis.

Persons sentenced to community service orders by the courts

Year	*Number*
1984	37,900
1985	38,300
1986	35,100
1987	35,900
1988	35,300

Source:
Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1988.

Persons commencing community service orders by hours specified, 1988

Hours specified	*Number*
40 and less than 100	7,490
100 and less than 150	13,670
150 and less than 200	7,850
200 to 240 inclusive	5,900
Total	34,900

Source:
Probation Statistics England and Wales 1988.

Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes there were in the Chelmsford local authority area in June 1983, June 1984, June 1987 and the latest available date.

Mr. John Patten: I understand from Essex police that there were no neighbourhood watch schemes in June 1983 or June 1984 in the area covered by the Chelmsford sub-division of Essex police, which covers very nearly the same area as the local authority area. The first scheme in this area was set up on 31 October 1984. There were 128 neighbourhood watch schemes at the beginning of June 1987 and at the beginning of June 1990 there were estimated to be 217 schemes in the area.

Chelmsford Prison

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department is taking to reduce overcrowding at Chelmsford prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The Government's overall strategy of reducing the number committed to custody while increasing the number of places available is, notwithstanding the recent disturbances, well on the way to drastically reducing overcrowding in prisons in the next two or three years. Meanwhile Chelmsford, along with other local

prisons and remand centres, many of which are similarly overcrowded, must hold those whom the courts commit to custody. The current industrial action by the local branch of the Prison Officers Association at Chelmsford is not the way to solve the problem. It simply means that prisoners have to be held in even less suitable conditions in police cells.

Correspondence

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 11 March from the Central Council of Physical Recreation on the subject of a single agency licensing authority for sports centres.

Mr. John Patten: A reply has been sent.

Colombia

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people from Colombia, seeking to visit friends and family in Britain, have been refused leave of entry to the United Kingdom in the six month period *(a)* from January 1990, *(b)* between June 1989 and January 1990 and *(c)* between January 1989 and June 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The centrally available information is as follows:

Period	*Number of Colombian nationals refused leave to enter and removed*
January to June 1989	312
July to December 1989	327
January to April 1990	212

From this information persons seeking to visit friends and family in Britain cannot be distinguished. More specific information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Royal Prerogative of Mercy

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list separately for each of the last 10 years for which figures are available the number of cases in which the royal prerogative of mercy was exercised *(a)* on grounds affecting the original conviction and *(b)* on other grounds, where the following actions were taken: (i) free pardon, (ii) remission of imprisonment, (iii) remission of borstal training, (iv) remission of detention and (v) remission of fine; if he will list separately the number of these cases that involved road traffic offences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The tables give details of the information requested.

Table I
Free Pardons (including those relating to road traffic offences)

Years	*Total number of pardons*	*Pardon granted on grounds affecting the original conviction*	*Pardon granted for other reasons*	*Number of pardons relating to road traffic offences*
1980	282	270	12	268
1981	168	161	7	155
1982	84	75	9	72
1983	143	133	10	131
1984	60	60	—	42
1985	92	38	54	85
1986	28	26	2	20
1987	41	35	6	29
1988	39	32	7	29
1989	50	37	13	39
TOTAL	987	867	120	870

Table II
Remission of imprisonment

Years	*Total number of remissions*	*Remission granted on grounds affecting the original conviction*	*Remission granted for other reasons*	*Number of remissions involving road traffic offences*[1]
1980	180	2	178	13
1981	131	1	130	12
1982	129	—	129	14
1983	103	—	103	12
1984	60	—	60	8
1985	78	—	78	5
1986	91	—	91	13
1987	70	—	70	7
1988	69	—	69	12
1989	71	—	71	11
TOTAL	982	3	979	107

[1] Includes cases where a road traffic offence form part of the conviction.

Table III
Remission of borstal training/youth custody/detention in a young offenders institution

Years	*Total number of remissions*	*Remission granted on grounds affecting the original conviction*	*Remission granted for other reasons*	*Number of remissions involving road traffic offences*[2]
1980	7	—	7	—
1981	7	—	7	3
1982	4	—	4	1
[1]1983	[1]73	—	73	9
1984	24	—	24	4
1985	31	—	31	4
1986	21	—	21	2
1987	18	—	18	2
1988	19	—	19	1
1989	17	—	17	3
TOTAL	221	—	221	29

[1] Fifty-two cases involved the use of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy in order to avoid any change to the release date brought about by the change from Borstal Training to Youth Custody.
[2] Includes cases where a road traffic offence form part of the conviction.

Table IV—Remission of Detention

Years	Total number remissions	Remission granted on grounds affecting the original conviction	Remission granted for other reasons	Number of remissions involving road traffic offences[1]
1980	3	—	3	1
1981	2	—	2	—
1982	4	—	4	—
1983	2	—	2	1
1984	1	—	1	—
1985	1	—	1	1
Total	13	—	13	3

[1] Includes cases where a road traffic offence forms part of the conviction.

Table V—Remission of Fines

Years	Total number remissions	Remission granted on grounds affecting the original conviction	Remission granted for other reasons	Number of remissions involving road traffic offences
1980	83	75	8	76
1981	79	57	22	56
1982	92	87	5	89
1983	14	3	11	13
1984	13	—	13	12
1985	31	8	23	26
1986	1	1	—	—
1987	9	8	1	4
1988	4	4	—	2
1989	2	1	1	2
Total	328	244	84	280

Police Complaints Authority

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the total number of criminal convictions arising out of criminal charges which arose out of cases *(a)* supervised and *(b)* unsupervised by the Police Complaints Authority in each of the last four years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Information relating to the numbers of police officers convicted of offences, following complaints made by members of the public, are published each year in the annual reports of Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary (for all forces in England and Wales other than the Metropolitan police) and of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, copies of which may be found in the Library. Information distinguishing those cases where the investigation was supervised by the Police Complaints Authority is not available.

Court of Appeal (References)

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list separately for each of the last 10 years for which figures are available the number of cases referred by him to the Court of Appeal under section 17(1)*(a)* of the Court of Appeal Act 1968 in respect of conviction; and for each such year *(a)* the number of defendants involved, *(b)* the number of appeals allowed and *(c)* the number of appeals dismissed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The table gives details of the cases referred to the Court of Appeal under section 17(1)*(a)* of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 in respect of conviction since 1980.

References by the Home Secretary to the Court of Appeal under Section 17(1)(a) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 in respect of conviction

Years	Number of cases referred	Number of defendants involved	Appeals Allowed	Appeals Dismissed
1980	3	3	1	2
1981	1	1	—	1
1982	4	7	4	—
1983	3	3	3	—
1984	[1]12	14	3	6
1985	4	4	2	2
1986	4	4	1	3
1987	6	13	3	3
1988	[2]2	2	—	1
1989	[3]3	6	2	—
Total	42	57	19	18

[1] 3 cases abandoned.
[2] 1 case abandoned.
[3] 1 case to be heard by the Court of Appeal.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recommendations were made to his Department to curtail or end the work of Professor Feldberg at the National Institute of Medical Research.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: None, before the publicity which was given to Professor Feldberg's work in May this year.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department specifically gave its approval for the use by Professor Feldberg of an anglepoise lamp as a heat source on experiments involving rabbits.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Authority was given for a lamp to be used as a heat source, but the type of lamp was not specified.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions over the past two years the Home Office inspectorate visited Mill Hill laboratories; and what were the dates of such visits.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Twelve visits were made to this establishment in 1988, 11 in 1989 and five this year. Many of these visits were announced. The dates were as follows: in 1988, 13 January, 10 June, 22 June, 11 July, 19 July, 24 August, 5 September, 26 September, 20 October, 7 November, 28 November and 19 December; in 1989, 6 February, 22 February, 21 March, 21 April, 8 June, 21 July, 3 August, 23 August, 18 October, 28 November and 14 December; in 1990, 10 January, 8 February, 29 March, 9 April and 3 May.

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether any complaints or observations were received from people within the National Institute of Medical Research regarding Professor Wilhelm Feldberg's state of competence while he held a licence to perform animal experiments;

(2) how many animals by species were used by Professor Wilhelm Feldberg at the National Institute for Medical Research, London in *(a)* 1988, *(b)* 1989 and *(c)* the current year.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* Professor Feldberg is a very distinguished scientist who for over 50 years held licences issued under the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876 and subsequently the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Over this time, there is no record of any complaints or observations from within the establishment having been made about the professor's state of competence. It is not our practice to provide details of the numbers or species of animals used by individual licence holders.

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps were taken to ensure that the holder of the certificate of designation within the National Institute of Medical Research ensured that all checks and monitoring were undertaken.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Inspectors routinely seek interviews with the holders of certificates of designation, or their representatives, to discuss their visits and any issues which may have arisen. A number of such interviews have taken place with the director of the National Institute of Medical Research.

Chief Officers of Police

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the guidance he gives to chief officers of police in dealing with correspondence from Members of Parliament, when a constituent has alleged assault.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No general guidance is given to chief officers of police on handling correspondence from Members of Parliament.

Guidance on complaints and discipline procedures refers to correspondence from Members of Parliament with respect to the interpretation of section 84(4) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which provides that a complaint may be made on behalf of a member of the public with his written consent. The guidance advises chief officers that, when a complaint is referred to the force by a third party, such as a Member of Parliament, any words which may reasonably be taken as indicating the complainant's willingness for his complaint to be so passed on should be taken as sufficient to indicate his consent for the purposes of section 84(4).

Police Rent Allowances

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make further changes to the regulations on police rent allowances in the light of the representations which he has received.

Mr. Waddington: I have already announced substantial amendments to the original draft regulations which will be of significant benefit to officers who were serving on 31 March 1990. In the course, however, of implementing the new arrangements, the need has been identified for further changes, which will be made as soon as possible after consultation with the police negotiating board. They are as follows:

(i) provisions for transitional rent allowance for officers serving on 31 March 1990 to include any compensatory grant which would have been due to them in 1990-91 on tax paid in previous years.

(ii) provision for police officers serving on 31 March 1990 whose wives, if also police officers, go on unpaid maternity leave, to move from flat rate to maximum transitional rent allowance; and

(iii) provision for police officer wives living in police houses or quarters on 31 March 1990 who go on unpaid maternity leave to recover their entitlement to provided accommodation allowance from the date on which they return from that leave.

Prison Officer Training

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the expected financial savings in respect of the anticipated downgrading of training tutors from principal officer to senior officer level following the recommendations of the staff inspection report on new entrant prison officer training.

Mr. Mellor: The staff inspectors estimated that the savings from regrading tutor posts from principal officer to senior officer level would be around £73,000, although part of this would be used to finance other recommendations in the report which would involve increased expenditure.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when policy decisions are expected on the recommendations received by his Department in respect of new entrant prison officer training; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Under the normal arrangements for handling staff inspection reports, comments on the report on new entrant prison officer training, which was issued in April, have been sought from all those with an interest. These have just been received and are now being considered. It is likely to be several weeks before any decisions are taken on the inspectors' recommendations.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any further discussions are planned with the Prison Officers Association in respect of probable future decisions in respect of new entrant prison officer training.

Mr. Mellor: At the meeting between members of the national executive committee of the Prison Officers Association and senior prison service officials on 16 May, the Prison Officers Association representatives gave a full account of their position. No further meetings on the subject are currently planned, although there will be the opportunity for further discussion at the next regular meeting of the relevant national Whitley sub-committee.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions have taken place with the Prison Officers Association on a local and national basis in relation to new entrant prison officer training.

Mr. Mellor: There are regular opportunities, both nationally and locally, for discussions between management and the Prison Officers Association about new entrant prison officer training generally. In the case of the recent staff inspection of new entrant prison officer training the inspectors gave local representatives of the Prison Officers Association the opportunity to comment on their emerging findings before completing their report. The full report was issued in April and the views of all those with an interest, including the Prison Officers Association, were sought. Members of the national executive committee of the Prison Officers Association attended a meeting with senior prison service officials on 16 May at which the staff inspection report was discussed.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what exercises have been conducted to

evaluate the possible consequences of downgrading training tutors in new entrant prison officer training establishments from principal to senior officer rank.

Mr. Mellor: The staff inspection team, which was led by an experienced prison governor, considered carefully the qualities, experience and expertise required of the tutorial staff. It was their considered judgment that the quality of training given to new prison officers would not suffer if their recommendation to regrade tutor posts to senior officer level were implemented.

Prisons (Crown Immunity)

Sir Charles Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what will be the effect of the Food Safety Bill on Crown immunity in prisons and on the inspection of prisons by local authority environmental health officers; and when the relevant provisions will come into effect.

Mr. Mellor: The provisions of the Bill will allow local authority environmental health officers the right of entry to prison establishments to carry out inspections of the catering facilities and make recommendations for improvement by way of Crown notices. When a decision is taken on the date of introduction of the relevant provisions a formal announcement will be made.

Traffic Wardens

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what period of training traffic wardens undergo before starting work in the Metropolitan police area;

(2) how many traffic wardens are employed by the Metropolitan police; and how many of them are women;

(3) what are the main educational qualifications required for people joining the Metropolitan police area traffic warden force;

(4) what is the level of payment received by Metropolitan police area traffic wardens, giving *(a)* starting salaries and *(b)* average earnings.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: On 30 April 1990 there were 1,312 traffic wardens employed in the Metropolitan police district. The Commissioner does not collect statistics about what sex wardens are but he estimates that there are more women than men in the service.

While specific qualifications are not sought, entry to the service is by means of a testing selection process aimed at finding candidates with common sense and good communications skills.

Once appointed, wardens undergo three weeks and four days training. They are accompanied by an experienced traffic warden for several weeks after being posted to a unit.

The starting salary of the basic grade traffic warden is £7,254 per annum. In addition, the job attracts London weighting of either £1,750, £1,000 or £725, depending on the work location. A boot allowance of £40·64 per annum and sock allowance of £32·28 per annum (women only) is also payable.

Average gross earnings inclusive of overtime and allowances are as follows:

	£
Traffic Warden (basic grade)	10,490·84
Traffic Warden Supervisor	11,852·80
Traffic Warden Controller	13,150·12
Senior Traffic Warden Controller	14,725·52
Area Traffic Warden Controller	16,405·28

Passports

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce 0898 numbers to provide information on passport matters to the public, either before or after agency status.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The telephone service provided by passport offices is kept under review and a survey of demand is currently being conducted. There are no present plans for the introduction of an 0898 number.

Merseyside Police Authority

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what representations he has received about the funding of Merseyside police authority;

(2) if he will increase the supplementary level of approval for Merseyside police authority for 1990-91;

(3) if he will make a statement on the level of central funding for Merseyside police authority and on the funding shortfall faced by Merseyside police authority in 1990 to 1992.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and noble Friend discussed the funding of capital expenditure with the chief constable and members of the police authority during a recent visit to Merseyside.

Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Government issue grants and credit approvals for capital expenditure by police authorities. The provision for grant and credit approvals for 1990-91, which is subject to cash limits, has been fully allocated to police authorities. No extra funding will be made available this year. It is, however, open to police authorities to incur capital expenditure above the level implied by allocation, but such expenditure would not attract grant.

Merseyside police authority will receive £1·194 million in capital grant, and credit approvals for £0·336 million in 1990-91. This will support capital expenditure of £2·130 million compared with the police authority's proposals for capital expenditure of £6·324 million.

No decisions have yet been made about the level of funding for 1991-92.

Notting Hill Carnival

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what police manpower and financial resources have been used in preparation of the task force report on the Notting Hill carnival.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 12 June 1990]:* No. I understand that no police resources have been used in any recent report on Notting Hill carnival prepared by North Kensington task force.

PRIME MINISTER

Zimbabwe

Q41. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations she has made recently to the President of Zimbabwe regarding the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe.

The Prime Minister: None. Our assessment, which is shared by Amnesty International and other independent human rights organisations, is that Zimbabwe's human rights performance has significantly improved in recent years. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe annual report for 1989 says that the situation in the country was generally good with only a few areas of concern. We take every suitable opportunity to encourage the Zimbabweans to reinforce this improvement.

Local Government Finance

Q50. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she plans to make a further statement on the progress of the Government's review of the community charge.

The Prime Minister: The Government are continuing their review of the operation of the community charge and will announce the results in due course.

Finchley

Q119. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to make an official visit to Finchley.

The Prime Minister: I do not visit Finchley in my official capacity but as the local Member of Parliament.

Rainham

Q134. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit Rainham in Essex.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Bradford

Q138. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to a Bradford school.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Food Prices

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the extra cost per family of food prices caused by the common agricultural policy; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have frequently raised at the European Council the consequences of the common agricultural policy for the Community's consumers and taxpayers, and have pressed for reforms to be made. I am glad to say that a significant measure of reform has been achieved. I shall certainly continue to stress to my Community partners the importance of continuing this process of reform, particularly in the context of the current GATT negotiations.

Polaris

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister what is the current status of the 1958 Polaris agreement.

The Prime Minister: The 1958 United Kingdom-United States agreement for co-operation in the uses of atomic energy for mutual defence purposes, as contained in Cmnd. 537, and amended by Cmnds. 859, 4119, 4383, 6017, 7976 and 9336, remains extant. The 1963 Polaris sales agreement was adapted in October 1982 to cover the purchase of the Trident-II weapon system, and remains extant.

Overseas Visits

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Prime Minister if, further to her reply to the hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Grocott) on 14 June, *Official Report*, column *270*, she will give the cost of each of the trips she has undertaken overseas since 1979 and the number of staff who have accompanied her on each occasion.

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer of 14 June, *Official Report*, column *270-1*, to the hon. Member for The Wrekin listing her official visits abroad, she will indicate in each case the cost of the visit.

The Prime Minister: This information is not available in the form requested except at disproportionate cost. The total cost of my overseas travel, and of those accompanying me, for each year since 1979 is as follows:

	£
1979-80[1]	151,864
1980-81	133,206
1981-82	556,000
1982-83	523,587
1983-84	216,146
1984-85	414,259
1985-86	457,483
1986-87	447,066
1987-88	341,880
1988-89	637,096
1989-90[2]	387,040

[1] From May 1979.
[2] Expenditure to date. Billing delays mean that some of the services used in 1989-90 have not yet been paid for.

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer on 14 June to the hon. Member for The Wrekin, *Official Report*, column *270-71*, listing her 74 official visits abroad, she will list the criteria which determine whether or not oral statements are considered appropriate.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the reply that I gave the hon. Member on 14 June.

Engagements

Mr. Gill: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 21 June.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the mayor of Paris, M. Jacques Chirac, and this evening I shall preside at a dinner in honour of the Crown Prince of Morocco.

EMPLOYMENT

Skill Centres

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how, in each individual case, the 61 potential bidders for the skill centres, who agreed that their identities might be disclosed, were assessed under appendix IV, principal lease terms, of the Deloitte information memorandum issued on his behalf; which bidders were informed of the possibility of grant being available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The 61 organisations that the hon. Member describes as potential bidders were those which had expressed an interest in the sale, and had agreed to have their identities disclosed to STA staff and trade unions. Not all those organisations submitted an initial bid.

Bidders had the choice of acquiring the Government's freehold or long leasehold interest in the properties or of taking a short lease, under the terms referred to in appendix IV of the information memorandum. Whichever option was chosen was up to the bidder and, provided that the main lease terms were met, no other element of assessment attached to appendix IV.

There were no grants available to bidders and none was paid. Most bids involved a negative consideration, which reflected factors such as the nature of leasehold, and estimated costs of turning the business round. All the bids received were evaluated by our professional advisers on a common basis. The Government chose the mix of bids which best met the objectives for the sale, a copy of which was placed in the Vote Office on 13 February 1990.

Employment Training

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to reduce the drop-out rate from his Department's employment training programme.

Mr. Nicholls: My Department is already pursuing a range of initiatives to ensure that those who express an intial interest in training receive appropriate information and help to enable them successfully to take up a training place and complete their agreed training. In addition, the recent efficiency scrutiny of take-up of my Department's programmes has produced its report. My right hon. and learned Friend is presently considering its findings and recommendations and plans to make it publicly available before the recess.

Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the reduction in expenditure on the technical and vocational education initiative extension for Blackburn and Darwen.

Mr. Eggar: I have agreed that Lancashire education authority, which includes Blackburn and Darwen, should start the extension phase of the technical and vocational education initiative (TVEI) in September 1990. The authority will receive its full share of funding over the lifetime of the programme. Lancashire will receive £870,000 for the financial year 1990-91.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish a table giving the expenditure on the technical and vocational educational initiative and its extension for Blackburn and Darwen for each year since its inception and that planned for future years.

Mr. Eggar: Blackburn and Darwen did not take part in Lancashire preparatory TVEI project. Development funding of £22,000 was spent by the Blackburn and Darwen consortium in 1989-90. Funds allocated to Blackburn and Darwen during the extension phase of TVEI will depend upon resources available and on Lancashire education authority's plan.

Tourism

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment approximately how many people are currently employed in jobs related to tourism within the United Kingdom; and what was the figure five years ago.

Mr. Nicholls: There were an estimated 1,330,000 employees employed in tourism-related industries in Great Britain in December 1989, the last available date, compared with 1,146,000 in the corresponding month of 1984. Employment in these industries is seasonal and in September 1989 there were 1,390,000 employees compared with 1,205,000 in September 1984.

Local Offices

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his best estimate of the value of the unemployment benefit office network.

Mr. Eggar: The unemployment benefit office network, formerly wholly owned and managed as part of the civil estate by the Property Services Agency, is now divided into two separate estates. These are:

The common user estate—owned and managed by DoE Property Holdings;

The departmental estate—owned and managed by the Employment Department.

Information as to the value of the unemployment benefit office network is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to rationalise the unemployment benefit network.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many unemployment benefit offices were in operation on 1 April.

Mr. Eggar: The Employment Service became an executive agency on 2 April 1990. Mr. Mike Fogden, the Employment Service agency's chief executive, will be replying in writing to the hon. Gentleman.

HEALTH

Immunisation

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to ensure that the level of take-up of vaccines is consistent nationally.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that Britain reaches the World Health Organisation's target of 90 per cent. for Europe for vaccination uptake.

Mr. Dorrell: The Department has funded the Health Education Authority to mount a joint nationwide immunisation campaign later this year which will provide health professionals with advice and training materials and the public with information on the benefits of immunisation. The campaign will include television advertising, posters and leaflets aimed at responding to the questions most frequently raised by parents of 0 to 5-year-olds.

We have accepted the World Health Organisation's 90 per cent. target for vaccinations against diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, whooping cough, measles, mumps and rubella. Departmental officials hold regular meetings with district immunisation co-ordinators to advise them of national developments, identify areas of difficulty and exchange information on local initiatives.

The new contract for general practitioners which applies from 1 April 1990 provides for bonus payments if 90 per cent. of patients are immunised as recommended.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the awareness of health professionals of the contra-indications to measles and whooping cough vaccines.

Mr. Dorrell: Clear advice on contra-indications and false "contra-indications" is given in the new edition of the memorandum "Immunisation Against Infectious Disease", a copy of which has been issued to all doctors and to other health professionals involved in immunisation. Copies of the memorandum have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what records his Department holds of the number of deaths which have occurred through non-vaccination.

Mr. Dorrell: Reports are made to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys of deaths from diseases for which vaccination is recommended, but it is not possible to say that all those deaths occurred in unvaccinated individuals.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what records his Department holds of the number of cases of disablement caused through non-vaccination.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to monitor the effects of the new general practitioner's contract on immunisation uptake in inner city areas.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Immunisation uptake rates in all areas are monitored routinely. The target payment system introduced in the new contract is one of a number of current initiatives aimed at increasing uptake rates. It will therefore not be possible to measure the impact of the new contract arrangements in isolation. The Government are satisfied that the target system provides a powerful incentive for GPs to undertake immunisations in all areas including inner cities.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to encourage immunisation uptake among ethnic minority groups.

Mr. Dorrell: Public information leaflets on immunisation, funded by the Department and prepared by the Health Education Authority, including new leaflets for use in the national campaign later this year, are produced in a number of ethnic languages. In addition, health authorities with substantial ethnic minority populations mount local initiatives.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to improve the level of take-up of vaccines in inner city areas.

Mr. Dorrell: The Department arranged a three-day immunisation seminar last September for the 25 lowest achieving districts in England. These districts were mainly but not exclusively "inner city". The seminar analysed the reasons for low uptake. One of these was failure by parents to bring their babies for the full course of vaccinations against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio, which were recommended at three, four to five and eight to 11 months. This finding contributed to the decision to accelerate the schedule from 1 May this year to two, three and four months, when mothers and babies are still attending the doctor's surgery for other reasons. In addition posters on immunisation produced by the Health Education Authority have been targeted on low uptake areas, which include the inner cities.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received concerning the levels of immunisation uptake.

Mr. Dorrell: Frequent representations on immunisation uptake are received from hon. Members, and from members of the public and the health professions.

Subjects raised recently have included the publication of a new edition of the handbook "Immunisation Against Infectious Disease" (issued to all doctors) a copy of which is available in the Library; the target levels we have urged general practitioners to aim for; immunisation record cards and compulsory immunisation.

We are pleased to say that our present policy of providing the health professionals with the fullest possible information on immunisation—to enable them to persuade parents of its benefits—is leading to steady improvement in uptake, with the latest estimates showing 88 per cent. coverage for diphtheria, tetanus and polio, 85 per cent. for measles and 80 per cent. for whooping cough.

Labour Force Survey

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if he will publish a table from the latest Labour Force Survey showing the population resident in each metropolitan county broken down by ethnic origin, showing both the number resident and the proportion of each ethnic group.

Mr. Dorrell: The tables give the information requested from the Labour Force Survey. To improve their reliability the data are presented as averages from three year's surveys (1986, 1987, and 1988); nevertheless, the data are still subject to sampling errors. The volumes for 1986 and 1987 have both been published and copies are available in the Library. The 1988 volume is expected to be published in 1991. A similar table will also be published in Regional Trends 25, later this year.

Estimated private household population resident in metropolitan counties by ethnic group, Great Britain, 1986-88
(a) Number of people (thousands)

Ethnic group	*Metropolitan county of residence*						
	Greater London	*Greater Manchester*	*West Midlands*	*West Yorkshire*	*Other Metropolitan counties*	*All Metropolitan counties*	*Great Britain*
White	5,462	2,397	2,256	1,856	3,736	15,707	51,470
All ethnic minority groups	1,100	134	326	162	77	1,820	2,577
West Indian or Guyanese	288	20	77	18	7	410	495
African	77	2	3	2	6	91	112
Indian	333	36	130	38	8	546	787
Pakistani	72	47	70	80	13	282	428
Bangladeshi	51	4	17	5	7	84	108
Chinese	51	5	1	2	9	69	125
Arab	31	3	4	3	6	48	73
Mixed	104	13	18	11	15	160	287
Others	92	3	5	4	6	110	163
Not stated	78	29	18	13	32	170	472
All groups	6,640	2,560	2,600	2,031	3,845	17,675	54,519

(5) Percentages of population of each county *Percentages of totals*

Ethnic group	*Metropolitan county of residence*					
	Greater London	*Greater Manchester*	*West Midlands*	*West Yorkshire*	*Other met. counties*	*All met. counties*
White	82	94	87	91	97	89
All ethnic minority groups	17	5	13	8	2	10
West Indian or Guyanese	4	1	3	1	0	2
African	1	0	0	0	0	1
Indian	5	1	5	2	0	3
Pakistani	1	2	3	4	0	2
Bangladeshi	1	0	1	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0	0	0	0
Arab	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed	2	1	1	1	0	1
Others	1	0	0	0	0	1
Not stated	1	1	1	1	1	1
All groups	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: 1986, 1987, and 1988 Labour Force Surveys—estimates are subject to sampling error.

Northumberland Health Authority

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date the existing members of Northumberland health authority will cease to hold office and carry out the duties of their office; on what date new members of the authority will take office; and whether he will list both the retiring members and the new members who will serve on the authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Subject to parliamentary approval for the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, it is proposed that the terms of office of existing district health authority members will be brought to an end approximately 11 weeks after Royal Assent. New members of the reconstituted health authority will take office on the following day. Responsibility for appointing the current members of Northumberland health authority rests with Northern regional health authority and certain local authorities. The new non-executive members of Northumberland health authority would be appointed similarly by Northern regional health authority. Lists of district health authority members are not held centrally.

Drugs

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any proposals to change the procedures followed by the Committee on Safety of Medicines in licensing new drugs; and whether he will bring forward proposals for an interim procedure before full licensing while medical data about side-effects are established.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The internal procedures of the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) are a matter for CSM itself under schedule 1, paragraph 4 of the Medicines Act 1968. We respect and value the independent scientific judgments made by the CSM on the information laid before it and have no plans to amend schedule 1, paragraph 4.

Measures are already in place and are already used to assess safety and efficacy before a licensing decision is taken. Applicants for licences are required to report

information and data derived from tests laid down in detail by directive 75/318 EEC, including toxicity tests and clinical trials.

After licensing, data sheets communicate to doctors the licensed uses of medicines and precautions, warnings, and necessary information about side-effects. Newly introduced medicines are subject to the black triangle scheme on product literature for at least two years after initial marketing. This is to alert doctors to report all adverse reactions (side-effects) to these medicines to CSM. Also, CSM monitors them intensively and takes appropriate action for example, by special "current problem" communication to all doctors, if new adverse reactions are identified. In addition, there is a legal requirement on companies to report adverse reactions to their own products. Since 1986, the CSM has recommended that companies carry out post-marketing surveillance studies on new medicines for widespread long-term use.

The existing system is therefore comprehensive in its scope to the objects of making the best scientific judgment before licensing and for monitoring after licensing. It is in line with present European Community pharmaceutical directives.

Corwin

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions have been held between the medical profession and the Committee on Safety of Medicines about withdrawing the heart drug Corwin; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information on the quality, efficacy and safety of Corwin was rigorously assessed by the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) prior to the granting of a product licence. It was placed on the market in May 1988, licensed for the treatment of mild to moderate heart failure. It was clearly recommended that the drug should not be used in severe heart failure as it had not shown benefit in these patients.

Corwin has been carefully monitored since its introduction on to the market and the CSM has collected and assessed extensive information on the effects of the product. In 1989 the findings of a clinical trial showed that the drug could cause deterioration in patients with severe heart failure; other information from the yellow card adverse drug reaction monitoring scheme indicated that it was sometimes being used inappropriately in such patients. A letter from ICI Pharmaceuticals, which markets the product, was sent to all doctors in August 1989 warning them of the dangers of the use of the product in severe heart failure, clearly defining those patients who should not be given the drug. The product's data sheet was amended accordingly.

In January 1990, on the basis of further information, the CSM made recommendations severely restricting the use of Corwin. Doctors were informed of this advice in a letter from ICI Pharmaceuticals and in the CSM bulletin "Current Problems" No. 28 of May 1990, a copy of which is available in the Library. The CSM is satisfied that the product can be used safely if these recommendations are followed, but will continue to monitor the situation.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the number of prescriptions involving use of the drug Corwin.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Available figures relate to the issue of prescriptions in England, in 1988, and are based on a sample of all prescriptions. Prescriptions issued for Corwin were 3,800 and for Xamoterol the generic equivalent were 1,420.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on deaths connected with the use of the drug Corwin; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Committee on Safety of Medicines CSM has received 29 spontaneous reports under the yellow card scheme of deaths occurring in patients receiving treatment with Corwin. The report of a suspected reaction does not necessarily imply a causal association with the drug. In the case of patients treated with Corwin, the majority of those who died were critically ill and receiving a number of concurrent drugs.

In a clinical trial carried out in severe heart failure, the findings suggested a 2·5-fold greater mortality in association with Corwin compared to the group given no drug treatment.

As a result of this study's findings the CSM has recommended restrictions on the use of Corwin to ensure it is not used in patients with moderate to severe heart failure but only in patients with mild heart failure who benefit from treatment. Doctors and pharmacists were informed of these restrictions by the CSM's "Current Problems" bulletin distributed in May 1990, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Steroids

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of drug reaction were reported in each year of operation of the yellow card reporting system; what percentage of the cases reported each year were steroid related; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The number of reports received in each year were:

Year	*Reports*
1964	1,414
1965	3,987
1966	2,600
1967	3,500
1968	3,466
1969	4,463
1970	3,601
1971	2,837
1972	3,638
1973	3,619
1974	4,818
1975	5,052
1976	6,490
1977	11,255
1978	11,873
1979	10,840
1980	10,179
1981	13,032
1982	10,922
1983	12,689
1984	12,163
1985	12,652
1986	15,527
1987	16,431
1988	19,022
1989	19,246

Information on the numbers of these reports which are steroid related is not readily available; to prepare percentage figures per year for such reports would incur disproportionate costs.

Adverse reactions to medicinal products are reported to the CSM on a voluntary basis by doctors and dentists under the yellow card scheme and there is a statutory requirement for pharmaceutical companies to submit reports. The more reports received the better the system works. We have encouraged reporting in a number of ways over the years.

Smoking

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many health authorities in England and Wales provide counselling services for people trying to reduce cigarette smoking.

Mr. Dorrell: We do not hold information centrally about the provision of such services in England. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairmen of the regional health authorities. Responsibility for the provision of health services in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Eye Tests

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of children aged under 16 years received free eye tests in England *(a)* in each quarter of 1988-89 and *(b)* in each quarter in 1989-90.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 20 June.

Northern Region

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the remuneration of *(a)* the chair of the Northern regional health authority, *(b)* members of the Northern regional health authority, *(c)* the chairs of every district health authority in the Northern region, *(d)* the members of each district health authority in the Northern region, *(e)* the chair of every family practitioner committee in the Northern region and *(f)* the members of each family practitioner committee in the Northern region on 1 April; and what he now proposes it to be in each case.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Until 1 April 1990 the chairman of Northern regional health authority and the chairmen of each district health authority received £12,462 per annum.

New rates authorised with effect from 1 April for the chairmen of the regional health authority and district health authorities are:

	£
Regional health authority	
Northern	18,921
District health authority	
Darlington	13,674
Durham	13,674
East Cumbria	15,503
Gateshead	13,674
Hartlepool	13,674
Newcastle	17,437
Northumberland	15,503
North Tees	13,674
North Tyneside	13,674
North West Durham	13,674
South Cumbria	13,674
South Tees	15,503
South Tyneside	13,674
South West Durham	13,674
Sunderland	15,503
West Cumbria	13,674

Until 1 April 1990 FPC chairmen received £5,000 per annum.

New rates authorised for 1 April 1990 for FPCs in Northern region are:

	£
Cleveland	10,600
Cumbria	10,600
Durham	10,600
Gateshead	9,805
Newcastle	10,600
North Tyneside	9,805
Northumberland	10,600
South Tyneside	9,805
Sunderland	10,600

At present members of health authorities and FPCs do not receive remuneration, although they are eligible to claim expenses for travel and subsistence. Subject to parliamentary approval for the NHS and Community Care Bill, non-executive members of the reconstituted RHAs, DHAs and family health services authorities will receive remuneration at the rate of £5,000 per annum.

Water (Aluminium)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has made an assessment of the health implications of the presence of aluminium in water; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: Aluminium and its salts are of low toxicity, and no disease is known to be caused by aluminium naturally present, or as a result of approved use, in drinking water.

Aluminium in water used for haemodialysis is a recognised cause of degenerative diseases of the bone and brain in patients with chronic renal failure. To avoid this possibility it is standard practice to ensure that water used for dialysis has low levels of aluminium.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the possible connection between aluminium in water and the onset of Alzheimer's disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: The cause or causes of Alzheimer's disease are unknown. However, the question of a possible relationship with aluminium is one of several hypotheses under investigation. The independent expert scientific and medical advisory Committee on Medical Aspects of the contamination of air, soil and water advised in November 1988 that,

"it has not been established that a reduction in the aluminium intake of the general population would be likely to reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's disease. The association between Alzheimer's disease and aluminium concentrations in drinking-water, suggested by recent studies in Norway and the United Kingdom, was too tentative to justify changes in the use of aluminium sulphate in water treatment,"

and therefore,

"further research is important, particularly on the bioavailability of aluminium from all sources".

Research on the bioavailability of aluminium from food and water is in progress at the trace metabolism unit at Southampton with funding from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Further epidemiological and neuropathological research is in progress at the Medical Research Council units in Southampton and Newcastle. Research into Alzheimer's disease in general, and into the aluminium hypothesis in particular, is expanding nationally and internationally. This research will be kept under review.

Ambulance Dispute (Costs)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he now has the bills from the Army and the police incurred during the ambulance dispute; if he will detail the total costs from both the sources; and how they are being divided between each health region.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The bill for the provision of military assistance during the ambulance dispute was £7·2 million. The cost, which stemmed partly from the training and general preparations needed to achieve a state of readiness across the country, is being shared between all regional health authorities in proportion to their share of main hospital and community health service revenue allocations. Information is not held centrally on the costs of assistance by police and other organisations which are being met directly by the health authorities concerned.

Baby Milk Food

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the restrictions on mothers' choice of baby milk formulas resulting from some health authorities' financial arrangements with manufacturers of infant formula;

(2) if he will list, so far as the information is available to him, the district health authorities in England and Wales which have made financial arrangements with manufacturers of infant formula to stock only one brand of baby milk food.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Other than infants formulas supplied under the welfare food scheme, health authorities are free to purchase from the full range of available infant formulas. Purchases by authorities are determined on the advice of relevant health professionals. Information about purchases by individual district health authorities in England is not collected centrally. However, authorities are aware of problems that may arise by purchasing from only one manufacturer. Information about purchases in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

SCOTLAND

Transport to Europe

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he has taken in respect of the availability of transport of passengers and manufactured goods from Scotland to Europe after 1 January 1993.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Our plans to upgrade the A74 to motorway, together with the completion of the M40 and the proposed widening of the M6, M1 and M25, will substantially increase road capacity to Europe. In addition, the Scottish Development Department is undertaking a major review to ensure that the strategic Scottish trunk and key principal road network will meet future demands. We are encouraging potential Scottish rail customers to make known to British Rail their requirements for services to Europe via the channel tunnel. The Government's policy of liberalising air services will assist operators to provide improved services where demand exists.

Local Government Finance

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average cost per person of collecting the poll tax; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: On the basis of local authorities' budget estimates, the cost of collecting the community charge in 1990-91 will be £13·86 per personal charge payer. This figure includes the cost of the registration work but excludes the cost of operating the rebate and transitional relief schemes. Full account has been taken in successive revenue support grant settlements of the costs incurred by local authorities in collecting the community charge.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate of the number of people who have not so far paid the poll tax for 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is not held centrally but we understand that in most regions 85 to 95 per cent. of those eligible for the community charge have made some payment, with a figure of 98 per cent. in one area. Payment levels are increasing as local authorities employ procedures for recovering arrears.

Employment Training

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the amount of money in real terms for employment training for each of the years from 1979 including the current year and the proposed amount for 1991; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: As employment training started in September 1988, the information requested is available from that time only. At constant 1988-89 prices, details (inclusive of training allowances and income support) are as follows:

Financial Year	*£ million (1988-89 prices)*
1988-89[1] (actual expenditure)	46·8
1989-90 (actual expenditure)	116·8
1990-91 (estimated expenditure)	130·0

[1] (Half-year September to March only)

Registers

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether following the conversion of the Registers of Scotland to agency status, he intends to *(a)*

increase the levels of recording dues and registration dues and *(b)* introduce charges for provision of any services which are at present provided free of charge.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 11 June. The fees order referred to there makes relatively minor adjustments to the main fee scales, leaving most recording dues and registration dues unchanged. Some new fees are to be introduced so that increasingly each service is paid for by its users. The fees order will increase income so that extra staff can be recruited to provide a better service.

A full-scale review of fees is to take place this year as provided for in the framework document for the Department of the Registers of Scotland, which was published on 6 April when the department became an agency.

Shellfish Ban

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to compensate fishermen for losses resulting from the shellfish ban.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No ban was imposed. The Government issued a warning to the public on 26 May that consumption of locally caught shellfish taken from the coast between Montrose and the Humber could cause illness. The risk arose from a natural cause and the Government acted to safeguard public health. In such circumstances compensation would not be appropriate.

Handicapped Prisoners

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has commissioned any research studies into the experiences and needs of prisoners with mental and/or physical handicaps in prisons.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The Scottish Home and Health Department has recently commissioned two studies which are concerned with the needs of mentally disturbed people in prison.

The first, under the direction of Dr. David Cooke of the Douglas Inch clinic, Glasgow, is designed to examine the prevalence of various forms of mental illness among the prison population and to develop training packages to assist prison personnel in dealing with these groups of offenders. The second is being conducted by Dr. James McManus of Dundee university, and is concerned with the possible impact which regime factors may have in the creation and exacerbation of mentally disturbed behaviour.

Both studies began in January 1989 and are scheduled to report in December 1991.

In addition, the Scottish Home and Health Department is currently in discussion with a Scottish university over the possibility of conducting work on the problems faced by physically handicapped persons while in prison.

Adult Education

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what steps he has taken to monitor the provision by education authorities in Scotland of community-based adult basic education and English as a second language service; what criteria he has used to determine whether or not those are adequate *(a)* in terms of scale and *(b)* in terms of quality; and what conclusions he has drawn from the application of these criteria;

(2) what plans he has to ensure that all those leaving long-stay institutions without essential skills in literacy and numeracy receive adult basic education tuition;

(3) what guidance he has issued to Scottish education authorities in order to ensure the development of an educational dimension to care in the community; and what steps has he taken to ensure that these guidelines have been implemented;

(4) what steps he has taken to assess *(a)* increases in volume and *(b)* improvement in quality in community-based adult education over the past 10 years.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 20 June 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave on 12 June to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) at columns *123-24.*

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total amount of funds made available in each of the past five years to train and accredit adult basic education practitioners in Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 20 June 1990]:* The funding of adult basic education practitioners in Scotland is primarily the responsibility of education authorities to determine in the light of local needs and with regard to their own priorities and the total resources available to them, including the resources provided by central Government.

In addition to revenue support grant, the Government have made available to education authorities in both 1989-90 and 1990-91 specific grant of £30,000 towards the costs of in-service training for adult basic education practitioners.

Railways

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the grant aid paid by central Government to British Rail for *(a)* the restoration of double track and related modernisation of the Perth to Inverness line and *(b)* the resignalling of the Perth to Inverness line since 1970; what grant, other than section 56 grant, was paid towards these two projects; and what was the economic rate of return, both before and after grant, for each project, or the project as a whole, on the basis of which grant was paid.

Mr. Freeman: I have been asked to reply.

Detailed information on these schemes is not held in the Department. However, public service obligation grant is paid towards the difference between the costs and revenues of the subsidised sectors of British Rail. It is not hypothecated to particular costs or individual projects.

A rate of return would not have been calculated in assessing these projects, because there is no requirement for investment which renews existing assets of services supported by public service obligation grant to earn a specific rate of return. The option chosen is that which maintains services at least net cost.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many states have acceded to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty since the last review conference of the treaty; how many states have withdrawn from the treaty since it came into force; and what information he has on how many states have threatened publicly to withdraw but declined to carry out the threat.

Mr. Waldegrave: Five states have acceded to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty since the 1985 review conference, and four others have ratified the treaty. In addition, North Korea, which we do not recognise as a state, acceded in 1985. No state has withdrawn from the treaty since it entered into force on 5 March 1970. As regards the last part of the question I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 11 June 1990 to the right hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Orme) at column *43*.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on the current year's review of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: The United Kingdom is a depositary power of the non-proliferation treaty and, as such, we have received several communications about the fourth review conference from other states' parties from non-governmental organisations and from members of the public.

Oman

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Oman regarding their refusal to adhere to CITES.

Mr. Waldegrave: We hope that countries not at present party to CITES, such as Oman, will in due course sign the convention, and we fully support any effort by the CITES secretariat to encourage wider participation in CITES.

British Citizens Abroad (Deaths)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many deaths of British citizens abroad his Department is aware of in each of the past five years.

Mr. Waldegrave: There is no requirement for the death of a British national overseas to be registered at a British consulate. Many such deaths are not reported. The numbers of deaths overseas in circumstances requiring the assistance of British consular officials are available only for the past three years. They are:

	number
1987	751
1988	833
1989	852

Some of these deaths were registered at British consular offices. The total numbers of deaths of British citizens registered by British consular officers during the period under reference were:

	number
1985	1,052
1986	1,231
1987	1,295
1988	1,193
1989	1,029

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what procedures are followed by his Department to assist relatives of British citizens who have died abroad;

(2) if he will review the procedures followed by his Department to assist relatives of British citizens who have died abroad.

Mr. Waldegrave: There are no set procedures. Each case is dealt with as the circumstances demand. Consular officers provide all the help they properly can. They have no powers to undertake inquiries of a police nature. Their help is normally restricted to ensuring that the next-of-kin is informed, assisting relatives and friends in organising the repatriation of the remains or arranging local burial or cremation, obtaining information from the local authorities and giving any other general assistance they can.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department takes to accurately record the cause of death abroad of British holiday-makers.

Mr. Waldegrave: There is no requirement for the death of a British national overseas to be registered at a British consulate. Many such deaths are not reported. Consular registers record the fact that a death has taken place. There is no requirement under the regulations for the cause of death to be entered on death certificates.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department takes to ensure that official reports by foreign authorities on the deaths of British citizens in European Community countries are received by relatives in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Waldegrave: Official reports on such deaths received by consular officers are made available direct to relatives in the United Kingdom or to Her Majesty's coroners when an inquest is being held.

Dall's Porpoises

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Japanese Government over the slaughter of Dall's porpoises; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have already raised this matter with the Japanese Government who have assured us that they are committed to the responsible management of small cetaceans, including the Dall's porpoise, which live within 200 nautical miles of Japan's coast. In 1989 the Japanese Government introduced new regulations which will reduce the numbers of Dall's porpoises caught.

Foreign Affairs Council

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 and 19 June.

Mr. Hurd: The Foreign Affairs Council met in Luxembourg on 18 and 19 June. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council discussed preparations for the Dublin European Council on 25 and 26 June. Ministers agreed their report to the European Council on political union, and briefly discussed economic and monetary union, co-operation against drugs trafficking and on the environment, and recent developments on frontiers issues.

The Council approved directives for negotiations with EFTA for the extension of the single market to EFTA countries through the creation of a European economic area. The first round of negotiations with EFTA on the basis of this mandate were held in Brussels on 20 June.

In the light of recent violence against opposition demonstrators in Romania, the Council deferred a decision on the signature of the EC/Romania trade and commercial and economic co-operation agreement. There was also broad support for freezing G24 economic aid to Romania and withholding an invitation to Romania to attend the G24 ministerial meeting on 4 July. The Commission announced its intention to table proposals on aid to the other central and eastern European countries after that meeting. The Council also asked the Commission to conduct exploratory talks on association agreements with those countries in eastern Europe implementing economic and political reform most quickly and effectively.

The Commission reported to the Council on preparations for the Houston economic summit. The three main issues were likely to be east-west, the environment and the GATT Uruguay round.

The Commission put forward proposals for strengthening the Community's relations with Yugoslavia and Turkey, and for new Mediterranean policy. These were referred for further detailed work at official level.

The Council finalised the internal financing agreement for the fourth Lomé convention allowing the Community and its member states to proceed to ratification of the convention. The House will have the opportunity to debate this in the autumn.

The Council discussed progress in the GATT Uruguay round, with a view to the Houston economic summit on 9 to 11 July and the GATT trade negotiations committee —TNC—in Geneva in the week beginning 23 July. Ministers reaffirmed their strong commitment to a successful outcome to the round.

In the margins, Ministers discussed the treatment of imports of Japanese cars after 1992. The Commission reported progress in contacts with Japan. There was also discussion in European political co-operation of eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, South Africa, middle east, Lithuania and Ethiopia. Statements were issued on Ethiopia and Romania.

Ivory

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much ivory has been exported from Hong Kong since 30 March; and what amounts to which countries.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* Between 30 March 1990 to 31 May 1990 the Hong Kong CITES Authority has been notified of the following ivory exports.

Destination	*Quantity kilograms*
Taiwan	1·9
South Korea	6·6
Mexico	9·8
China	3,268·6
Saudi Arabia	8·8
United Kingdom (personal affects for which the United Kingdom CITES management authority has issued licences)	5·4
Andorra	9·1

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by the Hong Kong authorities to ensure that none of the 116 tonnes of ivory without CITES certification leaves the territory.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The Hong Kong authorities have made it clear that export licences will not be issued for any commercial exports of ivory without CITES certificates. The special task force set up by the Hong Kong Customs and Excise service in June 1989 is responsible for enforcing these controls.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by the Hong Kong authorities to monitor the movement of the 116 tonnes of ivory in the territory without CITES documentation.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* All commercial ivory in Hong Kong, including stocks without CITES documentation, has to be registered. Those holding stocks are required to have possession licences. These licences have to be amended whenever ivory is transferred between traders. Spot checks are made to ensure that these regulations are enforced.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of the ivory seized by the special task force in Hong Kong since 22 March according to amount; from whom it was seized; what was the country of origin; and what is the current stock of confiscated ivory now held by the Hong Kong authorities.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* Since 22 March 1990, the Customs and Excise special task force has seized five consignments of worked ivory totalling 75·35 kg. Three consignments were illegal exports from Hong Kong not permitted into the destination country and confiscated from the returning travellers. One was an illegal export from the United Kingdom. The remaining item was found in a piece of unclaimed baggage so its origins remain unknown. The Hong Kong authorities now hold 2·4 tonnes of confiscated ivory.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much elephant ivory was exported to South Korea from Hong Kong in 1988 and 1989; and how much has been exported since the reservation entered on behalf of Hong Kong by the United Kingdom to the CITES ban.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 7 June 1990]:* The following amounts of raw elephant ivory were exported from Hong Kong to the Republic of Korea (South Korea):

	Kg
1988	Nil
1989	[1]460

[1] Value HK dollars 407,596.

In addition, Hong Kong exported worked ivory—including tooth products of animals other than elephants—to South Korea as follows:

	Value in HK dollars
1988	1,066,021
1989	747,742

In the period 18 January to 31 May, 214·6 kg of raw and worked elephant ivory have been exported to South Korea.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Energy Policy

13. **Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's energy policy for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: Energy policy in Northern Ireland is aimed at reducing dependence upon oil both for electricity generation and as an energy source for industry and commerce; and at promoting the efficient use of energy in all sectors of the economy.

Belfast Prison (Fights)

14. **Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent steps have been taken to reduce the level of fights at Her Majesty's prison, Belfast.

Mr. Cope: The governor is taking all the steps available to him in the management and supervision of movement within the prison to reduce the opportunities for conflict.

Extradition

15. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will make a statement on the arrangements for extradition from the Republic of Ireland to the United Kingdom; and when he last raised this matter at the Intergovernmental Conference.

Mr. Cope: United Kingdom Government concern that extradition arrangements between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom be fully effective was raised at the last Intergovernmental Conference on 19 April when Ministers commissioned officials to undertake a review of the situation and report back to a future conference.

18. **Mr. William Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what further applications have been made for the extradition of terrorist suspects from the Irish Republic to Northern Ireland since he last answered questions in the House.

Mr. Cope: It is not the practice to disclose what warrants have been sent to the Republic of Ireland. However, no new application for the return of fugitive offenders to Northern Ireland has been heard in the courts in the Republic of Ireland since I last answered questions in the House.

Poaching

16. **Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the extent of illegal netting and poaching on salmon and dollaghan rivers in Northern Ireland and in Lough Neagh.

Mr. Peter Bottomley The total amount of illegal netting seized in Northern Ireland by the Fisheries Conservancy Board and the Foyle Fisheries Commission for the two years 1988 and 1989 was 17,839m and 15,620m respectively while the netting seized in Lough Neagh was 11,142m and 6,400m respectively. In the same two years the total number of prosecutions taken in Northern Ireland for illegal netting and poaching related offences was 427 and 372 respectively.

Mr. Gerard Slane

17. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the current state of investigations into the death of Mr. Gerard Slane.

Mr. Cope: No. This is a matter for the Chief Constable of the RUC. However, I understand that the investigation into the murder of Mr. Gerard Slane is continuing.

Labour Statistics

19. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of employment in Northern Ireland at present and in June 1986.

Mr. Needham: At December 1989, the latest date for which figures are available, there were an estimated 518,640 employees in employment. This estimate is 17,200 higher than the corresponding figure for June 1986 and employment in Northern Ireland is now at its highest level for nine years.

Ministerial Visits

20. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many visits abroad have been made by Northern Ireland Ministers in the last two years in which inward investment into the Province was promoted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Since April 1988, Northern Ireland Ministers have made 15 visits overseas to encourage inward investment contributing to the promotion of almost 4,000 new jobs.

Stevens Report

21. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in giving effect to the recommendations of the Stevens report.

32. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken to give effect to the recommendations contained in the Stevens report.

Mr. Duffy: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the recommendations contained in the Stevens report are being acted upon.

Mr. Cope: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State indicated in his statement to the House on 17 May, at column 1027, action in relation to many of the matters to which Mr. Stevens drew attention in his recommendations has already been taken, or is in hand. All his other recommendations are now being followed up by the appropriate authorities.

22. **Mr. Mallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary about the Stevens report since the limited publication of the report.

Mr. Cope: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I regularly meet the Chief Constable and other senior RUC officers when we discuss a range of issues with which we are jointly concerned. Naturally, these issues have included the results of Mr. Stevens' inquiry. We are at one in our desire that a positive response should be made to his valuable report.

Benefit Claimants

23. **Mr. Maginnis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many claimants in Northern Ireland, as a result of replacement of supplementary benefit by income support, have had a net reduction in benefits received between April 1988 and April 1990.

Mr. Needham: The information is not available but, because of transitional additions, it must be very few.

Health Provision

24. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met representatives of the Northern Ireland health boards to discuss health provision.

Mr. Needham: My noble Friend Lord Skelmersdale last met board chairmen on 13 June and has had regular meetings with other representatives of the board. His discussions with them have covered a wide range of issues dealing with the policy and management of the health and personal social services, including progress on the reforms in "Working for Patients" and the proposals in "People First" to achieve improved provision of community care.

Ulster Defence Regiment

25. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers have been killed in terrorist attacks *(a)* in the current year so far and *(b)* since the regiment was founded.

Mr. Cope: Six members of the Ulster Defence Regiment have been killed in terrorist attacks this year. A total of 187 serving members of the regiment have been killed since it was founded.

Debenhams Store, Belfast

26. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from the Burton group concerning the opening of the Debenhams store in Belfast; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: No such representations have been received.

Community Relations Council

27. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the role of the Community Relations Council.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Community Relations Council was established in January 1990 to provide support, facilites and recognition for organisations operating at local level which are concerned with the development of community relations, awareness of cultural diversity and conflict resolution. The council aims to increase mutual respect and understanding, increase public awareness of activities which improve community relations and promote constructive debate about community relations and cultural diversity.

Around £100,000 will be available to the council in 1990-91 to develop new project work. The council will also have responsibility for a number of funding programmes previously carried out by central Government, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust. These programmes are concerned with supporting cross-community contact and widening understanding of and respect for the different cultural traditions in Northern Ireland.

NHS Trusts

28. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has received any expressions of interest from hospitals wishing to become self-governing trusts in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: Formal applications to become a self-governing trust can be invited only after Parliament has approved the necessary Northern Ireland legislation. However, to date the following have expressed an interest in exploring the implications of self-governing status:

1. Downe Hospital, Downpatrick
2. The Royal Group of Hospitals
3. The Ulster, North Down and Ards Hospitals Unit of Management.
4. Craigavon Area Hospital Group

The management executive for the health and personal social services will be discussing expressions of interest with the hospitals concerned with a view to identifying which candidates should be encouraged to develop formal business plans.

Fair Employment

29. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on the implementation of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989.

34. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action has been taken to implement the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989.

Mr. Needham: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden).

Arts

30. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to promote the contribution of the arts to education in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Government recognise the importance of the arts as part of the educational development of young people. Elements of creative and expressive studies have been included as a compulsory part of the Northern Ireland school curriculum. In addition, the Arts Council for Northern Ireland has established a range of programmes—for example, young arts, youth dance and youth drama—designed to expose children to the influence of professional artists as creators and performers.

"Shoot to Kill"

31. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will obtain a copy of the transcript of the ITV programme "Shoot to Kill" for his departmental library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I watched the programme and was concerned because I did not think that it showed an appropriate degree of balance and because the drama-documentary technique used was an unsatisfactorary approach to the serious issues at stake. On the events in question, there is nothing I can add to the statement made by the Attorney-General in the House on 25 January 1988 at column 21.

Community Relations

33. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department spent on community relations in 1989-90; what he is proposing to spend in 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: Measures directed at improving the relationships between the different parts of the community in Northern Ireland have a high priority in Northern Ireland public expenditure plans.

In 1989-90 around £2·6 million was spent on community relations programmes supported by the central community relations unit and the Department of Education. In 1990-91 it is proposed to spend £3·984 million.

In addition, all Northern Ireland Departments are required to take account of the impact of their policies and programmes on community relations in the Province. As such, many mainline expenditure programmes make an important contribution to healing community divisions.

The main objectives of community relations programmes are:

—to ensure that all sides of the community enjoy equality of opportunity and equity of treatment;
—to develop cross-community contact and co-operation;
—to encourage the development of mutual respect and understanding.

45. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to bring Protestant and Catholic schools together to foster better community relations; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: In October 1987 I introduced the cross-community contact scheme to stimulate cross-community schools and youth and community groups to undertake projects on a cross-community basis.

Since its introduction some 400 schools—about one third of all schools in Northern Ireland—and 300 youth community clubs have applied for assistance under the scheme which has a budget in 1990-91 of £500,000.

In addition, and in support of this scheme, I am providing funds to the Ulster folk and transport museum for residential and teaching facilities in which groups from both communities can meet and work together.

As part of education reform in Northern Ireland I have also included education for mutual understanding and cultural heritage as compulsory cross-curricular themes. These will not only improve the awareness of all children of the various strands in our cultural heritage but provide a framework within which opportunities for contacts between schools can be increased.

Constitutional Developments

35. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his discussions with Northern Ireland political parties regarding the constitutional developments.

43. **Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how he intends to inform Parliament about progress with his talks with the political parties in the Province relating to some form of devolved administration.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the progress of his talks with political groups in the Province.

Mr. Brooke: I have had useful preparatory talks with leaders of the main political parties in Northern Ireland, and with others, on the possibility of embarking on collective discussions. I am encouraged by the constructive approach of party leaders to believe that the basis for such discussions exists. It is common ground that the resolution of such talks would need to comprehend the transfer of power to locally accountable political institutions, the relationship between such institutions and the Irish Government and the implications for the relationship between the British and Irish Governments.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will seek to include representatives of the Conservative party in Northern Ireland in his talks on constitutional developments in the Province.

Mr. Brooke: In exploring the scope for political progress in Northern Ireland, I and my colleagues, take soundings from a wide range of political opinion, not excluding representatives of the Conservative party in Northern Ireland.

Community Workshops

36. **Mr. A. Cecil Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he will take to ensure that community workshops receive payments as promised.

Mr. Needham: Promised payments are being made.

Security

37. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will next meet Ministers of the Government of the Republic of Ireland to discuss security matters.

Mr. Brooke: Security matters will be discussed at the next meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, which is likely to take place within the next few weeks.

38. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

46. **Mr. Molyneaux:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

48. **Rev. William McCrea:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on security in the Province.

Mr. Brooke: I refer the hon. Members and the right hon. Member to the answer which I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown).

47. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met Ministers from the Irish Republic; what discussions took place on security matters; and what subsequent action has followed.

Mr. Brooke: I met the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr. Collins, on 11 June to discuss political development. Security matters were not raised on that occasion; they were last discussed at the Intergovernmental Conference meeting on 19 April. My hon. Friend would, for obvious reasons, not expect me to comment publicly on the details of security co-operation.

RUC (Shoot-to-Kill Allegations)

39. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to hold a judicial inquiry into the allegations of a shoot-to-kill policy by the Royal Ulster Constabulary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: These allegations have already been the subject of an exhaustive inquiry led first by John Stalker, deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester police and then by Colin Sampson, chief constable of West Yorkshire whose report was considered in full by the DPP(NI). There is not, and never has been, a so-called shoot-to-kill policy and I see no justification for a further inquiry.

Hazardous Waste

40. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much, by volume, toxic and other hazardous waste material passes through Northern Ireland en route from Eire to the mainland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In the 12 months to 31 May 1990, the weight of toxic and other hazardous waste material authorised for passage through Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland en route to disposal facilities in Great Britain was 2,386 tonnes. Although the volume of each consignment is not necessarily recorded, its weight is specified in the prescribed documentation.

Conservation

41. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to appoint a director of conservation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. We shall combine the functions of the conservation and environmental protection divisions of the Department of Environment Northern Ireland within an expanded directorate of environmental services. It will be headed by a new post at grade 4 level.

Two further senior appointments, at grade 5 and grade 6 level, will be made. A successor to the director of conservation, who retired on 11 June 1990, will be appointed as soon as possible. This will continue the process of enhancing the profile of conservation and environmental protection in Northern Ireland and of strengthening the resources directed to that end.

Human Rights

42. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the protection of human rights in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Cope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Ross).

Debt

44. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the average amount of debt per head of the adult population in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Cope: Information is not available in the form requested, but, according to a recent study undertaken by the Policy Studies Institute, the average amount of problem debt in 1989 was approximately £36 per head of the adult population. The PSI study defined a problem debt as a regular commitment, including a credit agreement or household commitment, which satisfied both the following conditions:

(a) respondents had fallen behind or failed to make a payment during the previous 12 months, and
(b) respondents were worried about the arrears or stated that making payments was a difficulty.

The figure therefore does not include all moneys owed; it does not cover credit agreements or household commitments where there is no problem making repayments.

Nurses

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the conversion courses available to nurses in Northern Ireland; if he will indicate commencement dates for each course and the number of places available annually; and what assistance has been given to the health boards in Northern Ireland by the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting.

Mr. Needham: Conversion courses, approved by the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting for Northern Ireland, are presently available at three colleges of nursing in Northern Ireland as follows:—

Name of College	Conversion to Part of the Register	Number of Intakes per annum	Number of Places available	Commencement Date	Length of Course
Northern Area	1	One	Minimum 12 Maximum 15	5 March 1990	Full-time course of 55 weeks duration minimum
Southern Area	1, 3 or 5	One	Minimum 8 Maximum 12	13 November 1989	Full-time course of 44 weeks duration minimum
Western Area	1 and 3	One	Minimum 6 Maximum 10	28 August 1988 Part 1 and 20 February 1989 Part 3	Full-time course of 48 weeks duration minimum

A proposal to provide a conversion course to part 6 of the professional register at the Eastern area college of nursing, Northside, is presently under consideration by the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting for Northern Ireland. If approved, this course will offer at least one intake of up to 20 students. It is hoped to introduce a second intake later this year. The Eastern area college of nursing, Southside, is presently developing a conversion course which is expected to be available early next year. It is also proposed to provide a conversion course to part 5 of the register at the Western area college of nursing in the near future.

Health and social services boards may second "second level nurses", previously referred to "state enrolled nurses", in their employment to the national board's colleges of nursing to undergo a period of further training for registration as a "first level nurse" or parts 1, 3 or 5 or the professional register. The health and social services boards liaise with the colleges of nursing about the numbers of nurses requiring training.

In addition to the traditional conversion courses available, there is also a proposal to enable conversion through an open learning inititative. This is being organised jointly by the Open university and an independent nursing publication and is scheduled for launch in October 1990. The Northern Ireland national board will be responsible for approving the open learning courses made available in the Province.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Flannery: To ask the Secretary of State for Northen Ireland what is the present status of the secretariat of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in Belfast.

Mr. Brooke: The secretariat services the Intergovernmental Conference and provides a useful channel of communication between the two Governments on issues of mutual concern under the agreement.

Road Fatalities

Dr. Twinn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on levels of road fatalities at the present time and in 1980.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Too many people are dying in crashes and collisions. In 1980, a total of 229 people died on the roads in Northern Ireland compared with 181 in 1989 and a provisional figure of 73 in the first five months of 1990.

These figures show an encouraging downward trend in road fatalities over the last 10 years. Much remains to be done if we are to achieve our target of a 30 per cent. reduction in fatalities by 31 October 1990.

The approaching summer months are frequently a time of high risk for road users. Sadly, children figure high amongst the victims. Looking forward to summer activities, drivers need to take extra care to ensure that our thoughtlessness does not lead to ruined holidays and wrecked lives.

Religious Education

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the religious education syllabus was last updated; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: There is no prescribed religious education syllabus in Northern Ireland, apart from those offered by recognised examining bodies. The recent Education Reform Order contains provision whereby the Department of Education may designate a "core syllabus" for religious education where such has been prepared and consulted upon by a drafting group. The main churches, in their capacity as trustees and transferors of schools, have been invited to collaborate in taking forward this task.

Beef

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he is able to estimate the value of beef traded between Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In 1989 exports of beef from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland had an estimated value of £67 million. Imports from the Republic were estimated at £8·3 million.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will make a further statement on the operation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Brooke: The Government remain committed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the principles it embodies, but would operate it sensitively in the interests of bringing about talks between the political parties. I remain willing to examine any proposals concerning the agreement, particularly if they are likely to command widespread support.

1020 CW68/36 Job 9-11

Republic of Ireland

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what subjects he expects to be raised at his next meeting with representatives of the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Brooke: I expect matters discussed at the next Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference to include the prospect for political development in Northern Ireland, cross-border security co-operation, arrangements for dealing with fugitive offenders, the Stevens report and cross-border economic and social co-operation.

Eye Tests

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will consider introducing proposals to remove charges for eyesight tests.

Mr. Needham: Children, those on low incomes, people with certain special medical needs and other vulnerable groups continue to be entitled to free health service sight tests. There are no plans to extend this entitlement.

Electricity

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met representatives of the Northern Ireland electricity board to discuss the provision of electricity.

Mr. Needham: I last met the chairman, the chief executive and other representatives of Northern Ireland Electricity on 7 November 1989.

DHSS Offices

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show for the years *(a)* 1969, *(b)* 1972, *(c)* 1979, *(d)* 1985 and *(e)* the current year for the month of April in each case the number of persons on his best estimate (i) unemployed and (ii) employed in the areas covered by the DHSS offices in (1) Londonderry, (2) Strabane, (3) Limavady, (4) Coleraine, and (5) Magherafelt.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 20 June 1990]:* Information is not available on the number of people employed by SSO area. Nor are records of the number of unemployed people held for longer than 10 years. However, the number of people registered as unemployed at these social security offices in April 1985 and April 1990 was as follows:

Social Security Office	*April 1985*	*April 1990*
Londonderry	9,840	8,231
Strabane	3,535	3,043
Limavady	2,240	1,895
Coleraine	3,647	3,228
Magherafelt	2,799	2,349

SOCIAL SECURITY

Community Charge Benefit

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much the poll tax rebate scheme would cost in Scotland in 1990-91 if everyone presently receiving an 80 per cent. rebate received a 100 per cent. rebate.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The estimated cost of increasing maximum community charge benefit for all benefit recipients in Scotland from 80 per cent. to 100 per cent. of the community charge set by the local authority would be about £80 million in 1990-91.

Source: Modelled using data drawn from the 1985-6-7 Family Expenditure Survey.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many retirement pensioners have ceased to be eligible for exemption from community charge benefit as a result of S.I. 1990, No. 142, introduced in April.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: None. As far as we are aware, the Companies Act 1989 (Commencement No. 2) Order 1990 did not affect retirement pensioners' entitlement to community charge benefit.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has issued any guidelines to local offices concerning disregarding mobility and attendance allowance when assessing eligible income for entitlement to community charge benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Local authorities are responsible for administering community charge benefit on a day-to-day basis, in accordance with the provisions in the Community Charge Benefit Regulations. The housing benefit and community charge benefit guidance manuals provide local authorities with guidance on how to disregard both mobility allowance and attendance allowance when assessing community charge benefit. Copies of both manuals are in the Library.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish figures showing the community charge in each London borough and with it the gross weekly income levels at which *(a)* single pensioners, *(b)* pensioner couples, *(c)* lone parents with one child under five years and *(d)* married couples with two children under 11 years lose entitlement to community charge benefit and/or family credit as appropriate.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 17 May 1990]:* The table shows the level of net income at which entitlement to community charge benefit or family credit is lost. Entitlement to all income-related benefits is determined by comparing net income with the relevant applicable amount. The relationship between net and gross income depends on the personal circumstances of the individual taxpayer; my right hon. Friend's question has therefore been answered by reference to net income alone.

Net income at which full community charge is payable

	Community charge	*Pensioners*	
		Single pensioner aged 60-74	*Couple aged 60-74*
Greater London			
City of London	288·00	74·69	131·20
Camden	534·00	99·85	181·52
Greenwich	408·00	86·96	155·75
Hackney	499·00	96·27	174·36
Hammersmith and Fulham	424·22	88·62	159·06
Islington	498·62	96·23	174·28
Kensington and Chelsea	380·15	84·12	150·05
Lambeth	547·89	101·27	184·36
Lewisham	297·00	75·61	133·04
Southwark	390·00	85·12	152·06
Tower Hamlets	297·00	75·61	133·04

	Community charge	Single pensioner aged 60-74	Couple aged 60-74
Wandsworth	149·59	60·53	102·88
Westminster	195·00	65·18	112·17
Barking and Dagenham	280·00	73·87	129·56
Barnet	338·00	79·81	141·43
Bexley	280·00	73·87	129·56
Brent	498·00	96·17	174·16
Bromley	283·00	74·18	130·18
Croydon	287·00	74·59	130·99
Ealing	435·00	89·73	161·27
Enfield	329·00	78·88	139·59
Haringey	572·89	103·83	189·48
Harrow	322·00	78·17	138·15
Havering	350·00	81·03	143·88
Hillingdon	366·91	82·76	147·34
Hounslow	396·00	85·74	153·29
Kingston-upon-Thames	345·07	80·53	142·87
Merton	279·74	73·85	129·51
Newham	449·00	91·16	164·13
Redbridge	290·00	74·90	131·61
Richmond-upon-Thames	395·00	85·64	153·09
Sutton	381·00	84·20	150·22
Waltham Forest	438·00	90·03	161·88

Net Income at which Entitlement to Family Credit Runs Out
Lone parent with one child under 5 £120·60
Married couple with two children under 11 £132·38
Note: Excludes Child Benefit and One Parent Benefit.

Net Income at which Full Community Charge is Payable
Working Families

	Community Charge	Couple two children under 11	Lone parent one child under 5
	£	£	£
Greater London			
City of London	288·00	155·30	107·29
Camden	534·00	205·62	132·45
Greenwich	408·00	179·85	119·56
Hackney	499·00	198·46	128·87
Hammersmith and Fulham	424·22	183·16	121·22
Islington	498·62	198·38	128·83
Kensington and Chelsea	380·15	174·15	116·72
Lambeth	547·89	208·46	133·87
Lewisham	297·00	157·14	108·21
Southwark	390·00	176·16	117·72
Tower Hamlets	297·00	157·14	108·21
Wandsworth	149·59	126·98	93·13
Westminster	195·00	136·27	97·78
Barking and Dagenham	280·00	153·66	106·47
Barnet	338·00	165·53	112·41
Bexley	280·00	153·66	106·47
Brent	498·00	198·26	128·77
Bromley	283·00	154·28	106·78
Croydon	287·00	155·09	107·19
Ealing	435·00	185·37	122·33
Enfield	329·00	163·69	111·48
Haringey	572·89	213·58	136·43
Harrow	322·00	162·25	110·77
Havering	350·00	167·98	113·63
Hillingdon	366·91	171·44	115·36
Hounslow	396·00	177·39	118·34
Kingston-upon-Thames	345·07	166·97	113·13
Merton	279·74	153·61	106·45
Newham	449·00	188·23	123·76
Redbridge	290·00	155·71	107·50
Richmond-upon-Thames	395·00	177·19	118·24
Sutton	381·00	174·32	116·80
Waltham Forest	438·00	185·98	122·63

Note: Net income includes net earnings, Child Benefit, any One Parent Benefit and Family Credit.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much he estimates it would cost his Department to abolish the 20 per cent. contribution to the community charge presently being paid by claimants on income support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* The estimated cost in terms of community charge benefit of increasing the maximum benefit, for income support recipients alone, from 80 to 100 per cent. of the community charge set by the local authority is about £330 million in 1990-91.

Source: Modelled using data drawn from the 1985-6-7 Family Expenditure Survey.

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what estimate he has made of the cost of granting married couples the equivalent joint income and savings limit for community charge rebate purposes as would be available to two individual adults.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 June 1990]:* The estimated cost for community charge benefit of granting to all couples (i) a personal allowance double the single person's personal allowance for the income-related benefits and (ii) lower and upper savings limits double the current limits of £3,000 and £16,000 respectively is around £230 million in 1990-91.

Source: Modelled using data drawn from the 1985-6-7 Family Expenditure Survey.

Retired Women

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the number of women over retirement age; and what number are in receipt of means-tested benefits.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In mid-1988 there were about 6·7 million women aged 60 or over in Great Britain. Of these an estimated 2·8 million were in receipt of an income-related benefit. The estimate relates to all women aged 60 or over including those who are the partners of claimants.

Retirement Pension

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what proportion of average net male earnings the retirement pension is in 1988-90; and if he will provide an estimate for 1990-91 for a single person and a couple.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is set out in the table. The figures are not yet available to provide a 1990-91 estimate.

Basic State Pension as a percentage of average net male earnings

Uprating date	*Male manual workers*		*All males*	
	Single	*Couple*	*Single*	*Couple*
April 1988	28·4	43·3	23·5	36·2
April 1989	27·7	42·4	22·8	35·1

Source:
Abstract of statistics for index of retail prices, average earnings, social security benefits and contributions. DSS August 1989.
Employment Gazette, DE.

Management Consultants

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the studies conducted inside his Department by management consultants over the last 10 years, naming the consultancy, the cost, the subject and the outcome in each instance.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Details of the studies conducted from 1986-87 are shown in the tables. The costs of individual studies are not given, as that could breach commercial confidentiality. Information on the outcome of studies is not collected centrally, and this and information on studies prior to 1986-87 could be provided only at disproportionate cost. As the studies prior to April 1989 were undertaken on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Security, some do not relate solely to social security matters.

1986-87

Consultancy Firm and Subject of the Assignment

Arthur Young
Planning Support to DS Division

Cooper and Lybrand
Unit Costs at NFCO

Coopers and Lybrand
Activity Sampling in Social Security Offices

Ernst and Whinney
Study of Private and Voluntary Residential Accommodation

Ernst and Whinney
Consultants for Audit and Computer Work

Hay MSL
Internal Talent Scrutiny Evaluation Programme

Institute of Manpower Studies
Staffing Implications of Social Security Review

Logica
Research into Forms

MMM Consultancy Group
Leaflets Unit Canons Park

PA Consulting Services
Whole Unit Concept

PA Consulting Services
Management Information Systems for Regional Directorate

Pactel
Joint DHSS/Post Office Study of Payment Methods

PHH Ltd.
Transport Fleet Management and Information System

R. H. Rawlinson
Pensions Consultant to Social Security Policy Division

Research Associates
Survey of Employers Reactions to Design of National Insurance Contribution Tables

Research Surveys of GB Ltd.
Social Security Communications Strategy

Sir G. Mosely
Review of Senior Open Structure

Social and Community Planning Research
Communications in HQ

Wolff Olins Ltd.
Social Security Communications Strategy

1987-88

Consultancy Firm and Subject of the Assignment

Arthur Young
Review of Forecasting, Planning and Control Systems for Local Office Network

Arthur Young
Whole Unit Concept: Internal Staffing Factors

Cocking and Drury
Operational Strategy—Implementation

Coopers and Lybrand
Regional Organisation Scrutiny

DEGW
Accommodation Study for Occupation of Richmond Yard

Delgat
Regional Organisation Scrutiny

Enator
Review of Forecasting, Planning and Control Systems for Local Office Network

Ernst and Whinney
Computer Audit Consultancy

Gallup
Regional Organisation Scrutiny

Institute of Manpower Studies
Manpower Management Model

Institute of Manpower Studies
Proteus

Linklaters and Paines
Personal Pension Scheme Model Rules

Logica
Regional Organisation Scrutiny

Logica
Aggregate Performance Indicators

PA Consulting Services
Whole Unit Concept

PA Consulting Services
DHSS Information and IT—Framework Study

Peat Marwick McLintock
Review of Forecasting, Planning and Control Systems for Local Office Network

Price Waterhouse
Financial Controls

Richmond Associates
Consultancy on Accommodation

Rowe and Maw
Personal Pension Scheme Model Rules

Sigma
Regional Organisation Study

Social and Community Planning Research
Headquarters Communication Project

Systems Design
Review of Forecasting, Planning and Control Systems for Local Office Network

Touche Ross
Recovery of Benefits from Tort Damage Awards

1988-89

Consultancy Firm and Subject of the Assignment

Arthur Young
Performance Based Systems

Arthur Young
Integrated Complementing System

Arthur Young
Efficiency Scrutiny of Fraud: Consultancy Support

Arthur Young
Quality Assurance Package for Social Security Offices

Brook Carmichael
North West Region Accommodation

Cavendish Tricorne
Overbearing Model

Coopers and Lybrand
Regional Organisation Scrutiny (Follow Up)

Coopers and Lybrand
DSS Agency Study

D. E. Bernard
DHSS printing and Publications

Enator
Performance Based Systems

Enator
Integrated Complementing System

Gallup
Staff Attitude Survey in Headquarters

INI Systems
OSD Manpower Model

INI Systems
Operational Strategy: Manpower Planning

Hoskyns Group PLC
Information Centre for Social Security

Jones Lang Wootton
Regional Organisation Scrutiny (Follow Up)

Logica
Regional Organisation Scrutiny (Follow Up)

M. N. & P. E. Pickett
Accommodation Policy

Oxford Centre for Management Studies
Workload Experiment

PA Consulting Services
Whole Unit Concept

PA Consulting Services
Framework Study for Information and IT

PA Consulting Services Ltd.
Future Rewards Strategy

Peat Marwick McLintock
Scrutiny of Overseas Branch and Study of Conts/ Compliance: Analysis of Questionnaires

Peat Marwick McLintock
Performance Based Systems

Peat Marwick McLintock
Integrated Complementing System

Platt White
North West Region Accommodation

Price Waterhouse
Integrated Complementing System

1988-89

Consultancy Firm and Subject of the Assignment

Price Waterhouse
Integrated Complementing System—Management Group

Price Waterhouse
Financial Controls

Price Waterhouse
Career Development

Richmond Associates
North West Region Accommodation

Rowe and Maw
Model Rules for Guaranteed Minimum Pensions in Occupational Pensions Schemes

Slaughter and May
Model Rules for Guaranteed Minimum Pensions in Occupational Pensions Schemes

Systems Designers plc
Review of Forecasting. Planning and Control Systems for Local Office Network Field Trials

Task Force
Monitoring Income Support

Touche Ross
Performance Based Systems

Touche Ross
Recovery of Social Security Benefits from Tort Damage Awards

Touche Ross
Financial Information Strategy Study

Touche Ross
Integrated Complementing System

1989-90

Consultancy Firm and Subject of the Assignment

Andersen Consulting
Contributions Unit (Agency) Project

Andersen Consulting
Director of Social Security's Central Unit (DSSO/CU)

Andersen Consulting
Agency Planning for the Information Technology Services Directorate (ITSD)

Andersen Consulting
Agency Implementation for ITSA

Andersen Consulting
Senior Management Information Systems

Andersen Consulting
Executive Reporting System for the Board of Benefits Agency

Applied Learning
Establishment of an Open Learning Centre for ITSD

Arthur Allwright Associates
DPSD Purchasing Consultancy

Arthur Young
Integrated Complementing System

Arthur Young
Efficiency Scrutiny of Fraud: Consultancy Support

BDO Binder Hamlyn
Central Accounting System Study

CAS Marketing Services
DPSD Purchasing Consultancy (Engagement of New Director)

Cavendish Tricorne
Local Pay Addition Hazard

Cavendish Tricorne
Overbearing Model

Cavendish Tricorne
Local Pay Addition Model

Cavendish Tricorne
Secondment on various projects

Central Computer and Telecommmunications Agency
Departmental Information Systems Strategy—Scoping Study

Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte
Social Security Agency Study: Future Work

Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte
Senior Management Structure—Organisational Analysis and Design

Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte
Purchasing Information System

Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte
Property Consultancy for HQ Relocation

Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte
Benefit Agency Implementation Team—Development of Project Timetable. Critical Path and Monitoring

D. Chislett
Review of Computer Security

Dun and Bradstreet
DPSD Ad Hoc Purchasing Consultancies

Easymove
Provision of Advice on Information Guides for Staff

Enator
Integrated Complementing System

Ernst and Young
Lone Parenthood Consultancy

Ernst and Young
Departmental Debt Scrutiny

Ernst and Young
Integrated Complementating System

Handley Walker
Post Office Counters—Fee Negotiation

King's Fund College
Director of Social Security's Central Unit (DSSO/CU)

Kinsley Lord
Social Security Policy Group Consultancy

Korn Ferry International
Benefits Agency Chief Executive—Consultancy to Assist Selection

Lloyd Northover
Corporate Image and House Style for DSS Property

Logica UK Ltd.
Integrated Monitoring System

M. Pickett
Accommodation Policy

Modulus
Consultancy Support for the Staff Suggestions Working Party

MORI Human Resource Research
Headquarters Relocation Preference Exercise

Nationwide Anglia Relocation
General Relocation Services for Staff

PA Consulting Group
Review of Management Formula

PA Consulting Group
Enhancement of the MMD-BMD Data Base at Nottingham Staff Resource Unit

PA Consulting Group
Pay Flexibilities for the Benefit Agency

PA Consulting Group
Review of Central Office Management

PA Consulting Group
Pay Arrangements for ITSA

PA Consulting Group
Reward Arrangements for the Benefits Agency

Peat Marwick McLintock
Centralised Receipts Collection System

Peat Marwick McLintock
Efficiency Scrutiny of Management of the Departmental Debt—consultancy support

P-E Inbucon
Survey of Local Authorities (Preparations for Community Charge Benefit)

Price Waterhouse
Administrative Resource Management System

Price Waterhouse
Integrated Complementing System

Price Waterhouse
Future Career Development for Staff within ITSD/ITSA

Price Waterhouse
Forecasting Social Security Expenditure

Price Waterhouse
Financial Planning and Control

Price Waterhouse
Performance Measurements for ITSA and CUIT

Professor Geoffrey Woodroofe
DPSD Purchasing Consultancy (Post Office Counters Fee)

Purchasing and Supply Consultants
DPSD Ad Hoc Purchasing Consultancies

Sema Group
Consultancy Support for Integrated Complementing System Project

Simmons Relocation Services
Advice on Relocation Package

The McNeil Robertson Partnership
Departmental Personnel Management (DPM) Survey

Touche Ross
Adminstrative Resource Management System (Phase 1)

Touche Ross
Integrated Complementing System

Touche Ross
Finance Information Strategy

Touche Ross
Benefit Agency Implementation Work (MIS and Finance)

Touche Ross
Patterns of Business Study

Touche Ross
Adminstrative Resource Management System (Phase 2)

Widowed Mother's Allowance

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many women who receive widowed mother's allowance also receive income support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available figures show that at May 1988[1] some 6,000 women getting widowed mother's allowance—approximately 8 per cent of the total —were in receipt of income support.

[1] *Source:* annual statistical inquiry, May 1988

Local Offices (Visits)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many visits were made by his Department's local office staff to *(a)* retirement pensioners, *(b)* families, *(c)* young people and *(d)* single people in (1) Leeds, West, (2) West Yorkshire and (3) England in each year from 1979 to 1990.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information about visits is not held in the form required. The table records total numbers of benefit visits made since 1985 by (1) Leeds West local offices, (2) West Yorkshire local offices, and (3) local offices in England and Wales.

Year ending March	*Leeds West local office*	*West Yorkshire*	*England and Wales*
1985	6,464	104,564	2,535,148
1986	5,171	91,326	1,988,934
1987	2,141	54,775	1,351,712
1988	1,655	41,576	1,058,051
1989	1,616	34,676	870,642
1990	1,774	33,493	911,046

Income Support

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many claimants in Scotland have had deductions made from their income support for payment of the poll tax each month since it was introduced; how many have had deductions in each case of 5 per cent. of their personal allowance as *(a)* single persons and *(b)* married couples; and how many in each case had deductions of their income support for other reasons as well.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The most recent count of income support cases in Scotland with a community charge deduction, completed in May 1990, identified a total of 2,434 with deductions in place. The further information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Carr: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the income support live load cases for his Department's offices covering Sefton, Knowsley and St. Helens, for the years 1979 and 1990.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information from 1979 is unavailable. The information for May 1990 is as follows:

Area	*Number of Income Support claimants*[1]
Sefton	30,214
Knowsley	30,484
St. Helens	16,005

[1] 100 per cent. count of cases in action which include a number where payment has ceased but other action is continuing. Data are provisional and subject to amendment.

Disability Allowance

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will give his estimate of the number of people with mental illness who will benefit from the new lower mobility component of the proposed disability allowance;

(2) if he will give estimates of the number of people with severe mental handicap, with moderate mental handicap and with mild mental handicap who will benefit from the new lower mobility component of the disability allowance; and what are the criteria used to define these groups.

Mr. Scott: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) on 9 February at column *800*.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the basis of his estimate of 150,000 disabled people being entitled to the new lower level of the mobility component of the proposed disability allowance.

Mr. Scott: The estimate which has to be regarded as tentative was derived by examining data from the OPCS surveys of disability to identify the number of people in the relevant age group whose responses to the survey questions indicated they were not independently mobile and did not otherwise fulfil the current criteria for mobility allowance.

Income-related Benefits

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what plans he has to increase the £3,000 disregard on capital in assessing entitlements to income-related benefits;

(2) what plans he has to revise regulations relating to assumed tariff income from capital;

(3) what plans he has to increase from £250 the amount of capital assumed to yield an income of £1 per week in calculating entitlement to income-related benefits.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We have no plans for changing capital rules beyond those announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget statement, but, of course, all such issues are considered periodically.

Minister for the Disabled

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he is considering any change in the title of the Minister for the Disabled; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I am pleased to announce that with effect from today, my departmental title will be "Minister for Social Security and Disabled People".

I have become increasingly aware of the concerns expressed both by people with disabilities and the

organisations which represent them about the use of the term "the disabled". I believe that the new ministerial title will be more appropriate.

Fraud

Mr. Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to publish the results of the efficiency scrutiny of social security fraud; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I have today placed a copy of the report in the Library.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Employment and I have carefully considered the recommendations contained in the report. On the major organisational issue raised by the report we have considered that it would not be right to establish a unified fraud investigation agency separate from the normal benefit administration of either Department. In our view action on fraud must be seen as an integral part of each Department's overall responsibilities to ensure that benefits go to those properly entitled to them. All benefits staff need to be alert to the risk of fraud and those investigating it need to understand the detail of benefits and be able to work in close co-operation with staff delivering them.

Instead, we propose to adopt the alternative approach recommended by the report, reorganising fraud resources within DSS into sector teams and reaching a liaison agreement between the two Departments to strengthen co-operation between them in preventing and detecting fraud.

A number of the report's other recommendations will also be implemented, with particular emphasis on those which seek to increase efficiency and effectiveness and to improve the monitoring of performance. Officials of the two Departments will prepare a joint action plan with a view to having the new organisational arrangements in place by the end of the year.

Industrial Deafness

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many civil servants within his Department deal with industrial deafness cases; and if this number is expected to increase in expectation of individuals who are now eligible for benefits after the abolition of the five-year rule governing claims for industrial deafness benefit.

Mr. Scott: It is not possible to identify the number of staff currently engaged on industrial deafness cases as this type of work is dealt with alongside wider disablement benefits work. In the light of the additional claims and applications for review received so far following the Court of Appeal decision on the five-year rule for occupational deafness, we consider that these can be accommodated within existing local office resources.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many individuals who have been rejected for claims as a result of the five-year rule governing claims for industrial deafness benefit have now been notified of the recent change as a result of the ruling by the Law Lords in October 1989.

Mr. Scott: None.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many individuals who suffer from industrial deafness have reapplied for benefits now that the five-year restriction has been removed; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many people who were previously denied benefits under the former five-year rule governing claims for industrial deafness benefit have reapplied since the ruling of the Law Lords in October 1989 on good cause grounds.

Mr. Scott: This information is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security why his Department has excluded the glass industry from its list of recommended industries for claims for industrial deafness.

Mr. Scott: The list of prescribed occupations for industrial deafness is based on recommendations by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council. The council has made no specific recommendations concerning the glass industry.

Local Offices

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many offices providing public access for the purpose of claiming benefit, including unemployment benefit, were in operation in Great Britain on 1 April.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The total number of offices giving public access for the purpose of claiming benefits in operation on 1 April was 1,825. These figures can be broken down as follows.

	Number
Integrated Social Security Local Offices	432
National Insurance Offices (Contributory Benefits only)	22
Area Offices (Income Support and Social Fund only)	19
District Offices	1
Branch Offices	4
Full-time Caller Offices	67
Part-time Caller Offices	176
Unemployment Benefit Offices	764
Unemployment Benefit Offices (sharing premises with Job Centres)	209
Employment Service integrated offices (combining Unemployment Benefit Offices and Job Centres)	131
Total	1,825

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many integrated local offices were in operation on 1 April this year.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: On 1 April there were 432 integrated local offices in operation.

Benefits

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 11 June, *Official Report*, columns *52-53* relating to social security benefits, if he will specify the further information that is required by his Department in order to enable it to provide an answer to the question.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Entitlement to income-related benefits can be established only once certain, quite precise, personal details are known.

Even if the value of benefit in respect of housing costs were excluded, information would still be required to enable an assessment to be made of what additional requirements each beneficiary may have received under the supplementary benefit scheme, for example, the exact ages of claimant, partner and children, their state of health and whether this meant they had to follow any special diet, needed extra baths or wore out their clothing unusually quickly, what laundry facilities were available and the size and condition of the accommodation. This list is by no means exhaustive but serves to illustrate the complexities of the old scheme and the intrusive questioning necessary to determine entitlement.

Further information would also be required to determine whether each individual satisfied the conditions for the receipt of other social security benefits such as attendance allowance, mobility allowance, retirement pension, and unemployment benefit and, if so, at what level.

Debt Recovery

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer on 11 June, *Official Report*, column *53*, what action has resulted from the efficiency scrutiny on the recovery of money owed to the Department; and whether he will place a copy of the scrutiny report in the Library.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Following completion of the scrutiny, officials have been preparing a draft action plan for consideration. When final decisions have been taken we shall announce them and also decide what supporting material should be published.

Resettlement Units

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his best estimate of the value of the existing resettlement units.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: There are 22 resettlement units throughout Great Britain. Two of the units are leasehold and one is owned by a health authority. From 1 April 1990 all the properties, except the one owned by the health authority became part of the Department of Social Security departmental estate under the aegis of the Resettlement Agency which has directed responsibility. Valuation of 12 units has been undertaken by the PSA. The value of those units at 1988 prices was just under £9 million.

Benefit Entitlement

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will set out the basis of calculation under the income support and housing benefit regulations which produced the result that the claimant who was the subject of commissioner's decision CIS/236/1989 was £2·49 per week worse off as a result of the £2·82 increase in her pension in April 1989; in how many cases similar losses have occurred; and whether he will amend the regulations to restore the total benefit entitlement in such cases retrospectively.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* Prior to the uprating in April 1989, the claimant concerned was in receipt of retirement pension in excess of the appropriate income support level. But income support was payable in the form of a transitional addition of £1·49, to protect the value of the claimant's total benefit income at April 1988 on the introduction of income support. This addition entitled the claimant to maximum housing benefit that is rent and rates rebates of 100 per cent. and 80 per cent. respectively. After meeting the net liability for housing costs of £0·70 a week, the claimant's disposable income was £48·23 for each week in which rent was due.

The increase in retirement pension of £2·82 a week in April 1989 more than overtook the need for the transitional addition of £1·49. The claimant was no longer entitled to income support, the transitional addition, or maximum housing benefit. As income was in excess of the appropriate level, the rent and rates rebates were reduced by 65p and 15p respectively for every pound above the level. After meeting liability for housing costs of £4·62 a week, the claimant's disposable income was £45·64 for each week in which rent was due.

It is estimated that some 30,000 people on income support receiving a transitional addition lost entitlement to maximum housing benefit in a similar way in April 1989. But an estimated 95 per cent. of all those floated off maximum housing benefit at the uprating—some 550,000—gained or were no worse off. The transitional additions were intended as a temporary cushion in April 1988. We have no plans to reinstate them in this situation.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 22 June 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Nursery Nurses

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many Nursery Nurses Education Board graduates there have been in each of the last 10 years;

(2) how many graduates there have been in B.Tec nursery nursing.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested is not available centrally.

Teacher Training

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what support his Department is giving to the in-service training of teachers of children with severe learning difficulties and the national curriculum.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department is making grants available through the local education authority training grants scheme to support some £70 million expenditure on training related to the national curriculum in 1990-91. The Department has made it clear, in guidance to local education authorities, that all aspects of training in the basic curriculum should apply to pupils with special educational needs. The scheme is also supporting over £2·2 million expenditure on specialist training in severe learning difficulties, which may also include aspects of national curriculum training.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students have graduated from the initial teacher training course at Westhill college, specialising in training to work with children with severe learning difficulties, in the last five years.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Numbers of students graduating from the initial teacher training course at Westhill college, specialising in training to work with children with severe learning difficulties, in the last five years are shown in the table. Related figures for in-service provision in this area are also shown.

Academic Year	*4 year BEd*	*Full-time (1 year) In-service*[1]	*Part-time (2 year) In-service*[2]
1989-90	18	11	0
1988-89	18	17	0
1987-88	22	9	3
1986-87	21	10	4
1985-86	19	13	9

Notes:

[1] The last entry to the four year primary BEd with a major subject option in mental handicap was in September 1987 and the final cohort of students will graduate in 1991.

[2] The college offered a diploma in special education (mental handicap) prior to September 1987 and a B. Phil. Ed. in severe learning difficulties after this date.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has for initial teacher training and the education of children with severe learning difficulties.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Initial training in this field is now provided mainly through long in-service courses, which are eligible for support at the higher rate of grant under the local education authority training grants scheme. We are currently reviewing the way in which this and other areas of training in special educational needs are organised and funded, with a view of establishing whether the effectiveness of the current arrangements could be improved. The outcomes of this review will not be determined until later in the year.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many bachelor of education graduates had specialist training in work with children with special educational needs in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Alan Howarth: All initial teacher training courses have been required since 1984 to include training in the recognition of children with special educational needs and strategies for developing all children's potential. Training for specialist teachers of children with special educational needs is now provided through post-experience training.

The following table shows the numbers of students recruited to bachelor of education courses which provided specialist training for teachers of children with special educational needs from 1983 until 1987, the last year in which such courses recruited.

Entrants to bachelor of education special needs courses 1983 to 1987

Year	*Students*
1983	56
1984	56
1985	41
1986	43
1987	48

Source: Department of Education and Science survey of recruitment to initial teacher training.

City Technology Colleges

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) in respect of each city technology college what amount of annual per capita grant he has agreed to pay for the financial year beginning in September 1991; what unit of cost per pupil has been used in calculating the amount of annual per capital grant; how this unit cost has been determined; and what enhancement of annual per capita grant has been allowed under the terms of paragraph 11 of the model funding agreement;

(2) what amount of earmarked annual grant he has agreed to pay in the financial year beginning in September 1991; and for what purpose each element of earmarked annual grant has been approved.

Mrs. Rumbold: The level of recurrent expenditure for city technology colleges for the academic year beginning September 1991 has not yet been agreed.

Creches

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what sources of external funding are available to support nursery, creche and playcare

schemes held at education establishments attended by numbers of women returners and retainees; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department does not collect information on the extent to which employers or others support the provision of child-care facilities at educational institutions.

REPLAN, funded jointly by the Department and the Welsh Office to promote educational opportunities for the adult unemployed, last year carried out a survey of childcare provision in institutions of higher education. I am placing copies in the Library.

Under the education support grants scheme administered by the Department, expenditure totalling £2 million will be available to local education authorities in each of the years 1990-91 and 1991-92 to support the development of measures to increase the recruitment of former teachers and mature entrants to teaching. These measures may include the provision of creche and other child-care facilities, as well as more flexible working practices. Out of 45 successful bids supported, 17 LEAs will receive funding for child-care initiatives amounting to nearly £150,000.

I am sure that employers will wish to explore every avenue when considering ways to encourage women back into the work-force, including the possibilities of co-operating with educational institutions in the provision of child-care facilities.

Haberdashers' Aske's CTC

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will initiate consultations, similar to those for the proposed city technology colleges at Derby, Telford and Wandsworth, with relevant local education authorities, local schools and other interested parties on the pupil numbers and catchment area proposed for the Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college in Deptford.

Mrs. Rumbold: The consultation on "Securing the Future of the Schools" undertaken by the then governing body of the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham girls' and boys' schools in July 1988 provided an opportunity for interested parties to consider three options, including that of establishing a city technology college (CTC). A majority of parents of pupils at the schools voted for the option of a CTC opening in September 1991.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what catchment area and pupil numbers are proposed for the Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college; and what additional measures will be taken to ensure that admissions to the college focus on pupils drawn from the disadvantaged parts of its catchment area;

(2) if he will consider imposing a condition on the Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college that a minimum proportion of its pupils should be drawn from the areas of the Deptford and North Peckham inner city task forces and other disadvantaged parts of its catchment area.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is for the Haberdashers' Aske's city technology college trust, when established, to submit proposals to my right hon. Friend relating to pupil numbers and catchment area. None has so far been submitted and my right hon. Friend would not wish to anticipate his response.

Anglia Institute

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to make an announcement as to whether the Anglia institute is to be granted polytechnic status; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The chairman of the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) wrote to my right hon. Friend on 13 June with the council's advice on the designation of new polytechnics. In his letter he indicated that the council had deferred consideration of the case submitted to it by Anglia higher education college pending accreditation of the college by the CNAA, which is one of the criteria established for designation as a polytechnic. My right hon. Friend will respond to the PCFC advice as soon as possible.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

World Population (United Nations Report)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he received the United Nations report, "The State of the World Population 1990".

Mrs. Chalker: The Overseas Development Administration received an advance copy of the UNFPA report on 10 May and attended the UNFPA's executive director's press conference to launch the report in London on 14 May.

We welcome the report and strongly support the urgent need for reduction in global population growth rates. Population will continue to be a priority issue in Britain's aid programme. Our spending on activities directly related to population concerns has increased from £6·5 million in 1981 to over £17 million in 1989. We are considering ways of increasing this assistance, but much depends on the willingness of recipient Governments to give population concerns a high priority in their own spending and action plans.

TRANSPORT

London Underground (Passenger Safety)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what new plans he has to improve the safety of women and other passengers on London Underground; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: London Underground Ltd is currently implementing a programme of new measures to improve passenger security with the aid of a £15 million Government grant. These measures, include trained staff with radios; help-point booths; passenger talkback alarms; closed-circuit television; safe waiting areas; and mirrors and improved lighting in passageways. They have been introduced at selected stations on the Northern and Central lines and at Oxford Circus station, in order to assess their effectiveness, and are now being installed at stations between Hammersmith and Paddington on the Metropolitan line. London Underground Ltd is also considering additional anti-crime features, such as the use of closed-circuit television in carriages. The new generation of rolling stock, now on order, incorporates a

number of security features, including alarms allowing communication with the driver, and greater visibility between carriages.

MV Derbyshire

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from relatives of those who died on the MV Derbyshire, following the publication of the wreck commissioner's inquiry into the ship's loss.

Mr. McLoughlin: The report of the court of formal investigation into the loss of MV Derbyshire was published on 15 January 1990. Since that date I have received one written representation from a relative of one of those lost in the Derbyshire tragedy.

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence he has received concerning the sinking of the MV Derbyshire since the conclusion of the inquiry of the commissioner for wrecks.

Mr. McLoughlin: I have received no fresh evidence concerning the sinking of the MV Derbyshire since the court of formal investigation concluded in March 1988.

Roll on/Roll off Ferries

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the specialist sub-committee on stability matters to report to the maritime safety committee of the International Maritime Organisation on the adoption of a higher standard of residual stability for existing roll on/roll off ferries; and whether he intends to take any action to impose higher standards of residual stability on existing roll on/roll off ferries using British ports in the meantime.

Mr. McLoughlin: The specialist sub-committee has been requested to report back to the maritime safety committee in May 1991.

In addition, a number of European Ministers for Maritime Affairs have been invited to send their officials to a meeting in London on the 24 July. The aim of this meeting will be to obtain European agreement on the application and timing of a higher standard of residual stability to existing roll on/roll off passenger ferries.

ENERGY

Energy Saving

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he is taking to substantially reduce energy consumption.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Government's policy is to promote improvements in energy efficiency through the programmes of the Energy Efficiency Office and by other means.

Nuclear Energy (Joint Ventures)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what role the United Kingdom plays in providing expertise and information in support of the joint venture programme, the international nuclear event scale project, by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's nuclear energy agency.

Mr. Baldry: The United Kingdom has played a key role in the establishment of the international event scale (INES). This scale was developed under the joint auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the OECD's Nuclear Energy Agency by an international committee chaired by a United Kingdom expert from Nuclear Electric. All operators of the United Kingdom's civil nuclear installations have been consulted throughout the development of the scale.

The United Kingdom has agreed to participate in a trial period of application of INES which will begin this autumn and will last for around 12 months. When in full use, INES will provide a means for promptly communicating to the public, in consistent terms, the safety significance of events reported at nuclear power plants. By putting events into proper perspective, the scale can facilitate a common understanding between participating countries, the nuclear industry, the media and the public. It should significantly reduce the risk of misunderstandings and help to pre-empt speculation in the media and elsewhere.

I am arranging for further details of the scale to be placed in the Library of the House.

Redundant Mineworkers Pension Scheme

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the inquiries of complaints he has had in each month over the last two years on behalf of redundant miners who are unable to transfer their pension in the redundant mineworkers pension scheme because of the cut-off date; what were the sources of the complaints in each case; and what consideration he is now giving to a review of the position.

Mr. Baldry: Ministers in this Department have received six letters from right hon. and hon. Members and six letters from mineworkers and ex-mineworkers on this subject. The transfer of accrued pension entitlement prior to 1 January 1986 is a matter for the trustees of the pension schemes concerned.

Nuclear Safeguards

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he received a copy of the 1989 safeguards implementation report of the International Atomic Energy Agency; and if he will make a statement on its implications for his Department's current policies.

Mr. Baldry: My officials received a copy of the IAEA's safeguards implementation report in May. The agency concluded that the nuclear material under its safeguards in 1989 remained in peaceful nuclear activities. There are no new implications for the policies of my Department arising from the report. A summary of the report will be contained in the agency's 1989 annual report, which will be placed in the Library of the House when it becomes available.

International Atomic Energy Agency

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he intends to table at the 34th regular session of the International Atomic Energy Agency general conference to be held in Vienna on 17 to 21 September; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The United Kingdom delegation will play a full and active role in the International Atomic Energy Agency's 34th general conference. However, in the light of the provisional agenda, I do not expect any new initiatives to be launched.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce his decision on flotation of the generating boards by *(a)* placing *(b)* tender or *(c)* general sale to the public.

Mr. Baldry: Decisions have yet to be taken on the precise structure of the sale of National Power and PowerGen. I announced on 28 February that the sale would take place in February 1991 subject to market conditions.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce what proportion of the shares of the electricity *(a)* distribution and *(b)* generating companies will be sold to (i) United Kingdom, (ii) other European community and (iii) foreign investors and institutions.

Mr. Baldry: Decisions have yet to be taken on the precise structure of the sale of the 12 regional electricity companies, National Power and PowerGen. These will be determined by a number of factors, notably market conditions, nearer the time of the sales.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what estimate he has made of the savings in public expenditure resulting from placing of the shares in the electricity supply industry companies.

Mr. Baldry: The cost to the taxpayer of privatising the electricity supply industry is being kept to the minimum commensurate with maximising the proceeds from the sales and achieving a successful privatisation. No final decisions have yet been made on the structure of the offers.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the total cost of the advertising budget to publicise the privatisation of *(a)* the electricity distribution companies and *(b)* the generating companies, in 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Mr. Baldry: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 1 May and 6 June 1990.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the name of the advertising agency that has been commissioned to publicise the privatisation of the electricity generating companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: A number of advertising agencies have been invited to apply for the job of providing the pre-flotation advertising campaign for the privatisation of the generating companies. An announcement will be made when the decision on the appointment has been made.

DEFENCE

Lavington Research Establishment

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to investigate allegations that secrets related to the latest generation of weapons were missing from the research establishment at Lavington, Wiltshire; if he will indicate the nature of the weapons involved; what progress has been made in the investigation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: I am aware of a recent newspaper article which contained such an allegation. However, while I can confirm that an Army warrant officer serving at West Lavington was arrested last September and charged with the theft of official documents; these concerned equipment which has been in service for many years. Ministry of Defence police investigations of this matter have now been concluded.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research contracts his Department has with the research establishment at Lavington, Wiltshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: None. The proof and experimental establishment at Lavington is part of the Ministry of Defence.

Service Personnel (Security)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the cost of providing an allowance to armed forces personnel towards the cost of installation of bullet-proof glass in their personal cars; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All proposals, including the installation of bullet-proof glass, are considered in relation to the threat and their cost-effectiveness. It is not our policy to divulge the details of our security precautions.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what advice is offered to armed forces personnel on personal security when off duty.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We have a comprehensive security education programme aimed at reducing the security risk to all service personnel and Ministry of Defence-employed civilians. The intention is to provide sensible and practical advice in a number of different formats (for example, videos and lectures). The type of advice provided includes the need to avoid clothing or luggage which could identify an individual as a member of the services; the importance of checking vehicles for bombs and booby traps and the need to be aware of the danger of any unnecessary gathering in a group in a public place. The central message of the programme is that personal awareness is the key to security.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has assessed the potential security risk of the Royal British Legion selling mailing lists of ex-service men and women.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence has no responsibility for the Royal British Legion. However, the Royal British Legion has sought and accepted the Department's advice on the security arrangements for its mailing lists.

Cruise Missiles

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the role of United States Navy Tomahawk nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles in employment plans for NATO theatre nuclear forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The details of NATO's operational plans are classified.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if his Department is participating in NATO action to examine how to integrate the use of United States Navy Tomahawk nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles into NATO theatre nuclear force targeting, command, control and employment plans; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if his Department is participating in the development of a military concept of operations for the use of United States Navy Tomahawk nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles in support of NATO military operations.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No, the examination of the potential contribution of sea-launched cruise missiles to European security is principally a matter for NATO and United States authorities.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement concerning progress by NATO in developing concepts of military operations for the employment of United States Navy Tomahawk nuclear sea-launch cruise missiles in conjunction with dual, nuclear/conventional weapon, capable aircraft.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Since 1984, the United States has deployed nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) on United States naval vessels as an integral part of its worldwide deterrent forces. In 1988 NATO Defence Ministers instigated, as part of a larger force restructuring programme, an examination of the potential contribution of SLCMs to European security.

With this remit, United States and NATO military authorities are continuing to develop the necessary arrangements that would permit the United States to make SLCMs available to NATO in wartime.

RAF Shackletons

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will deposit in the Library the reports or summaries of the reports of the completed boards of inquiry into the crash of RAF Shackletons since the end of 1967.

Mr. Neubert: The decision that military aircraft accident summaries would be published following service boards of inquiry into major military aircraft accidents was announced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chertsey and Walton (Sir G. Pattie) on 15 January 1980 at column *686*. There are no such summaries for accidents occurring before that date and, as my right hon. Friend made clear, the proceedings of service boards of inquiry are, and must remain, privileged.

There have been three major aircraft accidents involving RAF Shackleton aircraft since the end of 1967, two before 1980 (on 1 and 19 April 1968 respectively) and one on 30 April this year. A military aircraft accident summary in respect of this last accident will be published and a copy placed in the Libraries of both Houses as soon as it is available.

Armaments Depot, Beith

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civilian and military personnel have been employed at the royal naval armaments depot, Beith, in each year since 1979.

Mr. Neubert: No military personnel are employed at the royal naval armaments depot, Beith. The figures for civilian personnel employed over the past 10 years are shown in the table:

	Personnel
1981	537
1982	523
1983	506
1984	523
1985	496
1986	511
1987	444
1988	469
1989	499
1990	563

Information prior to 1981 is not available.

Deal Explosion

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he now proposes to make available the conclusions of the inquiry into the explosion at Deal on 22 September 1989; and what is the reason for the delay.

Mr. Neubert: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Stoney Castle Ranges

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department first initiated action to establish the status of access across Ministry of Defence land at Stoney Castle ranges, Pirbright, for the illegal tipping of waste.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My Department first initiated action to establish the status of the access across Ministry of Defence land at Stoney Castle ranges, Pirbright, on 6 March 1987.

Defence Exports

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of total visible exports was accounted for by defence exports for each year since 1985.

Mr. Alan Clark: Taking account of some defence goods which are not readily identifiable as such in the Customs tariff, it is estimated that United Kingdom exports of defence equipment have fluctuated around an average of 3 to 4 per cent. of total visible exports during the period from 1985. Because of changes in the coverage of the statistics, it is not possible to give a consistent annual series of figures over the period.

Mooring Buoys, Loch Linnhe

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the function of the mooring buoys located in Loch Linnhe, off Onich; who paid for their installation; who pays for their upkeep; and what use has been made of them in the past 10 years.

Mr. McLoughlin: I have been asked to reply as these moorings are the responsibility of the Department of Transport. They form one of a number of sets of moorings maintained by the Department for emergency use. The cost of installation and maintenance is met by the Department. These moorings have not been required for emergency use over the past 10 years but have occasionally been hired out for short-term use by private barge operators.

EMPLOYMENT

Action for Jobs

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much of the total expenditure on the action for jobs campaign in 1988-89 was spent on outdoor advertising.

Mr. Eggar: A total of £63,000 was spent on outdoor advertising on the action for jobs campaign in 1988-89.

Employment Training

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is his estimate of the number of parents unable to accept employment training because of inability to pay for nursery, creche or play care for their children while undertaking employment training.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what help he provides for parents taking employment training to place their children in nursery, creche or play care schemes or assistance in meeting the costs of placing their children in private schemes.

Mr. Nicholls: Lone parents participating in assessment or training in ET are entitled to receive the costs of caring for children under 16. They can train on a part-time basis if full-time child care facilities are not available. Training providers are encouraged to help parents generally, for example by offering creche facilities, flexible hours of training and distance learning materials.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he hopes to reply to the letter dated 14 May from the hon. Member for South Hams concerning Mr. Paul Hill of Furzehill, Moult road, Salcombe, Devon, and Mrs. Jean Rolfe of South Africa.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 19 June.

Birmingham Prison

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the extent of the shortages of shirts, pants, socks, shoes and towels discovered at Birmingham prison during the special stocktaking in March.

Mr. Mellor: The shortages were as follows:

Item	*Scale holding for population of 960*[1]	*Actual holding*	*Shortfall March 1990*
Shirts	9,600	6,474	3,126
Pants	6,720	1,858	4,862
Socks	9,600	1,910	7,690
Shoes	1,680	1,008	672
Towels	5,760	2,777	2,983

[1] The scales provide for articles actually in inmates' possession, in the laundry and in store awaiting laundering or issue.

Following the stocktaking substantial additional supplies were issued to the prison, and new control procedures were introduced to ensure that the issue and re-issue of clothing to prisoners is carefully monitored in future.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his investigations into the evidence supplied to him by Advocates for Animals regarding experiments carried out by Professor Feldberg and John Stean.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Government have considered the recommendations in the report on the National Institute for Medical Research by Advocates for Animals, a copy of which has been sent to him; and whether there are any plans to implement their proposals.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The matters raised in this document are being studied and a report has been made to the Animal Procedures Committee. The Medical Research Council has set up an inquiry, which is expected to report in December.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many scientists licensed to carry out animal experiments under the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 are aged *(a)* 65 to 70, *(b)* 70 to 75, *(c)* 75 to 80, *(d)* 80 to 85 and *(e)* 85 to 90 years.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information is as follows: *(a)* 65 to 69, 69 *(b)* 70 to 74, 24 *(c)* 75 to 79, 15 *(d)* 80 to 85, four. There are no licences over 85.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inspectors of the animals (scientific procedures) inspectorate are currently in post; how many inspections they carried out in the past 12 months; and how many laboratories are registered for animal experimentation by his Department.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: This information is published annually in the "Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals" (1988, Cm 743). Information for 1989 will be published in July. A total of 375 places are designated as scientific procedure establishments under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

Policing, London

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish in the *Official Report* a borough-by-borough breakdown of the Metropolitan police precept and the standard policing costs in each of the same boroughs.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The precept for Metropolitan police purposes is £112·79 per head of relevant population on the community charge registers maintained by each charging authority within the Metropolitan police district. Information on policing costs in each of the boroughs is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Mirza Sabir Hussain

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when a decision is to be taken on the application for British citizenship made by Mr. Mirza Sabir Hussain (Ref: IMP H257707/5); and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Mr. Hussain's application was approved on 11 May. A letter about the remaining formalities was sent to him on 16 May but to an address from which it was subsequently realised he had moved. A further letter to his new address was sent on 21 June.

Juvenile Offenders

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list any circulars and advice documents he has circulated on the subject of cautioning juvenile offenders during the last five years.

Mr. John Patten: Home Office circular 14/1985 is the only one about cautioning which has been issued in this period. It is soon to be superseded by new guidance.

Independent Television

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to meet the chairman of the IBA to discuss movements in the ownership of equity in companies which hold current independent television franchises.

Mr. Mellor: We have frequent meetings with the chairman of the IBA, at which a wide range of broadcasting policy questions are discussed. But it is for the IBA, and not Government, to operate the ownership provisions in section 20 of the Broadcasting Act 1981.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give for *(a)* 1974, *(b)* 1979 and *(c)* the latest available year (i) the number of crimes reported in each police force area in England and Wales, (ii) the number reported as cleared up, (iii) the number which were reported as cleared up as a result of other offences taken into consideration, (iv) the percentage cleared up in each of the three years and (v) the percentage which was reported as cleared up as a result of offences taken into consideration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The information requested on the total number of crimes recorded and cleared up is published annually in tables 2.4, 2.18 and 2.19 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales", copies of which are available in the Library. The latest information on crimes cleared up by being taken into consideration is for 1989 and is given in the table:

England and Wales 1989

Police force area	*Crimes cleared up by TIC*	
	Number	*Percentage*
Avon and Somerset	5,617	6
Bedfordshire	3,381	8
Cambridgeshire	3,272	9
Cheshire	3,900	9
Cleveland	2,918	5
Cumbria	2,505	9
Derbyshire	2,885	6
Devon and Cornwall	4,060	5
Dorset	2,893	7
Durham	1,262	3
Essex	3,417	5
Gloucestershire	3,181	9
Greater Manchester	13,779	5
Hampshire	5,477	6
Hertfordshire	4,119	10
Humberside	4,870	6
Kent	4,017	5
Lancashire	5,064	7
Leicestershire	4,326	8
Lincolnshire	3,250	9
London, City of	61	1
Merseyside	3,649	3
Metropolitan police district	8,255	1
Norfolk	3,181	7
Northamptonshire	2,493	7
Northumbria	6,851	4
North Yorkshire	1,758	5
Nottinghamshire	8,357	8
South Yorkshire	4,499	5
Staffordshire	3,361	6
Suffolk	905	3
Surrey	1,665	5
Sussex	3,877	5
Thames Valley	9,048	8
Warwickshire	1,367	5
West Mercia	2,581	5
West Midlands	8,534	4
West Yorkshire	6,721	4
Wiltshire	1,187	4
Dyfed-Powys	140	1
Gwent	766	3
North Wales	2,189	7
South Wales	2,007	2
England and Wales	167,645	5

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the average number of crimes directly apprehended by each police officer in each police force in England and Wales in *(a)* 1974, *(b)* 1979 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The available information on crimes cleared up by the primary means of charge, summons and caution is given in the table. The equivalent information is not available for 1974 and 1979.

Number of crimes cleared up by charge/summons/caution per police officer England and Wales 1989

Police force area	Number
Avon and Somerset	7
Bedfordshire	9
Cambridgeshire	7
Cheshire	7
Cleveland	10
Cumbria	8
Derbyshire	6
Devon and Cornwall	7
Dorset	8
Durham	9
Essex	5
Gloucestershire	6
Greater Manchester	7
Hampshire	7
Hertfordshire	8
Humberside	10
Kent	6
Lancashire	6
Leicestershire	7
Lincolnshire	7
London, City of	2
Merseyside	5
Metropolitan Police District	4
Norfolk	8
Northamptonshire	7
Northumbria	9
North Yorkshire	6
Nottinghamshire	11
South Yorkshire	8
Staffordshire	8
Suffolk	10
Surrey	5
Sussex	6
Thames Valley	6
Warwickshire	6
West Mercia	7
West Midlands	6
West Yorkshire	7
Wiltshire	8
Dyfed-Powys	7
Gwent	11
North Wales	8
South Wales	9
ENGLAND AND WALES	6

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average number of arrests per year in *(a)* 1974, *(b)* 1979 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available for each police officer in each police force in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 11 June 1990]:* The available information is for 1979 and 1989 and relates to arrests for all types of offence. Figures are given in the table:

Number of arrests per police officer by police force area England and Wales 1989

Police force area	Number of arrests per police officer 1979	1989
Avon and Somerset	10	13
Bedfordshire	15	13
Cambridgeshire	14	14
Cheshire	10	13
Cleveland	16	17
Cumbria	10	16
Derbyshire	9	13
Devon and Cornwall	7	11
Dorset	9	13
Durham	10	19
Essex	10	14
Gloucestershire	9	23
Greater Manchester	13	17
Hampshire	14	20
Hertfordshire	11	14
Humberside	14	18
Kent	12	16
Lancashire	11	17
Leicestershire	12	14
Lincolnshire	10	15
London, City of	4	6
Merseyside	13	13
Metropolitan Police District	15	[1]—
Norfolk	6	14
Northamptonshire	14	15
Northumbria	17	18
North Yorkshire	7	13
Nottinghamshire	13	18
South Yorkshire	14	14
Staffordshire	12	17
Suffolk	10	11
Surrey	11	12
Sussex	11	13
Thames Valley	13	16
Warwickshire	6	13
West Mercia	11	14
West Midlands	12	17
West Yorkshire	11	15
Wiltshire	7	12
Dyfed-Powys	7	13
Gwent	14	17
North Wales	7	15
South Wales	9	17
England and Wales[2]	12	15

[1] The total number of arrests in 1989 is not available but the number of arrests for notifiable offences in 1989 in the MPD was 4 per police officer.

[2] Excluding MPD.

Child Sex Abuse

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress his Department has made since March 1989 on reducing re-offending by child sex abusers and identifying predicting factors.

Mr. John Patten: *[holding answer 18 June 1990]:* A number of initiatives have been put in hand since March 1989.

A working group has been established to review existing arrangements for the treatment of sex offenders in prison service establishments and consider ways in which they can be developed and better co-ordinated, with the object of reducing the likelihood of re-offending upon release. The aim of the group is to co-ordinate and develop

better arrangements for the care and treatment of sex offenders in custody to reduce the likelihood of re-offending after release.

Her Majesty's inspectorate of probation is currently undertaking an inspection of the probation service's treatment of sex offenders. Its report should be available later this year. This will give a much clearer idea of the range of existing programmes and will contribute to decisions on how best to develop the supervision and treatment of sex offenders in the community.

The proposals in the White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" (Cm. 965) for the supervision by the probation service of offenders following their release from custody are aimed at reducing re-offending. The probation service has a key role to play in making offenders, including sex offenders, face up to what they have done; this is often the first step in preventing further offences.

The Home Office contributes to the work of the inter departmental group on child abuse and a sub-group on working with offenders has recently been established so that the various Departments can develop a framework for a strategic central approach.

On the question of predicting factors, the Institute of Psychiatry has been carrying out a study of sex offenders in prisons. The purpose of the study is to try to identify factors in sex offenders' histories which appear to distinguish them from other types of offender and non-offender populations and which may help in making decisions about which types of sexual offender are likely to benefit from treatment and which may not. The institute is also carrying out a study of convicted rapists. The purpose of the study is to describe the offenders and their offences in detail and to assess their treatment needs.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Iraq

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much of the £100 million arrears of Iraqi debt is underwritten by the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

Mr. Redwood: It has been the policy of successive Governments not to publish the details of ECGD's exposure on individual markets for reasons of commercial confidentiality, but it is no secret that there are some payments overdue as far as Iraq is concerned.

Internal Market Council

Mr. Irvine: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Internal Market Council on Wednesday 20 June.

Mr. Redwood: I attended the Internal Market Council in Luxembourg on 20 June. A series of decisions was reached in the insurance sector. Ministers agreed a common position on the life insurance services directive which confirmed the political agreement of last December. This will allow the measure to go before the European Parliament again under the co-operation procedure. A common position was reached on the motor insurance services directive, enabling insurers to sell motor insurance across borders to consumers in other member states, though subject to a number of restrictions. A progress report was also made on the insurance accounts directive, the entry into force of which will partially determine the full application of the motor services directive. Agreement in principle, subject to the opinion of the European Parliament, was reached on a measure permitting the Commission to grant a block exemption from article 85 of the treaty of Rome (prohibition of restricted agreements) for certain kinds of insurance agreement.

Common positions were reached on two company law directives. The first relates to small and medium-sized enterprises, and the second will improve transparency in disclosures made by certain types of partnership, especially GMBH and Co KG in Germany. It will not affect ordinary United Kingdom partnerships.

A common position was reached on a regulation on Community transit which will ease the movement of Community goods across internal frontiers post-1992. A further 11 measures in the area of customs procedures and industrial standards were adopted without discussion.

Progress reports were made on trans-European networks, biotechnological inventions and recognition of vocational training and education, and further work was discussed in the area of food irradiation. Further consideration on the use of certain dangerous substances was postponed until the next Internal Market Council.

Three measures concerning rights of residence for economically inactive persons were agreed subject to the view of the Danish Folketing.

Holiday Accommodation (Safety)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to ensure that United Kingdom tour operators carry out proper safety checks on holiday accommodation offered to United Kingdom citizens.

Mr. Forth: In the event of injury, United Kingdom citizens might be able, in the absence of adequate safety checks by tour operators in certain circumstances, to sue the tour operator in contract or in tort. In addition the recently strengthened ABTA code of practice and the EC package travel directive adopted on 13 June will extend the liabilities of those who organise package holidays. I understand that the United Kingdom travel industry is currently examining ways of ensuring adequate standards of holiday accommodation.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Funerals

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what guidance he gives to local offices on the cost criteria to be applied to funerals conducted at crematoria as against church funerals and as to what weight to give to these relative costs when asked to provide assistance with meeting these costs;

(2) what guidance his Department gives to local offices about the financing of church funerals when the deceased dies in a state of destitution.

Mr. Scott: None. Social fund funeral payments are made under regulations. Decisions on claims are taken by independant adjudication officers. The chief adjudication officer provides guidance to them in the adjudication officers' guide, a copy of which is in the Library.

Juvenile Offenders

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list any circulars and advice documents he has circulated on the subject of cautioning juvenile offenders during the last five years.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Within the last five years, as a result of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, all staff employed on fraud investigation duties have been issued with a copy of the code of practice for the treatment and questioning of persons. Additional instructions on dealing with young people are contained in the Department's fraud investigator's guide.

Social Fund

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the total number of (i) community care grants and (ii) loans from the social fund made in 1988-89 and 1989-90 broken down into pensioners, couples with children, lone parents, sick and disabled people and others.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 21 June 1990]:* The information available is set out in the table:

	1988-89 *Number of awards*		*1989-90* *Number of awards*	
	Loans	*Grants*	*Loans*	*Grants*
Pensioners	28,320	33,920	30,350	59,130
Lone parents (without disability premium)	278,390	36,600	380,160	58,390
Others with family premium[1]	140,280	18,240	171,690	25,100
Disabled[2]	65,190	22,920	45,330	38,440
Others[3]	369,280	40,740	403,120	48,890
Total	881,460	152,420	1,030,650	229,950

Note: Figures are rounded to nearest 10.
[1] Includes couples with children. It is not possible to identify separately this group.
[2] Applicants receiving a disability premium. It is not possible to identify applicants who are sick but not receiving a disability premium.
[3] Includes crisis loan payments to couples with children not in receipt of income support.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the proportion of pensioners, couples with children, lone parents, sick and disabled people and others on income support who received (i) community care grants and (ii) loans from the social fund in 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 21 June 1990]:* Information is not available on the number of individuals receiving an award in each client group. The available information set out in the table relates to the total number of awards made to the relevant client groups:

Number of awards expressed as a percentage of income support caseload for the relevant client group

	1988-89		*1989-90*	
	Loans *Per cent.*	*Grants* *Per cent.*	*Loans* *Per cent.*	*Grants* *Per cent.*
Pensioners	1·7	2·1	1·8	3·6
Lone parents (without disability premium)	37·3	4·9	50·9	7·8
Others with family premium[1]	27·4	3·6	34·4	5·0
Disabled[2]	22·8	8·0	14·6	12·4
Others[3]	28·2	3·4	29·1	3·8

[1] Includes couples with children. It is not possible to identify separately this group.
[2] Applicants receiving a disability premium. It is not possible to identify applicants who are sick but not receiving a disability premium.
[3] Includes crisis loan payments to couples with children not in receipt of income support.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Bailiffs

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Attorney-General how many bailiffs were employed in 1987, 1988 and 1989 and during the current year to date to enforce county court judgments.

The Attorney-General: All bailiffs as part of their duties enforce county court judgments. In 1987, 1988 and 1989 the number of bailiffs employed in the county courts was, respectively, 898, 930 and 921. For the current year the number of bailiffs employed is, at 20 June, 910.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Attorney-General what educational requirements are required from persons wishing to be employed as county court bailiffs; and what form of training they are given.

The Attorney-General: There are no educational qualifications required to be employed as a bailiff. Bailiffs are trained by their line managers at the court or group of courts where they are employed. This training is supplemented by a five day departmental procedural and job skills training course.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Attorney-General if he will publish in the *Official Report* the criteria needed to pass the Certificated Bailiffs Association examination.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor's Department is not responsible for the criteria needed to pass the Certificated Bailiffs Association examination. Under the Distress for Rent Rules 1988 those seeking certification must apply to a county court and are required to supply two references, one of which may be from the

applicant's employer or an approved officer of the Certificated Bailiffs Association of England and Wales, together with a certificated copy of the result of a serach of the register of county court judgments and confirmation that he is able to provide a security totalling £10,000.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Attorney-General how many county court bailiffs there are in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Northern Ireland.

The Attorney-General: The number of county court bailiffs employed in England and Wales is 839 and 71 respectively. There are no county court bailiffs in Northern Ireland. There is, however, an analogous post of enforcement officer and there are 16 officers in post at present.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Attorney-General how many bailiffs operating under section 7 of the Law of Distress Amendment Act 1888, certificated by a county court judge, are operating in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Northern Ireland.

The Attorney-General: There are currently 889 certificated bailiffs operating in England and 40 in Wales. There is no certificated bailiff system in Northern Ireland. The number of certificated bailiffs on the register maintained by the Lord Chancellor's Department does, however, frequently change as fresh applications for general certificates are granted by the county courts.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Attorney-General how many certificated bailiffs there are operating within the county courts in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Northern Ireland.

The Attorney-General: There are no certificated bailiffs operating within the county courts in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. All bailiffs operating within the county courts in England and Wales are employees of the Lord Chancellor's Department.

CIVIL SERVICE

Agencies

Mr. Andy Stewart: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what assessment he has made of the extent to which the objectives of the agency system are being fulfilled; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: The central aim of the "next steps" initiative is to improve management in the civil service, and so bring about lasting improvements in the quality and efficiency of Government services. Each agency is set clear targets covering both efficiency and quality of service, and the results so far show that these targets are being met. As I told the House on 2 April, we propose to publish annually, starting later this year, a general report on the initiative overall including summaries of developments and results in individual agencies.

Staff Secondments

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what interchange of staff there has been in the last 12 months between Government Departments and the business sector; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: As I announced on 23 May, *Official Report*, column *190-91*, we have had considerable success in increasing the interchange of staff between Government Departments and the business sector. In 1989, the latest period for which figures are available, there were 627 secondments lasting more than three months between the civil service and industrial or commercial organisations. This is 24 per cent. higher than in the previous year. There were also some 550 shorter-term secondments and increases in the attachments arranged under the Whitehall and industry and non-executive directorship schemes.

Details of these activities are included in my Department's report "Interchange of Staff between the Civil Service and Other Organisations—1989" which has been placed in the Library. This interchange is an essential ingredient in the fostering of greater understanding between Government and business. We hope to build further on the success of these arrangements in future years.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Tobacco

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* the proportion of the retail price of an average packet of cigarettes which is taken by public sector taxation in each of the European Economic Community member states and *(b)* the total revenue, in £ sterling at the latest convenient exchange rates, which each European Economic Community member state obtains from taxation on tobacco products.

Mr. Ryder:

(a) These figures show excise and VAT on 20 cigarettes in the most popular price category as at 18 June 1990[1]

Country	*RSP*[2]	*Factor cost*[3]	*Total duty*[4]	*VAT*[5]	*Total tax*	*Total tax as percentage of RSP*
	(pence)	*(pence)*	*(pence)*	*(pence)*	*(pence)*	
Belgium	114	32	76	6	82	72
Denmark	240	34	163	43	206	86
France	108	35	56	17	72	67
Germany	148	40	90	18	108	73
Greece	48	14	21	13	34	71
Ireland	187	50	102	35	136	73
Italy	90	25	51	14	66	72
Luxembourg	82	23	50	9	59	72
Netherlands	105	31	58	16	75	70
Portugal	60	15	36	9	45	75

Country	RSP[2] (pence)	Factor cost[3] (pence)	Total duty[4] (pence)	VAT[4] (pence)	Total tax (pence)	Total tax as percentage of RSP
Spain	34	14	16	4	19	59
United Kingdom	165	45	98	22	120	73

Notes:
[1] Rates of exchange as at 18 June 1990.
[2] Retail selling price.
[3] Cost exclusive of duty and VAT.
[4] Rounded to whole number.
Source: EC Excise Duty Tables.

(b) This information is not readily available.

VAT

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many representations he has received since 1979 calling for the abolition of value added tax on tampons and sanitary towels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The Government have received a number of such representations since 1979. There are no plans to zero rate sanitary products or other essential items of personal hygiene.

Gilts

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many gilts have been issued by the Treasury in the current financial year.

Mr. Ryder: The Government have issued no new stock so far this year.

Iraq

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what checks are used to ensure that consignments sent to Iraq described as milk powder are not explosives for military use; and what assessment he has made of the efficacy of these checks in recent shipments.

Mr. Ryder: Milk powder exported to Iraq is presently liable to monetary compensatory amounts (MCAs) which are export charges under the common agricultural policy (CAP) of the European Community. It may also be eligible for CAP export refunds. Customs and Excise regularly spot-checks and samples a proportion of such consignments as part of its normal responsibilities for the controls of CAP exports. Given the high level of CAP export refunds involved, Customs has in recent times given greater prominence to milk products in its sampling campaigns. This involves checks and sampling at premises where loading for export takes place. Customs also conducts spot checks on export freight generally for a variety of preventive purposes.

None of these checks has revealed the presence of explosives of any kind.

WALES

Suckler Cow Premium

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he intends to implement to increase the level of the suckler cow premium following the recent meeting of European Community Agriculture Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: My agriculture colleagues and I are considering the suckler cow premium rate for 1990-91 and will make an announcement as soon as possible.

Higher Education

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total number of students currently studying at each public sector higher education college in Wales; and how many of the students are normally resident in Wales, both in terms of total numbers and as a percentage of the main student body.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The information for the academic year 1988-89 is as follows:

	Students on higher education courses	Resident Welsh students[1] on higher education courses	Resident Welsh students as a percentage of HE students
The Polytechnic of Wales	5,897	3,183	54
South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education	3,452	2,426	70
Gwent College of Higher Education	3,365	2,657	79
North East Wales Institute of Higher Education	2,728	1,709	63
West Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education	2,659	2,131	80
Trinity College	643	443	69
Normal College of Higher Education	577	482	84
Carmarthen College of Technology and Art	353	314	89
College of Librarianship, Wales	314	48	15
Welsh College of Music and Drama	310	111	36
Bridgend College of Technology	209	208	100
Gwynedd Technical College	167	166	99
Llandrillo Technical College	157	127	81
Newport College of Further Education	98	91	93
Welsh Agricultural College	71	45	63
Pontypridd Technical College	64	64	100

	Students on higher education courses	Resident Welsh students[1] on higher education courses	Resident Welsh students as a percentage of HE students
Ebbw Vale College of Further Education	62	60	97
Pembrokeshire College of Further Education	56	56	100
Aberdare College of Further Education	48	48	100
Neath College	43	43	100
Merthyr Tydfil Technical College	13	13	100
Afan College	13	13	100
Crosskeys Tertiary College	8	8	100
Ceredigion College of Further Education	7	7	100
Total Wales	21,314	14,453	68

[1]Students whose home (grant-awarding) local authority is in Wales.

Juvenile Offenders

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list any circulars and advice documents he has circulated on the subject of cautioning juvenile offenders in Wales during the last five years.

Mr. David Hunt: "Handling Juvenile Crime in Wales" published in November 1986 and "Juvenile Crime in Wales" published in October 1989 both contain relevant information.

Children Act 1989

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he intends to implement the Children Act 1989 in Wales in whole or in phases.

Mr. Grist: Some minor provisions of the Children Act 1989 are already in force. We expect to implement all the remaining provisions in October 1991.

ENVIRONMENT

Research

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money was spent on research by his Department in 1988-89; and how much was allocated for expenditure in 1989-90.

Mr. Chris Patten: Full details of my Department's expenditure on research in 1988-89 and the financial provision for research in 1989-90 are given in the 1989 Cabinet Office review of Government funded research and development, copies of which are held in the Library of the House.

Environmental Audit

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to conduct an environmental audit of all civil service departments.

Mr. Trippier: The Government's environmental policies, including the implications for Government Departments, will be set out in the Environment White Paper, to be published in the autumn.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will call in a planning application over proposals by Leigh Environmental to build incinerators in Nash road, Trafford Park, Manchester, for the burning of chemical waste.

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will institute a public inquiry over plans to build two incinerators to process polychlorinated biphenyl chemicals in Nash road, Trafford Park, Manchester, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I have no present plans to do so. The planning application is still being examined by the local planning authority, Trafford Park urban development corporation.

Departmental Research (Expenditure)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total identifiable expenditure on research by his Department in each year since 1979; what proportion was awarded on a customer-contractor basis; and what proportion of his total departmental budget was expended on research for each year.

Mr. Chris Patten: Expenditure by my Department on research since 1979 is as follows:

	£ million
1979-80	33·4
1980-81	39·0
1981-82	35·8
1982-83	32·2
1983-84	31·5
1984-85	34·9
1985-86	41·4
1986-87	54·0
1987-88	56·1
1988-89	56·6

The proportion of this research commissioned on a customer-contractor basis was in excess of 97 per cent. for each of the above years. The proportion of my Department's total budget spent on research is as follows:

	Per cent.
1984-85	0·75
1985-86	0·98
1986-87	1·37
1987-88	1·48
1988-89	1·63

Homelessness

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has for dealing with the problem of people sleeping rough in London.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government are seriously concerned about people sleeping rough on the streets of London and other cities. The problem of rough sleeping in small but concentrated numbers is one that has begun to affect major cities throughout the western world. It has developed for complex reasons, involving in particular the break-up of families and other social ties.

This is placing substantial new pressures on hostel accommodation, especially in London, despite the Government's hostels initiative which has created nearly 25,000 hostel spaces throughout the country since 1981 and the availability in London of 23,000 hostel spaces. Most hostel dwellers in the past have moved on to ordinary accommodation in the private sector, and will continue to do so. We are already encouraging householders to offer lodgings and we have put a number of new policies in place to help revitalise the private rented sector. We are considering what further initiatives to take in this field.

In addition, I am announcing today that we are bringing forward a special programme of resources to provide additional subsidised accommodation for single homeless people. This will take the form of direct access accommodation for people on the streets, and of "move-on" accommodation to provide longer-term housing for people in hostels.

We will allocate £15 million for these new initiatives in the present financial year; the provision of resources for future years will be discussed in the public expenditure survey process in the next few months. Effective use of these new resources requires close co-operation between a number of Government Departments and other agencies. Police officers working on the streets will point those sleeping rough towards the new accommodation being made available.

The success of the strategy also depends very much on the co-operation of the voluntary bodies active in dealing with single homeless people and on co-operation with housing associations and the local authorities. We have had informal preliminary discussions with the voluntary groups and we will now talk to them and to the London boroughs urgently about the provision of both direct access and "move-on" accommodation. It is essential that we should ensure that any additional accommodation provided is well directed and meets acceptable standards, but that we do not create a magnet to attract more people into sleeping rough.

We also intend to discuss with the voluntary groups concerned the possibility of establishing a special fund to enable people living in hostels to get over the first hurdle of finding a deposit to gain access to rented accommodation. I hope that we will be able to secure the co-operation of voluntary groups in providing more counselling for people who have been sleeping on the streets. I hope, too, that it will be possible to enlist the support of the private sector in providing advice and support to help single homeless people to obtain jobs, making full use of the range of employment services and training provision which can be made available.

Those resources are additional to the allocation of £250 million that we have provided for local authorities and housing associations to house homeless families this year and next and to this year's programme of £2 million for voluntary bodies which provide advice and practical help to homeless and potentially homeless people. These special programmes in turn supplement £3 billion a year support for local authority housing revenue accounts and a programme of expenditure on housing associations which is rising over the next two years to almost £1·7 billion a year.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health is announcing a separate initiative today. It is designed to address the particular needs of young people who are sleeping rough or might be tempted to do so. He will also announce soon an initiative to help homeless mentally ill people.

The Government are determined that there should be no excuse for sleeping out on the streets. Emergency accommodation will be made available. Sleeping rough is unacceptable. It is unhealthy and often dangerous. We must see an end to the concentrations of people sleeping out in city centres.

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many professional staff are currently employed by the drinking water inspectorate.

Mr. Trippier: The complement of the drinking water inspectorate is 23 posts, of which 16 will be held by professional staff. Currently, eight professional staff are employed in the inspectorate, including two on secondment from the Water Research Centre. Recruitment of other professional staff is in progress.

Migrating Birds (Italy)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what efforts he is making to strengthen EEC regulations on the slaughter of migrating birds in Italy.

Mr. Trippier: Member states are already required to protect migratory birds by EC directive 79/409 EEC on the conservation of wild birds. It is the responsibility of the EC Commission to ensure that effective measures have been taken to comply with the terms of the directive.

Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each local authority the voluntary organisations in receipt of funds from his Department; and if he will make a statement concerning his policy towards the funding of such groups.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer of 5 June to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley)—*Official Report*, column *481*—in which I provided a complete list of organisations and persons in receipt of direct grants from my Department in 1989-90 and the size of each grant. Many of those organisations are national rather than local. For local organisations information broken down by local authority area is not readily available.

My policy towards the funding of voluntary groups follows the line set out by my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, on 4 April 1990, *Official Report*, column *639*, when he announced publication of the report of the efficiency scrutiny of Government funding of the voluntary sector.

Natural History Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the implication for research relating to the development of policies on the environment of the reduction of the Aculeate Hymonoptera section of the natural history museum.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 19 June 1990]*: None. My Department is not responsible for the development of policies on stinging insects.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Armenia

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by what means he travelled to and from Armenia during his recent visit to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I flew privately with Sir Jeffrey Sterling, one of the sponsors of the Lord Byron school.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Energy Consumption

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will give the expenditure during 1988-89 on solid fuels and liquid fuels of the buildings occupied by the Privy Council Office and the consumption of solid fuels in tonnes and of liquid fuels in litres.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Privy Council incurred no expenditure during 1988-89 on solid fuels and liquid fuels.

SCOTLAND

Railways

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the grants paid and the projects or rolling stock grant-aided by him to British Rail since 1968, at outturn prices.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There was none.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Brian Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action is taken against livestock producers who send cattle suffering from bovine spongiform encephalopathy for slaughter without declaration of the disease.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Bovine spongiform encephalopathy is a progressive disease of cattle which was made notifiable under the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (No. 2) Order 1988 and failure to notify the divisional veterinary officer is an offence against the Animal Health Act 1981. However, there is at present no blood or other tissue test available for detecting the disease in the live animal; a presumption that the disease may be present can therefore only be made on the basis of clinical symptoms as observed. Confirmation can be made only after slaughter on the basis of analysis of brain tissue.

Stress appears to cause exacerbation of clinical symptoms in some animals, particularly, for example, if transported. In some cases, therefore, it is possible that little or no evidence of the disease may be apparent on the farm and the disease may not be recognised until after transportation and arrival at the abattoir.

The question of whether a prosecution should be undertaken in such cases must be decided in the light of the individual circumstances relating to the case.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland in how many cases bovine spongiform encephalopathy has been identified *(a)* on farms and *(b)* in abattoirs in Scotland, in each of the past six months.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The number of cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy identified on farms in Scotland between 8 December 1989 and 8 June 1990 is 230.

The requirement separately to record cases found in abattoirs was introduced on 1 February 1990 and since that time four cases have been reported.

Transport Grant

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of all section 56 grants paid to Strathclyde regional council, or Greater Glasgow passenger transport authority or executive since its creation at out-turn prices, including the nature of the infrastructure works or the numbers of electric units grant-aided on each occasion.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested on section 56 grants is set out in the table:

Project details	*Section 56 grant (out-turn prices) £ million*	*Period*
Modernisation of Glasgow underground including signalling and 33 new sets of Electrical Multiple Units (EMUs)	32·0	1974-75 to 1980-81
Clyderail—re-opening, electrification, signalling and 16 new sets of EMUs	27·2	1974-75 to 1987-88
EMU Life Extension—modernatisation of 50 EMU sets	14·2	1983-84 to 1987-88
Ayrshire Electrification—modification/modernisation of 11 EMUs and purchase of 9 new EMU sets	10·3	1985-86 to 1986-87
Ardrossan/Largs Electrification—purchase of 1 new EMU set	0·7	1987-88
New Rolling Stock—purchase of 22 new sets of EMUs and 14 new sets of Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs)	[1]18·8	1988-89 to 1989-90

[1] A further £10·5 million is still to be paid.

Geriatric Day Hospitals

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the numbers of geriatric day hospitals in Scotland, their location and the numbers of patients seen annually by each.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There were 68 day hospitals—that is, day care facilities—with geriatric day patients attending in the year ending 31 March 1990. These hospitals are listed in the table together with the numbers of new patients attending. Information on the number of patients seen annually is not available centrally.

New day patients in geriatric day care facilities year ending March 1990 (provisional)

Hospital	*Number of new patients*
Argyll and Clyde	
Calton Hospital, Campbeltown	[1]0
Dalintart Hospital, Oban	28
Dunoon and District General Hospital, Dunoon	36
Braeholm Hospital, Helensburgh	3
Dumbarton Joint Hospital, Dumbarton	116
Vale of Leven District General Hospital, Alexandria	179
Victoria Infirmary, Helenburgh	3
Ravenscraig Hospital, Greenock	252
Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley	97
Health Board Total	714
Ayrshire and Arran	
Ayrshire Central and Maternity Hospital, Irvine	117
Kirklandside Hospital, Kilmarnock	45
Brooksby House Hospital, Largs	1
Holmhead Hospital, Cumnock	40
Davidson Cottage Hospital, Girvan	20
Biggart Hospital, Prestwick	221
Health Board Total	444
Borders	
Knoll Hospital, Duns	33
Drumlanrig Hospital, Hawick	[1]0
Inch Hospital, Kelso	75
Hay Lodge Hospital, Peebles	26
Borders General Hospital, Melrose	188
Health Board Total	322
Dumfries and Galloway	
Castle Douglas and District Hospital, Castle Douglas	2
Nithbank Hospital, Dumfries	25
Thomas Hope Hospital, Langholm	8
Lochmaben Hospital, Lockerbie	4
Moffat Cottage Hospital, Moffat	10
Newton Stewart Hospital, Newton Stewart	12
Dalrymple Hospital, Stranraer	12
Thornhill Hospital, Thornhill	14
Annan Hospital, Annan	26
Health Board Total	13
Fife	
Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy	126
Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital, Buckhaven	92
Glenrothes Hospital, Glenrothes	105
West Fife District General Hospital, Dunfermline	180
Health Board Total	503
Forth Valley	
Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary, Falkirk	286
Bonnybridge Hospital, Bonnybridge	94
Orchard House Hospital, Stirling	498
Health Board Total	878
Grampian Health Board	
Woodend General Hospital, Aberdeen	642
Health Board Total	642
Greater Glasgow	
Lightburn Hospital, Glasgow	554
Lenzie Hospital, Kirkintilloch	170
Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow	78
Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow	275
Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow	351
Southern General Hospital, Glasgow	275
Blawarthill Hospital, Glasgow	222
Drumchapel Hospital, Glasgow	190
Knightswood Hospital, Glasgow	228
Health Board Total	2,343
Highland	
Dunbar Hospital, Thurso	3
Caithness General Hospital, Wick	8
Lawson Memorial Hospital, Golspie	22
Migdale Hospital, Bonar Bridge	1
County Hospital, Invergordon	107
Health Board Total	141
Lanarkshire	
Coathill Hospital, Coatbridge	469
Red Deer Day Centre/Hospital, East Kilbride	193
Health Board Total	662
Lothian	
Eastern General Hospital, Edinburgh	153
East Fortune Hospital, North Berwick	181
Royal Victoria Hospital, Edinburgh	166
City Hospital, Edinburgh	538
Southfield Hospital, Edinburgh	180
Bangour General Hospital, by Broxburn	235
St. Michael's, Linlithgow	3
Whitburn Day Hospital, Whitburn	114
Health Board Total	1,570
Tayside	
Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee	430
Perth Royal Infirmary, Perth	81
Aberfeldy Cottage Hospital, Aberfeldy	3
Irvine Memorial Hospital, Pitlochry	9
Blairgowrie Cottage Hospital, Blairgowrie	17
Stracathro Hospital, by Brechin	23
Health Board Total	563
Western Isles	
Lochmaddy Hospital, North Uist	[1]0
Health Board Total	[1]0

[1] There are geriatric day patient attendances for all day care facilities listed, although some may not have new patients during the year.

Schools, Angus

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money was spent on running costs for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Angus.

Mr. Lang: The information on expenditure provided to my Department by education authorities is not broken down to district level.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money has been spent on funding school boards in Angus's primary and secondary schools; and on what basis the allocation of funds was made.

Mr. Lang: Information for the first year of the school board system will be contained in local financial returns for 1989-90 which we expect from authorities in the autumn. The returns do not break down information to district level.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the poll tax of each official residence of Cabinet Ministers; and who is the responsible person.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The only ministerial residence in Scotland is Bute house in Edinburgh. Lothian region's community charge registration officer has determined that, with the exception of the caretaker's flat in the basement, the property is non-domestic in nature and is therefore subject to non-domestic rates. There is therefore no responsible person except in respect of the caretaker's flat.

Sheriff Officers

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many sheriff officers there are in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The number of commissions issued by sheriffs principal authorising individuals to act as sheriff officers was 191 on 1 January 1990, the latest date for which figures are available centrally.

Aquagard

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the findings of research carried out by scientists of his Department on the effects of Aquagard sea lice treatment.

Mr. Lang: Scientists of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland's marine laboratory have carried out the following studies on the use and the effects of dichlorvos (the active ingredient of Aquagard).

1. Toxicity of dichlorvos to larvae of the common lobster (*Homarus gammarus* L.) and herring (*Clupea harengus* L.).
2. Comparative toxicity of dichlorvos to marine invertebrates.
3. Toxicity of dichlorvos to stage 4 *Homarus gammarus* larvae.
4. Effects of repeated short exposures to dichlorvos on lobster larvae.
5. Effects of dichlorvos treatment at fish farms upon lobster larvae and mussels maintained in cages.
6. Survey of invertebrate communities in the vicinity of salmon farm cages in Scottish west coast sea lochs.
7. Toxicity of insecticides to larvae of the common lobster (*Homarus gammarus* L.).
8. Fate of dichlorvos (DDVP) in sea water following treatment for salmon louse *Lepeophtheirus salmonis* infestation in Scottish fish farms.

I have arranged for copies of reports on these studies to be placed in the Library and they will also be made available as Scottish fisheries working papers.

Toxic Waste (Scottish Ports)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the Scottish ports that received toxic waste in 1987, 1988 and 1989 respectively; and what was the quantity of such waste imported, the composition of the waste and the country of origin and ultimate destination of the waste.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 21 June 1990]:* There is no requirement under the legislation on waste disposal for specific ports to be registered for imports. Returns made by Scottish local authorities indicate that the total amounts of waste imported into Scotland in 1987 and 1988 were as follows:

Country of origin	*Amount (tonnes)*	*Destination (District Council)*	*Nature of waste*
1987			
Holland	15	Strathkelvin	Sub-soil
1988			
Sweden	2	Inverness	Sodium metal
Eire	451	Edinburgh	Solvent and contaminated methylated spirits (for recycling)

Information is not yet available for 1989.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he hopes to reply to the letter dated 24 May from the hon. Member for South Hams concerning South Devon Shellfisherman Ltd. and gear losses; and if he will meet the hon. Secretary of South Devon Shellfisherman Ltd. with the hon. Member for South Hams.

Mr. Curry: I shall be writing to my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams shortly.

Quota Hopping

Mr. Harris: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on measures to deal with quota hopping.

Mr. Curry: The Government are firmly committed to the view that quotas allocated to this country under the 1983 agreement on the common fisheries policy should be for the benefit of British fishing communities. The measures that we have taken to deal with the problem of quota hopping uphold the common fisheries policy and its essential components—national quotas and relative stability.

The action that we have taken to seek to ensure that the quota system operates for the benefit of the genuine United Kingdom fishing fleet has been on two fronts. First, we have imposed operating conditions to ensure that fishing vessels entitled to fly the United Kingdom flag have a real economic link with this country, through licence conditions imposed under powers contained in the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967. Secondly, we have gone to the heart of the problem by enacting the provisions of part

II of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, as amended, where we require British-registered fishing vessels to be mainly owned, managed and controlled by people resident in Britain.

These provisions have been attacked in our courts by representatives of Spanish interests and questions have been referred to the European Court of Justice. The Commission has also taken proceedings, and is considering further proceedings, in the European Court of Justice.

We have defended, and will continue to defend, these cases before the Court of Justice. The recent judgments of the court in the Agegate and Jaderow cases, although critical of some aspects of our licence conditions concerned with the nationality and residence of crews, upheld our right to require fishing vessels to operate in a way which would ensure that vessels fishing against our national quotas should have a real economic link with this country. We will continue to enforce these conditions vigorously.

The substantive question whether the fishing vessel registration requirements of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 are compatible with Community law has still to be considered by the European Court of Justice. The recent judgment of the court in case 213/89 Factortame means that our national courts now have jurisdiction to grant interim protection of Community rights in appropriate cases, pending a final decision of the European Court. But it will be for our domestic courts to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether interim protection should be given to individual quota hoppers and, if so, what conditions or limitations should be imposed. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will continue to contest vigorously the grant of interim relief in the circumstances of this case.

PRIME MINISTER

Armenian School Infrastructure

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer to the hon. Member for Swansea, West, *Official Report*, column *405*, 18 June, how much of the funding for the Armenian school infrastructure comes from Government sources.

The Prime Minister: The total cost to public funds of the British school at Leninakan will be about £4·6 million.

Energy Consumption

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister if she will give the 1989-90 consumption of solid fuel by the Cabinet Office in tonnes and in expenditure.

The Prime Minister: The Cabinet Office consumed no solid fuel in 1989-90.

Official Visit (USSR)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Prime Minister what was the cost to public funds of her official visit to the USSR, and if she will list *(a)* those covered by and *(b)* those making a contribution towards the cost.

The Prime Minister: The details of the total cost of my visit to the USSR are not yet available. I was accompanied by four officials and 17 support staff, mostly security and communications personnel, whose costs are met from public funds. In addition, 24 media representatives travelled with the official party. Their travel costs will be recovered from their employers.

Science and Technolgy

Mr. David Evans: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list the recommendations contained in reports from the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology during the 1988-89 Session, which have been accepted wholly or in part by Her Majesty's Government, indicating which have already been implemented.

The Prime Minister: The reports of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology during the 1988-89 Session, together with Government responses, are available in the Library of the House, with the exception of the Government response to the report on agricultural and food research which will be published early next month.

HEALTH

Steroids

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will introduce free eye tests for long-term users of steroids to bring them into line with other glaucoma high-risk groups; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: There are no plans to extend the current national health service exemption categories to include long-term users of steroids. Patients receiving such treatment are normally under continual medical care where examination of the lens for symptoms of eye disease by the doctor or hospital clinician involved would be routine.

NHS Reform

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the professional organisations which were sent invitations to take part in the consultation on working paper 11 "Framework for Information".

Mr. Dorrell: The following professional organisations were sent invitations to take part in consultations on working paper 11:

Association of Anaesthetists
Association of British Paediatric Nurses
Association of Chief Ambulance Officers
Association of Clinical Biochemists
Association of Cytogeneticists
Association of Clinical Pathologists
Association of District Medical Officers
Association of District and Superintendent Chartered Physiotherapists
Association of Domestic Management
Association of Health Care Information and Medical Record Officers
Association of Microbiologists
Association of National Health Service Supplies Officers
Association of National Health Service Officers
Association of Occupational Therapists
Association of Professions for the Mentally Handicapped
British Association of Operating Department Assistants
British Dental Association
British Dietetic Association
British Institute of Radiology
British Medical Association
British Paediatric Association
British Psychological Society

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
College of Occupational Therapists
College of Speech Therapists
Community Psychiatric Nurses Association
District Nursing Association
English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting
Faculty of Community Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians
General Medical Services Committee of the BMA
Health Care Financial Management Association
Health Visitors Association
Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association
Hospital Physicists Association
Institute of Child Health
Institute of Chiropodists
Institute of Health Services Management
Joint Committee of Professional Nursing, Midwifery and HVAs
Mental Handicap Nurses Association
National Association of Family Planning Nurses
National Association of Health Service Personnel Officers
National Association of Theatre Nurses
Psychiatric Nurses Association
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Midwives
Royal College of Nursing in the United Kingdom (RCN)
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
Royal College of Pathologists
Royal College of Physicians of London
Royal College of Psychiatrists
Royal College of Radiologists
Royal College of Surgeons of England
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
Society of Administrators of Family Practitioner Services
Society of Chiropodists
Society of Community Medicine
Society of Family Practitioner Committees
Society of Nurse Advisers, Child Health
Society of Radiographers

Drug Reaction

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to improve the yellow card reporting system for drug reaction; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Adverse reactions to medicinal products are reported to the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) on a voluntary basis by doctors and dentists under the yellow card scheme, and there is a statutory requirement for pharmaceutical companies to submit reports. A new improved computer system is currently being developed to support the scheme.

Reporting by prescribers is encouraged in a number of ways, for example by organising lectures to doctors on adverse reactions, exhibitions and a video to publicise the scheme, and by including yellow cards in publications used regularly by prescribers, for example, the British National Formulary, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry data sheet compendium and MIMS—the monthly index of medical specialities.

Specialist yellow cards are produced for anaesthetists; these are to be included in the drug administration record books used in operating theatres. The format of the yellow card is in the process of being revised in order both to help and improve reporting; CSM will undertake a publicity drive to promote the yellow card scheme once the revision has been completed.

CSM regional monitoring centres have also been set up in a number of national health service regions to encourage adverse reaction reporting locally and to improve follow-up. There is a freefone service available to all parts of the United Kingdom for doctors seeking advice and information on adverse reactions.

Corwin

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines have been given by his Department to doctors concerning the prescribing of the heart drug Corwin.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) on 21 June.

Tampons

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether his Department has any plans to provide tampons and sanitary towels free of charge to all women;

(2) how many representations his Department has received since 1979 calling for the provision of tampons and sanitary towels free of charge through national health service clinics.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Figures on the number of representations made on this subject are not available. We have not recently received any representations from organisations on this matter, although it has been raised from time to time in correspondence from Members of Parliament and members of the public.

It would not be appropriate to provide sanitary protection products through the national health service free of charge. We are satisfied that it is more appropriate to assist disadvantaged people through income support and other similar measures, which are the responsibility of the Department of Social Security.

Homelessness

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to tackle the problem of homelessness among young people and people with a mental illness.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has today announced a number of initiatives to address the problem of people sleeping rough in London. My Department is also initiating a number of measures specifically to address the needs of two particularly vulnerable groups of homeless people—young people, and those with a mental illness. We hope to be in a position to make a further announcement on plans that we are developing for this latter group in central London as soon as possible.

It is important that young people who arrive in London without adequate support have somewhere to go where they can receive help and advice in a safe place, and where efforts can be made to pave the way for a return home. For a number of years, my Department has provided funding for the Children's Society to run a refuge of this kind for runaway children in London, and this year we have agreed a further grant totalling around £200,000 over three years for it to run a short-stay annex attached to this refuge.

I am particularly keen to develop work with young people outside London who are at risk of becoming roofless and possibly heading for the capital. This requires close working between a number of local agencies and

voluntary bodies. I intend to make funds available to help establish a number of projects in towns outside London run by voluntary organisations in collaboration with local agencies. We will allocate £250,000 from my Department's budget to start up these projects in the present financial year, and the provision of resources for future years will be discussed in the public expenditure survey process over the next few months. The projects will be targeted at young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, roofless. Their specific aim will be to help these young people find a stable environment which enables them to stay in their home community. The details of the scheme will be discussed with the voluntary sector and local authorities, and I hope that it will yield valuable lessons for service providers more generally.

A significant proportion of young runaways appear to have been at some time in local authority care, and there is clearly scope for improving the arrangements that local authorities make for children in their care, particularly in preparing them for leaving it. The Children Act 1989 gives local authorities enhanced duties and powers, and my Department will shortly be issuing draft guidance on how they should fulfil their leaving care responsibilities under the Act. I have also this year agreed a grant of £118,000 to a voluntary organisation, First Key, to provide authorities with advice on good practice in leaving care; and research has been commissioned from Leeds university to assess various approaches to leaving care policy and practice which should help local authorities to develop and improve their services.

Taken together, these measures will make an important contribution to overall Government policies aimed at reducing the risks of young people leaving home or care and coming to live in our cities without adequate protection or support.

Executive Agencies

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has identified any candidates within his Department for agency status under the "next steps" initiative.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Following a detailed feasibility study, I have identified my Department's estates directorate as a candidate for possible executive agency status.

Agency status could enable the directorate to operate with greater freedom and clearer responsibility within an agreed framework of objectives, performance targets and resources, and to respond more readily to the needs of the Department, the NHS management executive and the NHS.

The agency proposal and other options, including extending the scope of contracting out, will be considered further. Detailed discussions, which will include the preparation of a draft agency framework document have been set in hand. I will be considering other candidates for agency status in due course.

NHS Laboratories

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps national health service management has taken to improve staffing levels in national health service laboratories and the pay and conditions of service of the staff who work in them.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Since 1979 the number of qualified medical laboratory and scientific officers (MLSOs) in post has increased by 38 per cent. NHS management also undertook an extensive pay review and grade restructuring for this group of staff in 1988-89 to make a career in NHS laboratories attractive and to reward increased levels of skills and responsibilities. As a result of this review, the salary of the basic grade of qualified MLSOs, which includes 44 per cent. of all qualified MLSOs, increased by 11 per cent. in that year. Many MLSOs received substantially greater increases on assignment to the new grade structure. Current pay scales for qualified staff range from £7,897 to £20,244. These are currently under review in the Whitley council. In addition, about 25 per cent. of MLSOs now receive up to £2,527 extra through the discretionary local pay supplements for special skills or responsibilities. Many MLSOs also earn allowances relating to "out of hours" duties averaging 15 per cent. of their basic pay.

Local NHS management has not reported any significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining laboratory staff except in some places mainly in the south-east. Essential patient services are not affected.

In order to overcome local staffing difficulties NHS management, through the Whitley council management side has proposed a system of local pay supplements of up to 30 per cent., which could mean increases of up to £3,647 for basic grade MLSOs, greater flexibility in the way hours are worked and extra duty paid for and further local discretion on starting pay. These have all so far been rejected by the trade unions.

NHS management has taken positive steps in recent years to improve the pay and conditions of service of MLSOs and to resolve local recruitment and retention problems. Partial, inadequate and misleading surveys of the type recently published by the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) serve only to undermine NHS management and the laboratory service.

Births (Registration)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he will take to ensure that babies born in hospitals outside Wales but which serve people within Wales, can be registered in the Welsh language.

Mr. Dorrell: The Government's White Paper "Registration: proposals for change" (Cm. 939), a copy of which is available in the Library, has proposed new arrangements whereby, provided that a declaration is made at a registration office in Wales of a birth or death taking place in an English hospital, it will be possible to register that event in both languages. However, introducing such a procedure requires amendment to the present law; it is therefore one of the measures which the Government will bring forward when an opportunity arises to legislate on registration matters.

Cot Deaths

Mrs. Maureen Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration is being given to making the care of the next infant programme available nationwide, in order to support families who have experienced cot death.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths has developed this programme for use by health authorities. The Department helped with the

printing costs of guidance leaflets. I understand that there is already widespread take-up and the foundation's promotion of the programme is continuing. We will monitor use of the CONI programme, but believe the initiative is best taken forward through collaboration with the voluntary sector.

Children Act 1989

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he intends to implement the Children Act 1989 in whole or in phases.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Some provisions of the Children Act 1989 are already in force. We plan to implement the remaining provisions in October 1991.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list all working papers, implementation documents, departmental circulars, and other publications whether in draft or final form that have been issued to date arising from the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, "Working for Patients", "Caring for Patients" and associated Government initatives.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 19 June 1990]:* The main documents issued in England include:
"Working for Patients" and Discussion Documents:

"Self-Governing Hospitals" (Working Paper 1) (HMSO; 1989)

"Funding and Contracts for Hospital Services" (Working Paper 2) (HMSO; 1989)

"Practice Budgets for General Medical Practitioners" (Working Paper 3) (HMSO; 1989)

"Indicative Prescribing Budgets for General Medical Practitioner" (Working Paper 4) (HMSO; 1989)

"Capital Charges" (Working Paper 5) (HMSO; 1989)

"Implications for Family Practitioner Committees" (Working Paper 8) (HMSO; 1989)

"Capital Charges: Funding Issues" (Working Paper 9) (HMSO; 1989)

"Education and Training" (Working Paper 10) (HMSO; 1989)

"Framework for Information Systems: Overview" (Working Paper 11)

"Self-Governing Hospitals: An Initial Guide" (HMSO; 1989)

"Contracts for Health Services: Operational Principles" (HMSO; 1989)

"Funding General Practice" (DOH; 1989)

"Contracts for Health Services: Operating Contracts" (DOH; 1990)

"Improving Prescribing" (DOH; 1990)

Interim Report of the Steering Group on the "Undergraduate Medical and Dental Education" ("First France Report")

Second Report of the Steering Group on the "Undergraduate Medical and Dental Education" (France Report) (June 1990)

"Caring for People"—Implementation and Discussion Documents

Community Care—Caring for People:
- Independent Inspection Units (consultation paper)
- Care in the Community
- Community Care Planning—Review of Past Experience and Future Imperatives (consultation paper)
- Contracts for Community Care (consultation paper)
- The Specific Grants for Provision of Social Care for People with Mental Illness (draft guidance)

Community Care—Caring for People Implementation Documents—Draft Guidance:
- Planning
- Purchasing and Contracting
- Assessment and Case Management
- Inspection Units
- Complaints Procedures

Circulars Relating to "Working for Patients" and "Caring for People"

Reference and Title	*Date of Issue*
EL(89)S/1; LASSL(89)1 NHS Review: White Paper "Working for Patients"	31 January 1989
EL(89)MB/41 Planning in the Light of the NHS Review White Paper	14 February 1989
EL(89)S/2 NHS Review: Working Papers	21 February 1989
EL(89)S/3 NHS Review: Working Papers on Main Issues	21 February 1989
EL(89)S/4 General Practice: A New Contract	14 March 1989
EL(89)MB/58 Self-Governing Hospitals: Identification of Potential Candidates (Information for RHAs & DHAs)	14 March 1989
EL(89)MB/64 Self-Governing Hospitals: Identification of Potential Candidates (Information for SHAs)	14 March 1989
EL(89)MB/59 "Working for Patients" Delegating Responsibilities on Regions and Districts	21 March 1989
EL(89)P/61 NHS Review: 100 Consultant Posts	5 April 1989
EL(89)MB/96 Self-Governing Hospitals	8 May 1989
EL(89)MB/114 NHS Review: Working Paper 9 Capital Charges: Funding Issues	19 June 1989
EL(89)MB/119 Quality	22 June 1989
EL(89)MB/118 Additional Funds for White Paper Implementation: Personnel and Training	22 June 1989
EL(89)MB/124 Self-Governing Hospital: An Initial Guide	7 July 1989
EL(89)P/119 Capital Charges Update No. 2	14 July 1989

Reference and Title	*Date of Issue*
EL(89)MB/130 Pricing of Contracts	19 July 1989
EL(89)MB/137 Secretary of State's letter to Medical Profession: Letter to NHS Chairman Managers and Medical Officers	31 July 1989
EL(89)MB/148 Self-Governing Hospitals: Outline Application Document	16 August 1989
EL(89)MB/156 The White Paper In Yorkshire: The Future Role of the DHA	August 1989
EL(89)P/157; FPCL 180/89 Planning: National Priorities	14 September 1989
EL(89)MB/160 Capital Charges: Asset Groups	15 September 1989
EL(89)MB/171 Discussion Document on Pricing And Openness in Contracts For Health Services	28 September 1989
EL(89)MB/169 Contracts for Health Services Operational Principles	29 September 1989
EL(89)MB/142 Use of Private Sector Capital In the NHS (Unconventional Finance): Revised Guidance	2 October 1989
EL(89)P/164; FPCL 188/89 Preparing RHAs for New FPC Accountability Arrangements	3 October 1989
HC— (89) Medical Audit in the FPS (Draft Consultation Document Only)	6 October 1989
EL(89)MB/172 Capital Charges Updates 89/3 and 89/4	9 October 1989
EL(89)MB/168 Education and Training Working Paper	16 October 1989
EL(89)MB/176 Capital Charges: Costing Of Health Buildings	October 1989
EL(89)P/169 Indicative Prescribing Budgets and GP Practice Budgets	10 October 1989
EL(89)P/181 NHS Review: 100 Consultant Posts Allocation of first 35 Posts	30 October 1989
EL(89)P/189 Financial Matters—October 1989	31 October 1989
EL(89)MB/193 Capital Charges: Beacon Buildings	7 November 1989
EL(89)P/186 Caring for People: Community Care in the Next Decade and Beyond	November 1989
EL(89)MB/201 Government Response to Social Services Committee Report on "Working for Patients"	15 November 1989

Reference and Title	*Date of Issue*
EL(89)MB/199 Service Increment for Teaching—SIFT	16 November 1989
EL(89)MB/202 Community Care	16 November 1989
EL(89)MB/208 Capital Charges Update 89/5	29 November 1989
EL(89)P/194 Financial Matters—November 1989	30 November 1989
EL(89)P/199; FPCL 266/89 Practice Funding Scheme: Issue of Programme to GPs	13 December 1989
EL(89)MB/223 NHS Review Costs	14 December 1989
EL(89)MB/219 The Role of District HAs	19 December 1989
EL(90)MB/7 "Working for Patients" Information and IT	11 January 1990
EL(90)MB/9; FPCL 6/90 "Working for Patients" Briefing for Managers—January Update	12 January 1990
EL(90)MB/10 Capital Charges Update: 90/1	16 January 1990
EL(90)MB/13 Training for Income Generation	15 January 1990
EL(90)MB/16 Resource Management Extension Programme 1990/91	January 1990
EL(90)MB/17 Quality Funds 1990/91	23 January 1990
EL(90)P/14 Trauma Evaluation Centre Accident and Emergency Demonstration Projects	23 January 1990
EL(90)MB/19 Capital Charges Update: 90/2	24 January 1990
EL(90)MB/21 Funding of Medical Audit in 1990/91	January 1990
FPCL 16/90 Care in the Community	January 1990
EL(90)P/13 Financial Matters—January 1990	31 January 1990
El(90)MB/20 NHS Trusts—Originating Capital Debt	5 February 1990
NHS Review/Community Care Bill Invitation to talks on Clinical Audit	6 February 1990
El(90)MB/18 Care in the Community	6 February 1990
El(90)P/28 Medical Audit in HCHS—Draft Health Circular	7 February 1990
EL(90)MB/26 Contract Pricing: Cost Allocation Principles	7 February 1990
FPCL 22/90 Financial Matters (FPC)—January 1990	7 February 1990

Reference and Title	*Date of Issue*
EL(90)MB/22 District Allocations	9 February 1990
EL(90)MB/29 NHS Audit: Report of Directors of audit 87/88	13 February 1990
EL(90)MB34 Capital Charges Update: 90/3	14 February 1990
EL(90)P/36 Child Health Surveillance Implementation of the New GP Contract	16 February 1990
EL(90)P/46 NHS Review: 100 Consultants	27 February 1990
EL(90)MB/24 FPCL 18/90 "Operating Contracts"	27 February 1990
EL(90)P/21 Improved Joint Working Between Universities and the NHS	28 February 1990
EL(90)MB/46 Contract Pricing: Donated Resources	12 March
EL(90)MB/66 Capital Charges: Accounting Work Book	30 March 1990
EL(90)MB/48 NHS Manual for Accounts	23 March 1990
EL(90)MB/73 RGM's Meeting of 30 March 1990	26 March 1990
EL(90)MB/57 FPCL 67/90 Internal Audit in the NHS: Minimum Standards	29 March 1990
HC(90)9 Disciplinary Procedure for Hospital and Community Medical and Dental Staff	March 1990
EL(90)MB/74 NHS Reforms: Pilot Projects	4 April 1990
EL(90)MB/68 Capital Charges Update: 90/4	6 April 1990
EL(90)MB/77 NHSME Goals and 1990-91 Operational Programme	6 April 1990
EL(90)MB/70 Working for Patients: Briefing for Managers—April Update	10 April 1990
EL(90)MB/83 Service Support for Research in Non SIFT Hospitals	20 April 1990
EL(90)MB/94 Working Paper 10—Education and Training—Interim Guidance	30 April 1990
EL(90)P/77 Financial Matters—April 1990	30 April 1990
EL(90)MB/86 The Role of the District	April 1990
EL(90)MB/75 Use of Information Technology In Medical Audit	April 1990
EL(90)MB/78 NHS Register of Computer Applications: The Online Database	1 May 1990
EL(90)P/84 GP Practice Funds Management Allowance 1990-91	9 May 1990
EL(90)MB/101 London Postgraduate SHAs: Funding Arrangements from April 1991	21 May 1990
EL(90)P/93 Indicative Prescribing Scheme Issue of Working Paper	23 May 1990
EL(90)MB/61 NHS Stock Valuation and Control	23 May 1990
EL(90)MB/107 Capital charges Update: 90/5	31 May 1990
HC(90)16 Consultants Contracts and Job Plans	May 1990
EL(90)MB/105 Treatment of the Cost of Providing Common Services	4 June 1990
FPCL 119/90 Financial Matters (FPC)—May 1990	4 June 1990
HC(FP)0/8 HC(90)15 Medical Audit in FPS	18 June 1990
EL(90)MB121 FPCL 132/90 Framework for Information Systems	19 June 1990

National Health Service and Community Care Bill—Policy Papers

"The Government's Plans for the Future of the National Health Service: The Government's Reply to the Eighth Report from the Social Services Committee, Session 1988/89".

"Priorities in Medical Research": Government Response to the Third Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology: 1987/88 Session.

Notes on Clauses

The National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 174**

SESSION 1989–90

11th June—22nd June 1990

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes, and cannot, therefore, be used in conjunction with the daily part or weekly Hansard. For these versions use the Fortnightly Index.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R=first reading, 2R=second reading, Money res=money resolution, Com=Committee stage, Rep=Report stage, 3R=third reading, amendt/amendts=amendment/amendments, *=matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

A1
Road construction 476w

A12
(18:06:90) 774-5

A82
611-2w

A428
Road construction 444w

A696
Road works 628w

Abbott, Ms Diane
Questions
Chemicals, Industrial production 306-7w
Drug crimes, Crops 276
Evidence, Bombings 312w
Teachers, Vacancies 167-8w

Abolition of Deer Hunting Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (19:06:90) 804-6
2R order read (22:06:90) 1300

Abortion
(21:06:90) 1136-224
Sheffield 511w

ABRC
see Advisory Board for the Research Councils

Absent voting
British residents abroad 104w
Departmental leaflets 104w

Access funds
130
Handicapped students 506w
Higher education administration 505-6w

Access to buildings
Educational buildings 458-9w
School buildings 458-9w

Access to countryside
Forests 450w

Access to Parliament
Pedestrians 298-9w

Accidents
Bradwell power station 434w

Accountability
National Consumer Council 307w

Accountants
306w
Financial Reporting Council 491w

Acid rain
Wales 85w, 338w

ACOST
see Advisory Council on Science & Technology

ACPO
see Association of Chief Police Officers

Action for community employment
Belfast 155w
Sponsorship 155w

Action for jobs
Advertising 57w, 723w
Expenditure 57w

Active citizenship
458-9

Actors
Taxation 20w

Acute beds
Greenwich Health Authority 371-2w

Adams, Mr Allen
Questions
Iron & steel industry 582-3w

ADAS
see Agricultural Development & Advisory Service

Additional pensions
Armed forces pay 609w

Adjournment debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (20:06:90) 1087

Adley, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 300-6, 307, 308, 309, 311, 314, 321, 328, 334, 336-7, 347-8
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 236, 244, 252-4
Questions
Devolution, Northern Ireland 692w
Israel, Occupied territories 254w
Metropolitan Police, Road traffic control 318w
Railway transport, Transport subsidies 72w

Administrative costs
Arts 44w
Community charge 88w, 676-7, 680w
Student loans 559-60w
Student Loans Company 502w
Vacant land registers 565w

Administrative delays
British citizenship 500-1w
Departmental correspondence 269w
Hill livestock allowances 335w
Immigration applications 300w
Medical appeal tribunals 162-3w
Members' correspondence 5w, 101w, 723w
Naturalisation 574w
Patents 580w
Social Security Commissioners 389-90w
Student loans 502-3w

Admissibility of evidence
Child abuse 570w

Admission charges
Museums & galleries 44w

Adoption
Disclosure of information 507-8w
Romania 428w

Adoption (Amendment) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:06:90) 656

Adult education
Scotland 349w, 682w
Teacher training 682w

Advertising
Action for jobs 57w, 723w
Community charge 358-9w
Electricity supply industry 288w, 719w

Advertising agencies
Electricity supply industry 719w

Advisory Board for the Research Councils
218-9w

Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards
232-3w

Advisory Committee on Pesticides
530w

Advisory Committee on Salmon Conservation
see Salmon Advisory Committee

Advisory Council on Science & Technology
Public appointments 99w

Advisory services
Community charge 361-2w, 592-3w
Debts 361w, 582w
Home energy efficiency scheme 288w
Smoking 677w

Advocates for Animals
Animal experiments 724w

Afghanistan
British embassies 262w

African National Congress
255w

Age
Drinking & driving 71w
Higher education teachers 218w

Age participation rates
Sixth form education 168-9w

Agricultural Development & Advisory Service
339w
Conservation 530-1w
Fees & charges 335w
Income 335w

Agricultural development programme
284w

Agricultural land
Countryside premium scheme 466w

Agricultural Mortgage Corporation
650w

Agricultural research
532w
Aquagard sea lice treatment 745w
Fish diseases 128w
Fisheries 125-6w
International cooperation 126w
Lactofol 339w
Overseas aid 483w
Pest control 624w
Salmon 126-7w
Scotland 527w
Sea lice 128w
Ships 128-9w
Transmissible encephalopathies 332w
Trout 128w

Agriculture
Census 531-2w
Financial services 650w
Government grants 267w
Nuclear accidents 267w
Overseas aid (14:06:90) 566-83
Summertime 456-7

AIDS
Children 515w
Disease control 372-3w
Future 515-6w
Mersey Regional Health Authority 553-4w
Overseas aid 391-2w
Romania 395w

Aids for handicapped
Prison accommodation 105w

Air accidents
Aircraft equipment 562w
Hexham 546w
Shackleton aircraft 721-2w

Air displays
Air safety 60w
Crowd safety 60w

Air force
Armed forces recruitment 140w
Armed forces training 242w
International cooperation 380-1w
Military exercises 242w

Air force bases
Procurement Executive 547w

Air freight transport
RAE Bedford 547-8w

Air pollution control
Carbon dioxide 798
Greenhouse effect 138w
Methyl chloroform 269w
Overseas aid 11w, 392-3w
Ozone layer 295w, 416w, 631w
Petrol 157-8w

Air pollution monitoring
Ozone 294w, 675

Air routes
Competition 58-9w, 71w
USA 356w

Air safety
Air displays 60w
Low flying 243w

Air safety—continued
Smoke hoods 563w

Air traffic
Heathrow Airport 63w

Air traffic control
Capital investment 69w
International cooperation 69w
Stornoway Airport 610w

Air transport
Competition 59-60w
EC action 59w
Treaties 69-70w
USA 70w

Air travel
Military aircraft 645-6w

Aircraft
Ozone layer 302w

Aircraft equipment
Air accidents 562w

Aircraft noise
Helicopters 645w
Military aircraft 139-40w
Northern Ireland 645w

Aircrew
Armed forces training 548w

Airport security
63w
West Germany 10

Airports
Local government functions 67w

Aitken, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 26
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 133
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 313w

Albania
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 261-2w

Alcoholic drinks
Public order offences 322w
Scotland 346w
Young people 346w

Alcoholism
Residential care 35-6w, 375w

Aldridge Committee
see Commonhold Land Working Group

Aleutian disease
Mink 529-30w

Alexander, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 170
Questions
Business statements 478
Infant mortality, Scottish health boards 122w
Infant mortality, Wales 84-6w
Perinatal mortality, Northern Ireland 28-30w
Perinatal mortality, Regional health authorities 144-6w
Prison visitors, Car allowances 314w

Algae
485w, 613w
Liverpool Bay 88w
Pollution monitoring 567w
Shellfish 131-2w
Water storage 4w

***Alison, Rt Hon Michael**, Second Church Estates Commissioner*
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1178, 1179-82, 1204

Allen, Graham
298w

Allen, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 489
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 144
Questions
Army, Armed forces strength 327w
Army, Defence expenditure 381w
Army, Defence land 326-7w
Army, Public sector assets 328w
Arts finance, East Midlands 45w
Attorney General, House of Commons Select Committees 678-9
British Aerospace, Ministry of Defence police 382w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 3-4
Child abuse 105w, 501w
Child abuse, Departmental coordination 99w
Child abuse, Habitual offenders 728-9w
Child abuse, Local government social services 297w
Child abuse, Research 370w, 509-10w
Child abuse, Research finance 272-3w
Child abuse, Sexual offences 272w, 365-6w
Child Abuse Interdepartmental Group, Public appointments 365w
Community charge, Blind 197w
Economic policy 405w
Economic policy, Disclosure of information 405w
Greenhouse effect, International conferences 797-8
Inflation 151w
Management consultants, Attorney General 388w
Management consultants, Cabinet Office 97-9w
Management consultants, Dept of Education & Science 217-8w
Management consultants, Dept of Energy 362w
Management consultants, Dept of Social Security 701-7w
Management consultants, Dept of Transport 302w
Management consultants, Home Office 571-2w
Management Consultants, House of Commons 297-8w
Management consultants, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 468-70w
Management consultants, Privy Council 110w
Management consultants, Scottish Office 448w
Management consultants, Welsh Office 576-7w
Members' Facilities & Services Review 110w
Ministerial policy advisors, Economic policy 406w
Ministry of Defence police, Pay 382-3w
Mortgage relief 378w
Mortgages, Economic regions 558w
Official hospitality, 10 Downing Street 405w
Oral questions, Procedure Select Committee 109w
ROF Nottingham, Defence contracts 436w
ROF Nottingham, Ministry of Defence police 382w
ROF Nottingham, Security 381w
Sexual offences, Rehabilitation of offenders 272w
Social workers 400w
Stocks & shares 735w
Territorial Army, Defence expenditure 328w
Vote bundle, Costs 109-10w
Vote bundle, House of Commons questions 237w

Allergies
Committee on Safety of Medicines 402w

Alternative energy
Incinerators 415-6w
Non-fossil fuel obligation 433w
Waste disposal 414-6w, 432w

Alternative medicine
Wales 84w

Alton, Mr David
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 944-7, 950, 953, 954-5, 991, 992-3, 997, 999, 1007, 1008, 1011
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1143, 1147-9, 1184-5, 1188, 1194, 1200, 1205-9
Questions
Housing associations 421w
Housing associations, Merseyside 631w
Languages education, Irish 1099-100
Merseyside Police Authority, Finance 666w
Ozone layer, Air pollution control 631w
Rent control, Merseyside 564-5w
Social Fund, Funerals 730w

Aluminium
Water supply 678w
Water treatment 635w

Alyn & Deeside District Council
90w

Alzheimer's disease
Water supply 678-9w

Ambulance services
Family doctors 86-7w
Industrial disputes 553w, 679w
Military aid to civil community 679w
NHS hospital trusts 404w
South West Thames Regional Health Authority 235w
Wales 86-7w

AMC
see Agricultural Mortgage Corporation

Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 821-2, 826-9

Amess, Mr David
Debates etc.
Sixth form education, Wickford (15:06:90) 661-2
Questions
Criminal statistics, Basildon 100w
Driving, Information services 76w

Ammunition
Armed forces cadets 33-4w
Low flying 381w
Schools 23w

Amos, Mr Alan
Questions
Air accidents, Hexham 546w
Air routes, Competition 71w
Curriculum, Northumberland 173w
Employment Select Committee, Members' visits abroad 398w
Japan, War crimes 196w
Northumbria Police Authority, Manpower 320w
Sheep scab, Disease control 649-50w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Pets 378-9w

ANC
see African National Congress

Ancient monuments
Metal detectors 616-7w

Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979
Questions
357w, 616-7w

Anderson, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 65, 66
Questions
Channel tunnel, Roads 61w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 272

Anglia Higher Education College
Polytechnics 716w

Anglo-Irish Agreement
695-6w

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference
697w
Civil servants' 695w
Contraceptives 518w

Angus
School boards 745w
Schools 744w

Animal cruelty
Punishment 525w
Scotland 525w

Animal diseases
Animal quarantine 77w
Import of live animals 650w

Animal experiments
195w
Advocates for Animals 724w
Animal welfare 194w
Feldberg, Wilhelm 662-3w
Laboratories 724w
LD50 toxicity test 194w
Research 194w
Research finance 194-5w
Scientists 724w

Animal feed
135w
Avoparcin 620w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 468w
Food contamination 268w
Offal 621-2w
Pigs 78w, 470-1w, 622w
Poultry 622w
Sheep 337w

Animal Health Act 1981
Questions
742w

Animal husbandry
Cattle 87w

Animal Procedures Committee
194-5w

Animal products
Scrapie 622w

Animal quarantine
Animal diseases 77w

Animal welfare
Animal experiments 194w
Electric shock 334w
Furs 529w
Livestock 531w
Manpower 333-4w
Professional qualifications 333-4w
Transport of animals 334w

Animals
EC action (11:06:90) 110

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
Questions
662-3w, 724w
Law enforcement 323w

Annual reports
(13:06:90) 293-440

Antarctic
Environment protection 120w, 259w, 280-2, 286-7
Minerals 120-1w
Mining 40w

Antarctic Treaty
121w

Antibiotics
Fish farming 81w
Salmon 81w

Antisemitism
Eastern Europe 386w

Antisubmarine warfare
Royal Fleet Auxiliary 646w

Anton Piller orders
111w

Aphids
624w

Appeals
680-1
National insurance credits 264w
Sentencing 387w
Special education 459w

Aquagard sea lice treatment
81w
Agricultural research 745w
Licensing 125w, 297w, 648-9w

Arbuthnot, Mr James
Questions
Computers in schools 180w
Hinkley Point C, Public inquiries 287w

Archaeological sites
Metal detectors 357w

Archaeology
Radar 616w
Scotland 616w

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Questions
Evidence, Bombings 311w
Guyana 258w

Architects
Free movement of labour 419w

Arctic fox
530w

Argoed High School Mynydd Isa
School closures 439-50w

Armagh
Courts 290w

Armed forces
Career structure 787
Cars 720w
Intimidation 540w
Israel 400w
Security 720w
Women's employment 538w

Armed forces cadets
Ammunition 33-4w
Schools 33-4w

Armed forces civilians
RNAD Beith 722w

Armed forces deployment
794-5
Armed forces strength 786-7
Environmental impact assessment 549-50w
Germany 379w
Local government services 794
Namibia 789
NATO 142w
Peace keeping operations 543-4w, 789
Skilled workers 794
Wales 33w
West Germany 285
Western European Union 494w

Armed forces discharges
Convictions 33w
Training 142w

Armed forces housing
141w
Repairs & maintenance 141w
Resignations 141w

Armed forces married quarters
Greater London 140-1w

Armed forces pay
Additional pensions 609w
Social security benefits 609-10w
Widowers' benefits 609w

Armed Forces Pay Review Body
609w

Armed forces punishment
Army 33w

Armed forces recruitment
Air force 140w
Armed forces reserves 542w
RAF Biggin Hill 546w
Territorial Army 548w

Armed forces reserves
Armed forces recruitment 542w

Armed forces storage depots
722w

Armed forces strength
545w
Armed forces deployment 786-7
Army 327w

Armed forces training
142w
Air force 242w
Aircrew 548w
Low flying 31w, 139w, 793-4
Scotland 436-7w

Armenia
Educational aid 747w
Ministers' visits abroad 741w

Arms control
42-3w, 379w
Nuclear weapons 533w
Western European Union 495w

Arms control negotiations
Defence 538w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 244w
Navy 300w
Nuclear disarmament 119w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 240w
Trident 535w
USSR 383w

Arms exports
Astra Holdings 545w, 791
British Army Equipment Exhibition 540w
Iraq 436w, 791-2

Arms trade
Exports 722w
South Africa 119w

Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 495-6
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1025-6, 1031
Questions
British Army Equipment Exhibition, Arms exports 540w
City technology colleges, Corby 559w
Educational buildings, Access to buildings 458-9w
Employment Service 116w
Handicapped students, Teacher training 459w
Hospital consultants, Merit awards 232-3w
Namibia, Debts 392w
National Youth Agency, Community work 458w
Nursery nurses, Graduates 713w
Railway transport, North East region 7-8
School buildings, Access to buildings 458-9w
Shipbuilding, Investment 588-9w
Special education 502w
Special education, Appeals 459w
Special education, Teacher training 713-4w
Special education, Wales 491w
Standard assessment tasks, Primary education 558-9w
Under-Fives Education Inquiry 182w

Army
Armed forces punishment 33w
Armed forces strength 327w
Convictions 33w
Defence expenditure 381w
Defence land 326-7w

Army—continued
Helicopters 324-5w
Management consultants 328w
Public sector assets 328w
Tanks 324-5w

Army in Northern Ireland
1100-1, 1103
Border security in Ireland 1101-2
War widows' pensions 783-4

Arnold, Mr Jacques
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 490
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 256
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 62w
HMS Invincible, Nuclear weapons deployment 788
South America, Foreign policy 278

Arnold, Sir Thomas
Questions
Bus services subsidies 473w
European Economic Community 497w
Eye tests, Take-up 509w
Motorways, Road construction 189w

Arrests
Demonstrations 192-4w
Drug crimes 18w
Football 482w
Police 727-8w

Arson
Criminal investigation 190w
Sentencing 102w
Wales 190w

Art works
Exports 13-4

Arthritis
Wales 225w

Articled teachers
Teacher training 220-3w

Arts
Administrative costs 44w
Curriculum 46w
Northern Ireland 690-1w
Relocation of employees 45-6w

Arts Council
47w, 644w
Regional arts associations 46-7w

Arts Council grants
Royal Opera House 46w

Arts finance
44w, 46w
East Midlands 45w
National Campaign for the Arts 47w

Arts grants
British Museum (Natural History) (20:06:90) 1086-94
Music 644w
Non-metropolitan counties 44-5w

Arts Support Review Group
46-7w

Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 696
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 141-2
Questions
Economic & monetary union, European currency unit 1110-1
European Communities 133
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 1102
Railway network, Capital investment 465

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 144
Questions
Armed forces, Intimidation 540w

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack—continued
Business statements 1118
Community charge, Students 526w
Local government expenditure, Voluntary organisations 203w
Police, Crimes of violence 498-9w
Police, Criminal statistics 499w
Police, Domestic violence 320w
Police, Manpower 499-500w
Tinnitus, Research finance 120-1
War pensions, Nuclear weapons tests 215w

Ashton, Mr Joseph
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 344
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1128, 1130
Questions
Football Licensing Authority 575-6w
House of Commons, Smoking 551w

Assembly of Welsh Counties
25w

Assisted places scheme
Publicity 183w

Associated British Ports (No 2) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Order for consideration of Lords amendts read (12:06:90) 119, (14:06:90) 449, (21:06:90) 1093

Association of Chief Police Officers
16w

Astley Bridge Police Station
Construction costs 360w
Prison escapes 360w

Astra Holdings
Arms exports 545w, 791
Defence equipment 791

Astra Training Services
Civil servants' business appointments 15-6

***Atkins, Mr Robert**, Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Questions
A1, Road construction 476w
A428, Road construction 444w
A696, Road works 628w
Bus services subsidies 473w
Buses, Speed limits 154w
Bypasses, Danbury 189w
Dangerous Substances (Conveyance by Road in Road Tankers & Tank Containers) Regulations 1981, Law enforcement 302w
Dept of Transport, Civil service manpower 563w
Diesel vehicles, Exhaust emission controls 63w
Drinking & driving, Age 71w
Driving, Information services 76w
Driving instruction 71w
Driving licences, British dependent territories 627w
East London river crossing, Public inquiries 354-5w
Exhaust emission controls 154w
M1, Road construction 473w
M4, Road works 69w
M6, Road works 444w
M11, Public inquiries 188w
M25, Road traffic 9-10
M40, Lighting 74w
Management consultants, Dept of Transport 302w
Motor vehicle testing, Cars 188w
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emission controls 187w
Motor vehicles, Fire prevention 473-4w
Motor vehicles, Wheelchairs 71-2w
Motorcycles, Driving instruction 75-6w
Motorways, Road construction 189w
Motorways, Speed limits 76w
Pedestrian crossings, Death 187w
Pelican crossings, Blind 629w
"Road Accident Statistics English Regions" 153w

Atkins, Mr Robert—continued
Road construction, Construction costs 68w
Road construction, Contracts for services 303w
Road construction, Essex 153w
Road construction, Northamptonshire 70w
Road tax, Tax evasion 71w
Road traffic, Basingstoke 61w
Road traffic, Greater London 64w
Road works, Public utilities 60w
Roads, Dorset 9
Roads, Greater London 70w
Roads, Leyton 9
Roads, Urban areas 69w
Tachographs, Working hours 187w
Traffic areas 475-6w
Transport, Environment protection 473w
Transport infrastructure, Inner city areas 11-2
Transport of radioactive materials 6
Transport of radioactive materials, Ferries 5-6
Travel, Safety 64-5w

Atkinson, Mr David
Questions
Airports, Local government functions 67w
Chiropractic, NHS 144w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 383-4w
European Security Conference, Human rights 258w
Family planning 507-8w
Furs, Exports 361w
Grant maintained schools 127-8
Public order policing, Football 315-6w

Atomic Weapons Research Establishment
Managers 328-9w

Attendance
Football 482w

Attendance allowance
Community charge benefits 698w
Handicapped children 163w
Social security benefits rules 163w
Social security recipients 215w

Attorney General
House of Commons Select Committees 678-9
Management consultants 388w

Audit
Police stations 191-2w

Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England & Wales
197w

Availability for work
Income support 330-1w

Average earnings
Retirement pensions 700w
Teachers 655w
Unemployment benefits 522w

Aviation & Maritime Security Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1047-85

Avoparcin
Animal feed 620w

AWE Aldermaston
382w, 647-8w
Construction 543w
Defence contracts 243w

AWE Cardiff
Licensing 342w
Trident missiles 382w

AWRE
see Atomic Weapons Research Establishment

B & Q DIY Supercentres
551-2w

Babies
HIV infection 515w

Baby milks
District health authorities 679w
Soya beans 236w

BAC 111
562w

Badgers
Nature conservation 100-1w

Badgers Act 1973
Questions
Convictions 100-1w

Bail hostels
249-50w

Bailiffs
731-3w
Manpower 731w

Baker, Kenneth
405-6w

***Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth**, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster*
Questions
Armenia, Ministers' visits abroad 741w
St Helens 556w

Balance of payments
Information technology 582w

Balance of trade
914
Foreign investment in UK 913-4
Japan 579w
Manufactured goods 579w, 922
Textile industry 590w, 914-5
West Germany 556-7w, 593w, 922

***Baldry, Mr Tony**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Bradwell power station, Accidents 434w
British Nuclear Fuels, Capital investment 484w
Connah's Quay power station 8w
DREH Resources, Turbines 7w
Electricity distribution, Rural areas 239w
Electricity supply industry, Non-fossil fuel obligation 287w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 719w
Hawkshurst moor, Planning inquiries 434w
Hinkley Point C, Public inquiries 434w
International Atomic Energy Agency 718-9w
Magnox reactors, Nuclear safety 434w
Non-fossil Fuel Purchasing Agency 657w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Contracts 286w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Nuclear safeguards 286-7w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Radioactive wastes 238w, 285-6w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Sellafield 484-5w
Nuclear fuels, Magnox reactors 285w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear safeguards 286w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 286w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Publishing 238w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Technology transfer 285w
Nuclear power, Technical assistance 8w
Nuclear power stations, Electricity generation 7w
Nuclear power stations, Nuclear safety 717-8w
Nuclear power stations, Radioactive waste disposal 483-4w
Nuclear safeguards 718w
Nuclear safety 238w
Plutonium, Nuclear physics 239w
Plutonium, Nuclear safeguards 8w
Power stations, Clwyd 7w
Radioactive waste disposal, Ionizing radiation 137-8w
Radioactive waste disposal, Sellafield 657w
Radioactive wastes, Sellafield 238-9w
Redundant mineworkers' payments scheme 718w

***Baldry, Mr Tony**—continued*
South Western Electricity Board, Electricity tariffs 485w
Tritium, Nuclear safeguards 8w

Baltic Republics of USSR
Foreign relations 465-6
USSR 285, 465-6

Ban of Imports (Child Labour) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (13:06:90) 288

Bananas
Caribbean 393w
EC internal trade 393w

Bangladesh Porishad
Entry clearances 431w

Bangor
225w, 328w
Shopping centres 208w

Bank for Reconstruction & Development of Europe
see European Development Bank

Bank of England
210w

Bank services
Student loans 503w

Banking supervision
Harrods' Bank 210w

Bankruptcy
Debts 51w
Scotland 51w, 245w

Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985
Questions
245w

Banks
Companies 133
Crime prevention 103w
EC law 212w
St Helena 39w
Security 103w
Student Loans Company 503w, 505w

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 492
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 714, 717, 723, 727, 728, 746-7, 760, (19:06:90) 823, 829, 841-3, 866
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 627, 635, 648-51, 652
Questions
Advocates for Animals, Animal experiments 724w
Armed forces deployment, Skilled workers 794
Birds, Italy 740w
Bombings, Birmingham 459-60
County Hall, Property development 482w
Cultural heritage, Taxation 14
EC social charter, EC action 601w
European Development Bank, Newham 284-5
Feldberg, Wilhelm, Animal experiments 662w
Harrods, Dept of Trade inquiries 586w
Hong Kong, Ivory 685-7w
Japan, Porpoises 684w
Judges, Retirement age 387w
London Residuary Body 634w
London Residuary Body, County Hall 635w
M25, Road traffic 10
Metropolitan Police, Finance 725w
National Institute for Medical Research 662w
Nature conservation, Transport of animals 633-4w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 534w
Official engagements 668-9w
Oman, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species 683w

***Banks, Mr Tony**—continued*
Overseas aid, Nature conservation 397w
Road works, Public utilities 60w
Scientific Procedures Inspectorate, Manpower 724w
Teachers, Greater London 126
Teachers, Vacancies 167-8w

BAOR
Nuclear weapons 544-5w
Nuclear weapons deployment 787-8

Bar code equipment
EC law 424-5w
Price labelling 424-5w

Barnes, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1053-4, 1069, 1077, 1078
Electoral register, Community charge (22:06:90) 1302-7, 1308
Questions
Anton Piller orders 111w
Business statements 476
Cambodia, Foreign policy 684
Channel tunnel, Transport of radioactive material 304w
Civil servants, Pay 17-8
Environment protection, Television programmes 159w
Evidence, Bombings 311w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Further education 109899
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 119w
Nuclear weapons deployment 533-4w
Shipbuilding, Investment 588-9w
Yemen, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 119w
Yemen, Nuclear test ban 118w

Barnes, Mrs Rosie
Questions
Community care 800
Educational finance, Inner London boroughs 625w
Home Office, Nuclear accidents 323w
Inner London Education Authority, Expenditure 625w
Ministry of Defence, Nuclear accidents 330w

Barron, Mr Kevin
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 945-6, 971
Questions
Mental illness, Hospital admissions 148-9w
Mental illness, Mental health community care 148w
Shipbuilding, Government assistance 589w

Barrow in Furness
139w

Barry College
Deaf 442w

Basic education
Scotland 123w, 349-50w
Teacher training 123w

Basildon
1-2w, 477-8w
Criminal statistics 100w

Basildon Development Corporation
House prices 1-2w

Basildon District Council
Sixth form education (15:06:90) 659-66

Basingstoke
Road traffic 61w

Bath Health Authority
Hospital beds 34-5w

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Questions
Business statements 1122
Channel tunnel, Railway network 5
Dept of Social Security, Ministers 708-9w

***Batiste, Mr Spencer**—continued*
Spaceflight, Research finance 919-20

Battered wives
Refuges 38w, 131w

Battle, Mr John
Questions
Community charge benefits, Pensioners 698w
Dept of Social Security local offices, Leeds 707w
Developing countries, Debts 395w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 257w
Employment 601-2w
Ethnic groups, Metropolitan counties 672-4w
Industry, Environment protection 580w
Local government finance, Capital investment 478w
National insurance contributions 522-3w
Social Fund, Civil service manpower 521-2w
Social Fund, Loans 607w
Supplementary benefits, Social security payments 607w
Teachers, Manpower 181w
Unemployment benefits, Average earnings 522w

BBC
(11:06:90) 111-8, 349-50w
Political refugees 322w
Radio 321w

BBC External Services
Japan 399w

Beaches
Pollution control 3w, 226w
Pollution monitoring 227w, 443w, 492w, 619w
Radiation hazards 159w
Scotland 526w
Sea pollution 93w, 203w, 480-1w, 526w, 566w, 578w, 619w
Tourist industry 198w
Wales 93w, 227w, 443w, 492w, 578w

Beaches & Coastline (Regulation) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (13:06:90) 291-2

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 23
Questions
Defence procurement 786
Israel, Palestine 286
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 556w

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Questions
Retirement pensions 165w

Bedford bypass
444w

Beef
335w
Exports 79w, 81w, 342-3w, 530w
Food hygiene 27w
Government assistance to industry 339w
Republic of Ireland 696w
Sales promotions 224w
Wales 27w, 87w, 224w, 339w, 671-2

Beef premiums
Northern Ireland 519w

Beggs, Mr Roy
Questions
Education, Northern Ireland 1099
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 27-8w
Housing, Northern Ireland 518w
Housing, Planning permission 518w
Nurses' training, Northern Ireland 694-6w
Poaching, Northern Ireland 688w
School admission, Northern Ireland 422w

***Beggs, Mr Roy**—continued*
Whiteabbey Hospital, Orthopaedics 28w

Beith, Mr A J
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1237, 1251-4
Questions
A696, Road works 628w
Competition 594w
Defence Select Committee, Low flying 536-7w
Members' Facilities & Services Review 110w
Northumberland Health Authority 673w
Orders & regulations, House of Commons debates 237w
Overseas aid, Air pollution control 392-3w
Police housing, Rent allowances 314w
Railway freight transport 60w
Treasury & Civil Service Select Committee 31w
Waste paper, Prices 158w

Belfast
208-9w
Action for community employment 155w
Debenhams 689-90w

Belfast Prison
Violence 687w

Bell, Mr Stuart
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1072-5, 1080-1, 1082, 1083
European Communities (11:06:90) 59-63
Oral question time point of order (19:06:90) 792
Oral questions (20:06:90) 925
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 150
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 801
Questions
Business statements 1123-4
Industry, Environment protection 579-80w

Bellingham, Henry
House of Commons questions 416w

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Questions
Extradition, EC countries 1102
Human rights, Romania 1110
Libyan Arab Republic, Foreign relations 257-8w

Bendall, Mr Vivian
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 964

Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 692, 694, 711, 738-41, 742

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Debates etc.
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 561-2
Questions
Commission for Local Administration in England, Costs 3w
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 379w, 721w
East Africa, Peace negotiations 282-3
Nuclear submarines, USA 328w
Nuclear weapons, Explosives 325w
Police custody, Prisoners on remand 461-2
Rivers, Government grants 9w
Trevi Group 104w
Trevi Group, Criminal records 104w
Trevi Group, Political refugees 104w
Warships, Nuclear weapons 140w

Bennett, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1078
House of Commons divisions (19:06:90) 898

***Bennett, Mr Nicholas**—continued*
Members' conduct (18:06:90) 685-6
Questions
Business statements 1122-3
Community charge, Wales 676
Crime, Detection rates 13w
Eastern Europe, Travel requirements 41w
Firing ranges, Contractorisation 435-6w
Foreign investment in UK, West Wales 672
Israel, Occupied territories 254w
Northern Ireland health & social services councils 155-6w
Over-the-horizon radar 784
Police, Arrests 727-8w
Police, Cost effectiveness 14w
Police, Detection rates 725-7w
Police, Manpower 12-3w
Radar 141w
Secondary education, Cost per pupil 167w

Benyon, Mr W
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 143

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Questions
Aircraft, Ozone layer 302w
Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, Law enforcement 323w
Armed forces deployment, Environmental impact assessment 549-50w
Electricity supply industry, Non-fossil fuel obligation 287w
Evidence, Facsimile transmission 290w, 323w
Ozone layer, Air pollution control 295w
Prison discipline, Legal representation 574-5w
Prison discipline, Remission 575w
Supersonic aircraft, Ozone layer 302-3w

Bessbrook
645w

Bevan, Mr David Gilroy
Questions
Air accidents, Aircraft equipment 562w

Bidston-Wrexham railway line
Investment 75w

Bidwell, Mr Sydney
Questions
Industry, Environment protection 579-80w

Bilateral aid
Cambodia 394w
Greenhouse effect 392w

"Biological Defense Programme"
380w

Biotechnology
Ethics 557-8w

Birds
Drift nets 80w
Droughts 291w
Italy 740w
Nature conservation 356w
Sea pollution 291w

Birmingham
Bombings 15w, (12:06:90) 262-70, 310-2w, 453-4, 459-61

Birmingham City Council (No 2) Bill 1988/89
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned debate on consideration read (14:06:90) 449, (21:06:90) 1093

Birmingham Prison
Prisoners' clothing 14-5w, 724w

Birth registration
Welsh language 752w

Bishopbriggs
Resettlement units 521-2w

BL
see British Library

BL
see Rover Group

Black, John
Coroners 552w

Blair, Mr Tony
Questions
Prisoners' release, Training 604w
Unemployment benefit offices 462w

Blakelock, Keith
Homicide 324w

Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 313-5, 344-5
Water pollution, Coastal areas (13:06:90) 442-3
Questions
USSR, Baltic Republics of USSR 285

Blind
Community charge 197w
Ophthalmic services 234w
Pelican crossings 629w

Blood
Imports 271w

Blood sports
Deer (19:06:90) 804-6

Blood transfusion services
Expenditure 373-4w

Blunkett, Mr David
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 494
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1022-3, 1027
Questions
Housing benefits, Social security benefits disqualification 53w
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90, Pay settlements 150w
Personal income, Taxation 151-2w
Wave power, Research finance 433w

BNFL
see British Nuclear Fuels

Board of Inland Revenue
see Inland Revenue

Boateng, Mr Paul
Questions
Developing countries, Debts 395w
Exports 556w
Network SouthEast, Transport subsidies 64w

Body, Sir Richard
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 613-7, 620, 637, 639, 647

Bolton
360w

Bolton Borough Council
322w

Bombings
Birmingham 15w, (12:06:90) 262-70, 310-2w, 453-4, 459-61
Cross border cooperation in Ireland 1097
Evidence 310-2w, 459-60
Guildford 679-80
Inquiries 311w
Miscarriages of justice 454, 460
Public inquiries 453

Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 308, 312, 314-5, 316-8, 394, 425, 427
Private Members' Bills, 2R order read (22:06:90) 1300

Bora, Alexander
Immigration applications 189w

Border security in Ireland
1100-1
Army in Northern Ireland 1101-2

Borders region
Low flying 325w

Boscawen, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 736-8

Boswell, Mr Tim
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Fees & charges 335w
Defence, USSR 537w
Europe, International cooperation 284
Housing associations, Low cost home ownership schemes 294w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UK contributions 681

***Bottomley, Mr Peter**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Beef, Republic of Ireland 696w
Beef premiums, Northern Ireland 519w
Cattle, Northern Ireland 421w
Conservation, Northern Ireland 693-4w
Fences, Farms 284w
Fishing, Strangford Lough 422w
Marine nature reserves, Strangford Lough 1106-7
Poaching, Northern Ireland 688w
Road accidents, Death 695-6w
Sheep meat, Trade promotion 284w
Transport of hazardous materials, Northern Ireland 693w

***Bottomley, Mrs Virginia**, Minister of State, Department of Health*
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 936-7, 959-65, 975-6, 1020-1, 1029-32
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1159-62
Questions
Acute beds, Greenwich Health Authority 371-2w
Adoption, Disclosure of information 507-8w
AIDS, Disease control 372-3w
AIDS, Future 515-6w
AIDS, Mersey Regional Health Authority 553-4w
Ambulance services, Industrial disputes 553w, 679w
Ambulance services, NHS hospital trusts 404w
Ambulance services, South West Thames Regional Health Authority 235w
Baby milks, District health authorities 679w
Battered wives, Refuges 38w
Blood, Imports 271w
Cancer, Ondansetron 150w
Cancer, Prescription drugs 149-50w
Care of the next infant programme, Cot deaths 752-3w
Child abuse, Local government social services 297w, 370w
Child abuse, Research 370w, 509-10w
Child abuse, Research finance 272-3w
Child abuse, Sexual offences 272w
Children Act 1989 753w
Chiropractic, NHS 144w
Clinical Standards Advisory Group 233w
Clinical Standards Advisory Group, Public appointments 233w
Committee on Safety of Medicines, Allergies 402w
Community care, Personnel 402-3w
Community care, Social workers 403w
Corwin, Death 676w
Corwin, Drug side effects 675w, 750w

***Bottomley, Mrs Virginia**—continued*
Corwin, Prescriptions 675-6w
Crossroads Care 234w
Dental hygienists, Career structure 400w
Dentists, Pay 145w
District health authorities 147w
District health authorities, Pay 146w
District health authorities, Public appointments 515-6w
Drug side effects 373w
Drug side effects, Compensation 275w
Drugs, Licensing 674-5w
Erythropoietin, Licensing 39w
Eye tests, NHS charges exemptions 510w
Eye tests, Optical charges exemptions 553w, 677w, 748w
Eye tests, Regional health authorities 371w
Eye tests, Social security recipients 401-2w
Eye tests, Statistics 402w
Eye tests, Take-up 509w
Factor VIII, Imports 231-2w
Family doctors, Budgeting 370-1w, 511-2w
Family doctors, Greater Manchester 403w
Family planning 507-8w
Family practitioner committees, Wirral 37w
Gamete intrafallopian transfer treatment, Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists 516-7w
Haemophilia, HIV infection 231w
Handicapped, Local government social services 553w
HIV infection, Babies 515w
HIV infection, Regional health authorities 236-8w
HIV infection, Tuberculosis 374w
Hospital beds, West Berkshire Health Authority 516w
Hospital consultants, Merit awards 232-3w
Hospital waiting lists, Hip replacements 36-7w
Hospital waiting lists, Information services 37-8w
Hospital waiting lists, Management consultants 507w
Multiple births, Medical treatments 233-4w
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90, Departmental publications 753-8w
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90, Pay settlements 150w
NHS hospital trusts 145-6w, 513-5w
NHS hospital trusts, Departmental publications 146w
NHS hospital trusts, Disclosure of information 146w
NHS hospital trusts, Opinion polls 275w
NHS internal market, Health services 371w
NHS review, Plain language 513w
NOP Market Research, Eye tests 275w
Northumberland Health Authority 673w
Nursing homes, Local authorities 402w
Ophthalmic services, Blind 234w
Ophthalmic services, Out-patients 274w
Oxfordshire Health Authority, Performance related pay 511w
Regional health authorities, Public appointments 677-8w
Sanitary protection 750w
Sexual offences, Rehabilitation of offenders 272w
Social workers 400w
Social workers' training, Law 235w
Steroid drugs, Drug side effects 372w
Teaching hospitals, Finance 274w
Under-fives initiative 554w
Vaccination, Inner city areas 671-2w
Yellow card scheme, Drug side effects 676-7w, 749-50w

Boundary Commission for England
Parliamentary constituencies 323w

Bournemouth School
127-8

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
78w, 135w, 471-2w, 530w, 620-2w
Animal feed 468w
Carmarthen 338w
Cattle 266-7w

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy*—*continued
Compensation 135w, 332w
Creutzfeldt-Jakob dementia 275w
Criminal proceedings 742w
Disease control 80w, 135w, 332w, 378-9w, 622w
EC action 671-2
Exports 265w
Farms 620-1w
Food contamination 621w
Milk 135w, 621w
Offal 134-5w
Public expenditure 333w
Research 265w
Scotland 525w, 742w
Slaughterhouses 79w
Transmissible encephalopathies 332-3w
Wales 342-3w
Waste disposal 80w

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (No 2) Order 1988
Questions
742w

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Working Party
471-2w

Bowden, Mr Andrew
Questions
Mental health community care, Local government finance 369w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 489
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 243, 244
Questions
Arts finance 46w
British Rail, Government grants 474w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 62w
Channel tunnel, Road traffic 474-5w
Dept of Transport, Civil service manpower 563w
Railway travel, South London 474w
Teachers, Greater London 174w

Bowis, Mr John
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 602-6
Questions
Alcoholism, Residential care 35-6w, 375w
Archaeological sites, Metal detectors 357w
Arts, Curriculum 46w
Arts, Northern Ireland 690-1w
Business statements 473
Cambodia, United Nations 259w
Central London Rail Study 66w
Concessionary fares, Greater London 153w
Dogs, Law reform 103w
Economic policy 133-4
Falkland Islands, Hong Kong 120w
Israel, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 40w
Israel, Vanunu, Mordechai 40w
King's Head Theatre, Finance 12-3
Palestine, Death 120w
Railway stations, Handicapped 475w
Recycling, Iron & steel 568w
UN General Assembly, Cambodia 284
Under-fives initiative 554w
Warsaw Pact, Defence contracts 537-8w
Westminster Abbey, Security 161w

Boyes, Mr Roland
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 768-71
Questions
Chemical weapons, Waste disposal 32-3w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 257w
Exports 556w
HMS Southampton, Shipbuilding 609w
Ministry of Defence, Transport of radioactive materials 32w
Nuclear depth charges 647w
Nuclear submarines, Radioactive waste disposal 790-1

Boyes, Mr Roland*—*continued
Rosyth dockyard, Radioactive waste disposal 32w
Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Antisubmarine warfare 646w
Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Warships 646w
Submarines, Holy Loch 646w
US bases, Holy Loch 646w
Vietnam, Overseas aid 391w
Warships 646-7w

BR
see British Rail

Bradford
269w
Property development 481-2w
Rented housing 481w
Schools 667w

Bradford University
406w

Bradley, Mr Keith
Questions
Ambulance services, NHS hospital trusts 404w
Bombings, Birmingham 311w
Defence, USA 543w
Exports 556w
Family doctors, Greater Manchester 403w
Hospitals, Income 404w
Vietnam, Overseas aid 391w

Bradwell power station
Accidents 434w

Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 938-41, 946, 968
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1144-6, 1201
Questions
Business statements 471
Immigration appeals, Philippines 43w, 359w
Railway network, Southend-on-Sea 8
St Helena, Banks 39w
St Helena, Sea transport 40w

Braithwaite, Mark
324w

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Questions
Arts Council, Regional arts associations 46-7w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 256w
National Campaign for the Arts, Arts finance 47w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 121-2

Brazier, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 700, (19:06:90) 823
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1028
Questions
Armed forces, Career structure 787
EC Foreign Affairs Council 684-5w
Navy, USSR 540w

Breach of contract
Building industry 204w

Brecon Beacons National Park
340w

Brentwood
Planning permission 3w

Bridge programme
734w

Bridges
Irish Sea 349w

Bright, Mr Graham
Questions
Air safety, Smoke hoods 563w
Defence procurement, Cost effectiveness 539w

Bright, Mr Graham*—*continued
Grant maintained schools, Capital investment 181-2w
Smoke hoods, Standards specifications 626-7w

Bristol
477-8w

British Aerospace
426-7w
Ministry of Defence police 382w
Tax allowances 916

British Airways
59w, 254w

British Army Equipment Exhibition
Arms exports 540w

British Broadcasting Corporation
see BBC

British citizenship
725w
Administrative delays 500-1w
Hong Kong (13:06:90) 293-440, 431-2w

British Coal Corporation
482w

British Council
46w
Sri Lanka 397w

British dependent territories
Democracy 259w
Driving licences 627w
Shipping registration 627w
Treaty of Tlatelolco 41w

British embassies
Afghanistan 262w
Civil service manpower 385w
Death 683-4w

British Leyland
see Rover Group

British Library
185-6w

British Merchant Shipping Industry Joint Working Party
67-8w

British Midland Airways
59-60w

British Museum (Natural History)
152w, 483w, 485w, 487-8w, 527w; 532w, 567w, 624w
Arts grants (20:06:90) 1086-94
Collections 557w
Disease control 512w
Environmental policy 741w
Finance 14-5
Medical research 513w
Redundancy 18

British national (overseas)
Hong Kong 121w

British National Space Centre
398w

British nationality
Death 684w

British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 293-440

British Nuclear Fuels
137-8w, 238-9w, 483-4w, 657w
Capital investment 484w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 288-9w

British Rail
7-8, 66w, 94w, 302w, 443w, 474-5w, 628w, 679, (18:06:90) 775, 1110
Bus services 301w
Government grants 301w, 474w, 741w
Public service obligation grant 301w

British Railways (No 2) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for consideration read (14:06:90) 449, (21:06:90) 1093

British Refugee Council
Government grants 501w

British residents abroad
Absent voting 104w
Electoral register 14w, 319w, 361w

British Steel Corporation
113w, 306-7w, 343-4w, 583w
Industrial relations 911-2
Overseas investment 909-12
Privatisation 912
Ravenscraig steelworks 583w, 909-13
Scotland 912

British Telecom
52w

British Transport Police
628w

Brixham
Customs & Excise 337w

Broadmoor Hospital
Death 274w

Brogdale Experimental Horticulture Station
National Fruit Collection 651w

Bromley Education Authority
277w

Brook advisory centres
350w

Brooke, Rt Hon Peter, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 696w
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 697w
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, Civil servants 695w
Army in Northern Ireland 1101, 1103
Army in Northern Ireland, Border security in Ireland 1101-2
Contraceptives, Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 518w
Cross border cooperation in Ireland, Bombings 1097
Cross border cooperation in Ireland, Extradition 1096-7
Devolution, Northern Ireland 692w
EC law, Extradition 1097
Extradition, EC countries 1102
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 1102
Extradition, Terrorism 1102
Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 552w
Security, Northern Ireland 692-3w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 1100-1

Brown, Mr Gordon
Questions
British Aerospace, Tax allowances 916
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 913
Industrial investment 413-4w

Brown, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1079, 1084
Questions
Business statements 1120
Midland Montagu 132

Brown, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Caribbean, Bananas 393w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 257w
EC Industry Council 587w
National insurance, Fraud 408w
School administration, Budgeting 169-70w

Brown, Mr Ron
Questions
Balance of trade, West Germany 556-7w
EC Industry Council 305w
NATO 539w
Terrorism, International cooperation 458

Brown, Mr Ron—continued
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 1100-1

Browne, Mr John
Questions
Business statements 475
Methyl chloroform, Air pollution control 269w

Bruce, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 706, 765, 767-8, (19:06:90) 870
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 240-1
Questions
Arms control negotiations, USSR 383w
Higher education admission 168w
Home Office, Members' correspondence 324w
Roads, Dorset 9
Self-employed, Manpower 601w

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 912
Business, Rent increases 564w
Gas supply industry, Methane 527-8w

Brymbo steelworks
113-4w, 669-70
Factory closures 668-9
Government grants 113w

BSC
see British Steel Corporation

BT
see British Telecom

BTEC
see Business & Technician Education Council

Buchan, Mr Norman
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 174, 192
Questions
Art works, Exports 13-4
EC Industry Council 587w

Buck, Sir Antony
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland 1103
Defence procurement 785

Buckingham
Parliamentary constituencies (21:06:90) 1224

Buckley
Opencast mining 96w

Buckley, Mr George J
Questions
Defence expenditure 538w
Developing countries, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 393w
Export promotion 585w
Summertime 309w

Budgen, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 296, 303-4, 310-1, 410
European Communities (11:06:90) 27, 40, 72-7, 100, 101
Questions
Business statements 1115-6

Budgeting
Drug abuse 370-1w
Family doctors 124-5w, 247w, 370-1w, 403w, 492-3w, 511-2w, 619-20w
Group practices 620w
School administration 169-71w, 369w, 667
Schools 369w
Social Fund 607w

Building industry
Breach of contract 204w
Consumer protection 204w

Building industry—continued
EC action 203w
Licensing 203w
Summertime 457

Building repairs
Manchester Prison 102w, 313w, 321w
Prisons 15w

Building societies
Pay 136

Bulgaria
Trade promotion 209w

Burglary
Longfield Upper School 13w

Burnley
Unemployment 461w

Burns, Mr Simon
Questions
Anglia Higher Education College, Polytechnics 716w
Arts finance 44w
Banks, EC law 212w
Bypasses, Danbury 189w
Chelmsford Prison, Prison overcrowding 658-9w
Council for National Academic Awards 278w
Cultural heritage 14
Development aid, Expenditure 356w
Estates Directorate, Civil service agencies 751w
Food hygiene, Food microbiology 147-8w
Grant maintained schools, School population 178w
Medical education 401w, 555-6w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Chelmsford 658w
Prisons, Sanitation 315w
Road construction, Essex 153w
Squatting, Law reform 797

Burns International Security Services
Government buildings 49w
Public buildings 49w

Burt, Mr Alistair
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1077-8
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 871-5
Questions
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 313w
Minimum wage 463w
Rapid transit systems, Greater Manchester 68w
South Africa, Constitutions 255w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 272
Western European Union, UK contributions 545w

Bus services
British Rail 301w
Competition 7, 62w
Greater London 7
West Yorkshire 62w

Bus services subsidies
473w

Buses
Speed limits 7, 154w

Business
National insurance 605-6w
Rent increases 564w

Business & Technician Education Council
713w

Business motions
(20:06:90) 1020, (22:06:90) 1301

Business questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:06:90) 1114

Business sponsorship incentive scheme
45w

Business statements
469-81, 1113-24

Business travel
Car allowances 653-4w

Butcher, Mr John
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 296-8, 317, 319, 431
Questions
Terrorism, Netherlands 792-3

Butler, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 509
Questions
Caribbean, Drug crimes 262w
Developing countries, Environment protection 276w
Foreign investment in UK 424w
Forests 565-6w
History education, Wales 439w
Ministry of Defence, Government departments 244w
Official engagements 668-9w
Prisoners, Drug abuse 452

Butterfill, Mr John
Questions
Business sponsorship incentive scheme 45w

Bypasses
Danbury 189w
Road construction 226w, 252w
Scotland 252w
Wales 226w

C130 aircraft
Low flying 241w

CA
see Consumers' Association

CAA
see Civil Aviation Authority

Cabinet Office
269w
Energy consumption 747w
Management consultants 97-9w

Caborn, Mr Richard
Questions
Defence review 534w
Regional planning & development 921-2
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 171-2w
South Africa, Political parties 255w

Calcutt Committee
see Privacy & Press Law Review

Calcutt Inquiry
see Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry

Calderdale
Community charge capping 123
Educational administration (21:06:90) 1227-34
Housing & handicapped 295-6w
Secondary education 123

Caldey Island Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Ways & means res* (19:06:90) 899

Callaghan, Mr Jim
Questions
School administration, Budgeting 170w

Calling of members
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:06:90) 382, 410, (21:06:90) 1124

Cambodia
Bilateral aid 394w
Foreign policy 684
Overseas aid 684
UN General Assembly 283-4
United Nations 259w

Cambridge University
16

Camden
Housing insulation 118w, 481w
Neighbourhood energy action scheme 137w

Camelford
Water pollution 403w

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
537w

Campbell, Mr Menzies
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 724-8, (19:06:90) 876
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 159, 164, 171, 184, 199-204, 230
Questions
Courts martial, World War II 141w
Defence procurement 785
Football Licensing Authority, Offices 322w
Football Licensing Authority, Public appointments 323w
Housing, Rural areas 614w
Iron & steel industry 582-3w
NATO 546w
Road traffic control, Gateside 615w
Touting, Tickets 321w

Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Questions
Caribbean, Bananas 393w
Defence, West Germany 795
Export promotion 585w
School buildings 171w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 122
Social workers' failures, Manpower 1107-8

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 304, 305, 307, 313-4, 348, 362-4, 366, 367, 368, 372, 385-7, 390, 391-2, 396, 422, 427-8
Catheters, Prescription charges exemptions (14:06:90) 584, 585
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1000, 1002
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1141, 1162
Overseas aid, Agriculture (14:06:90) 580
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 147
Questions
Business statements 472
Ethiopia, Famine 394w
House of Commons Select Committees, Television 107-9w
Members' facilities, Telephones 106w
Nuclear fuels, Exports 96w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 260w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 260w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Publishing 238w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Video recordings 261w
Regional selective assistance, West Cumbria 921
Sheppey General Hospital 273-4w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering, Security 139w
Vietnamese refugees, Hong Kong 681

Canada
Low flying 31w

Canavan, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 169-70, 205, 213-6, 231
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 149
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 697w
Armed forces deployment, Germany 379w
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 909-10
Clothing industry, Manpower 604w

Canavan, Mr Dennis—continued
Defence 328w
Southern Africa, Overseas aid 391w

Cancer
Medical research 509w
Medical treatments 93w
North Wales 93w
Ondansetron 150w
Prescription drugs 149-50w

Cancer hazards
Industrial health & safety 604w

Capital gains tax
Tax allowances 414w

Capital investment
Air traffic control 69w
British Nuclear Fuels 484w
Ceredigion 577w
Grant maintained schools 181-2w
Gwynedd Health Authority 438w
Local education authorities 181-2w, 454-7w
Local government finance 478w
London Regional Transport 61w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 288-9w
Railway network 465
Railway transport 58w
Roads 58w
Schools 88w
Scottish Homes 252w
Water supply 247-8w

Capital rules
Community charge benefits 700w
Means tested benefits 708w

Car allowances
Business travel 653-4w
Prison visitors 314w

Car industry
EC internal trade 595w, 917-8
Foreign companies in UK 595w

Caravans
Fire regulations 211w

Carbon dioxide
Air pollution control 798

Carbon tetrachloride
295w

Cardiff City Council
342w

Care of the next infant programme
Cot deaths 752-3w

Career structure
Armed forces 787
Dental hygienists 400w

Caribbean
Bananas 393w
Drug crimes 262w

"Caring for People White Paper"
753-8w

Carlile, Mr Alex
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 419-20, 423, 426
Questions
AIDS, Disease control 372-3w
AIDS, Future 515-6w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Compensation 135w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Exports 265w
Community councils, Wales 677
Corwin, Death 676w
Corwin, Prescriptions 675-6w
Eastern Europe, Antisemitism 386w
Foxes, Urban areas 357w
HIV infection, Babies 515w
Homelessness 420-1w, 481w
Homelessness, Greater London 357-8w
Housing construction 635w
Juno project, Finance 586w
Liberia, Overseas aid 386w

Carlile, Mr Alex—continued
Myanmar, Elections 561w
Overseas students, Greater London 354w
Police custody, Prison escapes 572w
Police custody, Prisoners on remand 572-3w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Wales 367-8w
Railway network, Subsidies 628-9w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Police misconduct 693w
Schools, Budgeting 369w
Schools, Wales 369w
Taiwan, Foreign policy 561w
Teachers, Average earnings 655w
Teachers, Pay settlements 655w
USSR, South Korea 385w
Yemen, Foreign relations 385-6w

Carlisle, Mr John
Questions
East Africa, Peace negotiations 283

Carmarthen
85-6w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 338w

Carr, Mike
(14:06:90) 509-12

Carr, Mr Mike
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 509-12
Questions
Business statements 1116-7
Income support, Sefton 707-8w

Carrington, Mr Matthew
Questions
Arts, Administrative costs 44w
Conventional weapons, USSR 544w
London Regional Transport, Capital investment 61w
Official engagements 100w

Cars
Armed forces 720w
Motor vehicle testing 188w
Security 309-10w

Cartrefi Cymru
24-5w

Cartwright, Mr John
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 836-40
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1133
Questions
Acute beds, Greenwich Health Authority 371-2w
East London river crossing, Public inquiries 354-5w
Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements in English Mathematics & Science) Orders 1990 458w
NHS internal market, Health services 371w

CAS
see Citizens Advice Scotland

Case assessment
553w

Case management
553w

Caseous lymphadenitis
77w, 650w
Disease control 77-8w, 650w
Import of live animals 650-1w

Cash, Mr William
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 620, 628, 634, 637, 639-40, 646
Exports (22:06:90) 1257, 1262, 1268, 1278, 1280-1, 1291-3
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 956, 957, 962

Cash, Mr William—continued
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1130-1
Standing Order No 20 applications, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community (20:06:90) 926-7
Questions
Beef, Exports 79w

Castleford Normanton & District Hospital
146w

CASW
see Committee on Medical Aspects of Contamination of Air Etc

Category A prisoners
360-1w

Cathedrals
Choirs 182w

Catheters
Prescription charges exemptions (14:06:90) 584-90

Cattewater Reclamation Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 449, (21:06:90) 1093

Cattle
Animal husbandry 87w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 266-7w
Export of live animals 79w
Meat 82-3w
Northern Ireland 421w
Slaughterhouses 83w

CBA
see Certificated Bailiffs' Association of England & Wales

CBI
see Confederation of British Industry

Census
Agriculture 531-2w

Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work
619w

Central Council of Physical Recreation
659w

Central Electricity Generating Board
7w, 239w, 286w

Central heating
Norman Shaw buildings 419w

Central London Rail Study
66w

Ceredigion
Capital investment 577w
Health services 654w
Welsh language 655w

Certificated bailiffs
Examinations 732-3w
Manpower 733w

Certificated Bailiffs' Association of England & Wales
732-3w

CFE talks
42-3w, 118w
Defence equipment 143-4w
Tanks 543w

CGDK
see Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda, Minister for Overseas Development
Debates etc.
Overseas aid, Agriculture (14:06:90) 566-9, 579-83
Questions
Bilateral aid, Greenhouse effect 392w
Cambodia, Bilateral aid 394w

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda—continued
Cambodia, Foreign policy 684
Caribbean, Bananas 393w
Crown Agents, Postage stamps 643w
Developing countries, Debts 395w
Developing countries, Environment protection 276w
Developing countries, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 393w
Developing countries, Irrigation 276w
Development aid, Expenditure 356w
Eastern Europe, International assistance 394w
Eastern Europe, Know-how Fund 213-4w
EC Development Council 390w
Environment protection, Overseas aid 11w
Ethiopia, Disaster relief 394-5w
Ethiopia, Famine 394w
Ethiopia, Overseas aid 276w
International Service for National Agricultural Research, UK contributions 216-7w
Namibia, Lome Convention 392w
Overseas aid 682-4
Overseas aid, Agricultural research 483w
Overseas aid, AIDS 391-2w
Overseas aid, Air pollution control 11w, 392-3w
Overseas aid, Economic growth 390w
Overseas aid, Environment protection 391w
Overseas aid, Expenditure 643w
Overseas aid, Forest protection 397w
Overseas aid, Handicapped 561-2w
Overseas aid, Nature conservation 397w
Overseas aid, Population 716w
Overseas aid, Rain forests 396w
Overseas aid, Refugees 643-4w
Rain forests, Forest protection 397-8w
Rain forests, Forestry research 397w
Romania, AIDS 395w
South Africa, Educational aid 395-6w
South Africa, Overseas aid 396w
Southern Africa, Overseas aid 391w
Southern African Development Coordination Conference 396w
Sri Lanka, British Council 397w
Sri Lanka, Overseas aid 154-5w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees 393-4w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UK contributions 681
Vietnam, Overseas aid 275-6w, 391w
Vietnamese refugees, Hong Kong 681-2
Zambia, Overseas aid 396w

Channel ferries
Safety regulations 445w

Channel tunnel
Customs 20w
Kent County Constabulary 11w
Ministerial statements (14:06:90) 482-500
Motor vehicles 189w
Police 11w
Railway freight transport 443w
Railway network 3-5, 62w, 133, 463-4, (14:06:90) 482-500
Road traffic 474-5w
Roads 61w
Rolling stock 628w
Security 61w, 188-9w
South Wales 443w
Transport of radioactive materials 304w
Wales 443w

Channel Tunnel Act 1987
Questions
3-4

Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 378-81, 396, 399-400

Charities
Scotland 49w, 347w
Tax allowances 377w

Charity Commission
625w

Chelmsford
Neighbourhood watch schemes 658w

Chelmsford Prison
Prison overcrowding 658-9w

Chemical weapons
Public order policing 429-30w
Waste disposal 32-3w

Chemicals
Greenhouse effect 306-7w
Industrial production 306-7w

Chernobyl
134w

"Chickengate"
470w

Child abuse
105w, 501w
Admissibility of evidence 570w
Departmental coordination 99w
Evidence 573-4w
Habitual offenders 728-9w
Local government social services 297w, 370w
Research 370w, 509-10w
Research finance 272-3w
Sexual offences 272w, 365-6w

Child Abuse Interdepartmental Group
99w, 365-6w
Public appointments 365w

Child care
Fife 131w
Ministerial Group on Women's Issues 19w

Child workers
Import controls (13:06:90) 288

Children
AIDS 515w
Concessionary fares 71w
Evidence 570w, 573-4w
Eye tests 227w, 339w
Leukaemia 50-1w
Mobility allowance 524w
Video recordings 317w

Children Act 1989
Questions
753w
Wales 737w

Children & Young Persons Act 1933
Questions
573-4w

Children's Society
750-1w

Chile
Overseas aid 259-60w
Trade fairs 795

China
Political refugees 322w
Refugees 190-1w
Temporary immigrants 571w

Chiropractic
NHS 144w

Chlorofluorocarbons
159-61w, 295w, 392-3w, 416w
Greenhouse effect 798
Refrigerators 114w
Solvents 112w, 114-5w
Waste disposal 414w

Chlorofluorocarbons (Control) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:06:90) 656, (22:06:90) 1299

Choirs
Cathedrals 182w

***Chope, Mr Christopher**, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency & Crown Suppliers Bill, Lords amendts (11:06:90) 108, 109, 110

***Chope, Mr Christopher**—continued*
Questions
Business, Rent increases 564w
Community charge, Blind 197w
Community charge, Non-payment 1w
Community charge, Nurses 294w
Community charge, Tax collection 478w
Community charge exemptions, Elderly 1w
Compulsory purchase, Housing improvement 639-40w
Double glazing, Housing construction 479w
Government buildings, Energy consumption 419w
Government grants to local authorities, Community charge 419-20w
Homelessness, Sunderland 204w
House prices, Basildon Development Corporation 1-2w
House renovation grants, Private sector housing 639w
Housing action trusts, Lambeth 200w
Housing & handicapped, House renovation grants 295-6w
Housing associations 421w
Housing associations, House purchase 567-8w
Housing associations, Low cost home ownership schemes 294w
Housing associations, Merseyside 631w
Housing construction 635w
Housing Corporation, Tenants' choice 565w
Local government expenditure, Voluntary organisations 203w
Local government finance, Capital investment 478w
Local government finance, Walsall 1w
Loft insulation 420w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 5w
Non-domestic rates 477-9w
Non-domestic rates, Manufacturing industries 293w
Norman Shaw buildings, Central heating 419w
Norman Shaw buildings, Water pollution 296w
Palace of Westminster, Recycling 3w
Parish councils, Uniform business rate 199w
Rateable value 478w
Rent control, Merseyside 564-5w
Right to buy 479w
Standard community charge, Local authority powers 158-9w
Uniform business rate, Cost of living 294-5w
Uniform business rate, Enterprise zones 566w
Uniform business rate, Holiday accommodation 199w

Christmas bonus
Northern Ireland 518w

Churchill, Mr Winston
Questions
Community charge benefits, Married people 700w
EC social charter, Part-time employment 466-8
Middle East, Nuclear non proliferation 275
Shellfish, Health warnings 132w

Citizens' Advice Scotland
361-2w, 592-3w

City grants
632w
Expenditure 481w
St Helens 482w
3D 481-2w

City technology colleges
175w
Corby 559w
Government grants 714w
Haberdashers' Askes' School 23-4w, 182-3w, 625w, 715w

Civil Aviation Authority
69w, 562-3w

Civil defence
189-90w
Local government functions 570w

Civil liability
Oil pollution 73-4w

Civil proceedings
Insider trading 640w

Civil servants
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 695w
Conditions of employment 15
Disabled workers 551w
Pay 17-8
Recruitment 16-7

Civil servants' background
Universities 16

Civil servants' business appointments
Astra Training Services 15-6
Dept of Trade & Industry 599w

Civil servants'-secondment
Civil service manpower 734w

Civil service agencies
644w, 733-4w
Civil service manpower 31w
Conditions of employment 15
Estates Directorate 751w

Civil service manpower
British embassies 385w
Civil servants' secondment 734w
Civil service agencies 31w
Customs & Excise 336-7w
Dept of Transport 563w
Energy conservation 285w
Government assistance to industry 915-6
Occupational deafness 709w
Social Fund 521-2w
Wages Inspectorate 58w

Civil Spectrum Review Committee
426w

CLAE
see Commission for Local Administration in England

***Clark, Mr Alan**, Minister of State for Defence Procurement*
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 766, 771-4
Questions
Armed forces deployment, Wales 33w
Arms exports, Iraq 436w, 792
Arms trade, Exports 722w
Astra Holdings, Arms export 545w
Astra Holdings, Defence equipment 791
British Army Equipment Exhibition, Arms exports 540w
Defence equipment, Middle East 329w
Defence expenditure 538w
Defence industries 535-6w
Defence procurement 785-6
Defence procurement, Cost effectiveness 539w
Defence review, Defence industries 143w
European fighter aircraft, Defence procurement 546w
Guided weapons, Defence research 647-8w
Harrier aircraft, Defence procurement 325w
Military aircraft, Defence procurement 380w
Ministry of Defence, Corruption 647w
Nuclear depth charges 647w
Nuclear weapons, International cooperation 244w
Official hospitality, Codes of practice 647w
Over-the-horizon radar 536w, 784
Over-the-horizon radar, Public opinion 784
Radar 141w, 536w
ROF Nottingham, Defence contracts 436w
Trade fairs, Chile 795

Clark, Mr Alan*—*continued
Trident 541w
Trident missiles, Defence expenditure 244w
Trident missiles, Safety 435w

Clark, Dr David
Questions
Advisory Committee on Pesticides 530w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Conservation 530-1w
Agriculture, Census 531-2w
Animal diseases, Import of live animals 650w
Animal feed, Food contamination 268w
Animal quarantine, Animal diseases 77w
Beef 335w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Cattle 266-7w
Caseous lymphadenitis 77w
Caseous lymphadenitis, Disease control 77-8w, 650w
Caseous lymphadenitis, Import of live animals 650-1w
Drift nets 80w
Drift nets, Birds 80w
Fish farming, Antibiotics 81w
Fish farming, Pesticides 81w
Pigs, Animal feed 78w, 470-1w
Poultry, Spain 268w
Salmon, Antibiotics 81w
Slaughterhouses, Environmental health 268w
Slaughterhouses, Veterinary services 622w
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee 135w
Veterinary drugs, Environment protection 80-1w

Clark, Rt Hon Sir William
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 393

Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth, Secretary of State for Health
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 935, 965, 977, 993-1009, 1011, 1019-20, 1035
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1169, 1180, 1191-2, 1200-5, 1207, 1212, 1221
Questions
Estates Directorate, Civil service agencies 751w
Food hygiene, Food microbiology 147-8w
Homelessness, Young people 750-1w
Medical education 401w, 555-6w
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Recruitment 751-2w

Clarke, Mr Tom
Questions
British Steel Corporation 307w
Debts, Advisory services 582w
Handicapped, Local authorities 400-1w
Handicapped, Local government social services 553w

Clay, Mr Bob
Questions
Dockyards, Health physics 540-1w
Enterprise zones, Sunderland 297w
Evidence, Bombings 310w
Homelessness, Sunderland 204w
Tyne & Wear Development Corporation, Employment opportunities 296w
Urban programme, Sunderland 203w

Clelland, Mr David
Questions
Export promotion 585w
Political refugees, Immigration applications 319w

Clinical Standards Advisory Group
233w
Public appointments 233w

Clothing industry
Manpower 604w

Clwyd
Power stations 7w
Summertime 456-7

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1252
Overseas aid, Agriculture (14:06:90) 569-76
Questions
Arms exports, Iraq 436w
British embassies, Civil service manpower 385w
Development aid, Expenditure 356w
EC Development Council 390w
European Development Bank, UK contributions 378w
International Service for National Agricultural Research, UK contributions 276-7w
Namibia, Lome Convention 392w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 683w
Overseas aid 683
Overseas aid, Expenditure 643w
USSR, Overseas aid 366w

CNAA
see Council for National Academic Awards

CND
see Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Coal Industry (Restructuring Grants) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(21:06:90) 1135

Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea
283

Coastal areas
Fishing gear 48w
Low flying 139w
Radioactivity 477w
Water pollution (13:06:90) 441-8

Coastal protection
Gwent 673

COCOM
see Coordinating Committee on Export Controls

Codes of practice
Official hospitality 647w
Quota of disabled workers 58w
Solvents 115w

Coffee
Prices 489w

Cohen, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1051, 1053
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 711, (19:06:90) 825, 867-71
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 146
Road construction, Public petitions (18:06:90) 774-5
Questions
Adoption, Romania 428w
Advisory services, Debts 361w
Afghanistan, British embassies 262w
Ambulance services, Industrial disputes 553w
Armed forces, Security 720w
CFE talks, Defence equipment 143-4w
Dale, Pat, Inquiries 501w
Dockyards, Health physics 540-1w
Ethiopia, Overseas aid 276w
Fire prevention 17w
Guided weapons, Iraq 138w
Hong Kong, Ivory 9w
London Fire Brigade, Women 17w
London Underground, Safety 562-3w
Low flying, Ammunition 381w
M11, Public inquiries 188w
Military alliances, Nuclear power 668w
Ministry of Defence, Corruption 647w
Moyle, Jonathan, Death 207w
Network SouthEast, Greater London 63-4w

Cohen, Mr Harry*—*continued
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 233w
Nuclear weapons, Nuclear safety 435w
Official hospitality, Codes of practice 647w
Pedestrian crossings, Death 187w
Police civilians, Trade union membership 16w
Prisoners' release, Prison overcrowding 16w
Prosecutions, Dog fighting 103w
Prosecutions, Pedestrian crossings 187-8w
Roads, Leyton 9
Slane, Gerard, Death 688w
Teachers, Vacancies 168w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Pets 471-2w
Turkey, Penal reform 494w
Turkey, Political prisoners 494w
West Lavington Research Establishment, Defence research 720w
West Lavington Research Establishment, Official secrets 720w

Colchester Military Correction & Training Centre
Prison sentences 33w

Coleman, Mr Donald
Questions
Employment training, Wales 670-1

Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry
34w

Collections
British Museum (Natural History) 557w

Coine Valley
Unemployment 602w

Colombia
Elections 255w
Temporary immigrants 659w

Colorado beetles
333w

Colvin, Mr Michael
Questions
Badgers Act 1973, Convictions 100-1w
Defence review 534w
Employment training 603w
Office of Fair Trading, EC internal trade 209-10w

COMARE
see Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment

Command & control
721w

Commercial television
Independent Broadcasting Authority 725w

Commission for Local Administration in England
Costs 3w

Commission of the European Communities
see European Commission

Committee on Medical Aspects of Contamination of Air etc
678-9w

Committee of Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment
235-6w, 375w

Committee on Safety of Medicines
373w, 676w, 749-50w
Allergies 402w
Corwin 675w
Drug side effects 674-5w

Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food
147-8w

Common agricultural policy
Food prices 667w

Common land
Legislation 157w, 416-7w

Commonbold land
293w, 389w

Commonbold Land Working Group
389w

Community care
800
Personnel 402-3w
Social workers 403w

Community charge
667w
Administrative costs 88w, 676-7, 680w
Advertising 358-9w
Advisory services 361-2w, 592-3w
Blind 197w
Demonstrations 192-4w
Departmental correspondence 224w
Domestic rates 479-80w
Electoral register (22:06:90) 1302-8
Government grants to local authorities 419-20w
Income support 700w, 707w
Income tax 152w
Local government staff 675-6
London boroughs 698-9w
Non-payment 1w, 87-8w, 680w
Nurses 294w
Official residences 745w
Personal income 698-9w
Police 312w
Rent allowances 312w
Scotland 526w, 680w
Students 526w
Tax collection 478w
Transitional relief 224-5w
Voluntary organisations 613-4w
Wales 87-8w, 224w, 440w, 675-7
Youth training 463w

Community charge benefits
Attendance allowance 698w
Capital rules 700w
Lambeth 408-9w
Married people 332w, 700w
Mobility allowance 698w
Pensioners 698w
Scotland 697-8w

Community charge capping
477-8w
Calderdale 123
Education 123-4, 179w

Community charge exemptions
Elderly 1w
Personal savings 331-2w

Community charge register
Housing benefits 53w

Community councils
Wales 438w, 677

Community education
Scotland 122-3w, 681-2w

Community health councils
NHS finance 508w

Community programme
Housing insulation 117w
Islington 118w

Community relations
Northern Ireland 691-2w

Community service orders
Expenditure 427w
Local government expenditure 446w
Scotland 446w, 449w
Working hours 449w, 658w

Community work
National Youth Agency 458w

Community workshops
Finance 692w
Northern Ireland 1105-6

Companies
Banks 133
Export licensing 308w

Companies—continued
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland 279-83w

Companies Act 1989 (Commencement No 2) Order 1990
Questions
698w

Companies (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 1990
Debates etc.
(18:06:90) 686

Companies House Executive Agency
642w

Company law
595w
Prosecutions 387w

Company liquidations
Directors 423w
Natural Beauty Products (18:06:90) 776-82

Company pensions
Retirement age 608w

Company registration
Limited liability 489w, 600w

Compensation
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 135w, 332w
Drug side effects 275w
Fisheries 131w, 486w
Low flying 31w
Oil pollution 73-4w
Repetitive strain injury 216w
Ulster Defence Regiment 783-4

Competition
594w
Air routes 58-9w, 71w
Air transport 59-60w
Bus services 7, 62w
Water supply industry 199w

Competition Act 1980
Questions
362w

Competition law
Transport subsidies 72w

Complaints
Low flying 793

Complaints against police
(19:06:90) 899
Director of Public Prosecutions 289w
Members' correspondence 663w
Metropolitan Police 19w

Comptroller & Auditor General
see National Audit Office

Compulsorily detained mental patients
Scotland 248-9w

Compulsory purchase
Housing improvement 639-40w

Computer industry
907-9
Defence contracts 908
Production 594w

Computer privacy
EC law 498w

Computer software
Industrial health & safety 589-90w
Standards specifications 589-90w

Computers
Safety standards 598-9w
Science & Engineering Research Council 354w

Computers in National Health Service
748-9w

Computers in schools
180w

Concessionary fares
Children 71w
Greater London 153w
London Regional Transport 71w

Concessionary television licences
313w
Northern Ireland 657-8w

Conditions of employment
Civil servants 15
Civil service agencies 15
Prison staff 317w
Stagecoach 11

Confederation of British Industry
Export Credits Guarantee Department 593-4w
Inflation 557w
Investment 587-8w
Manufacturing industries 584w

Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe
see European Security Conference

Conferences
Environment 4-5w
Heap, John 120w

Confidence building measures
300w

Connah's Quay power station
8w

Conservation
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 530-1w
Northern Ireland 693-4w

Conservation of Seals Act 1970
Questions
250w

Conservative Party
692w

Constitutions
South Africa 255w

Construction
AWE Aldermaston 543w
Higher education 217w

Construction costs
Astley Bridge Police Station 360w
RAF Cranwell 140w
Road construction 68w

Consultants
Dept of the Environment 358w
Student Loans Company 502w

Consumer protection
Building industry 204w

Consumers' Association
424-5w

Contraceptives
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 518w

Contractorisation
342w
Firing ranges 435-6w

Contracts
HMSO 21w
Hunterprint 213w
Non-fossil fuel obligation 657w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 286w, 289w
Training Agency 251-2w

Contracts for services
Dept of Social Security 164w
Dept of the Environment 159w
Local education authorities 182w
Recycling 569w
Road construction 303w
Waste disposal 568-9w

Contracts of employment
Family doctors 671-2w

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
685-7w
Oman 683w

Conventional weapons
USSR 544w

Conveyancing
Fees & charges 348w
Scotland 348w

Convictions
Armed forces discharges 33w
Army 33w
Badgers Act 1973 100-1w
Homicide 324w
Maguire, Annie 387w
Miscarriages of justice 311-2w
Poaching 571w
Police misconduct 661w
Wallace, Colin 196w

Conway, Mr Derek
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 880-1
Exports (22:06:90) 1237
Standing Order No 20 applications, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community (20:06:90) 925
Questions
Armed forces reserves, Armed forces recruitment 542w
Car industry, Foreign companies in UK 595w
Murrell, Hilda, Criminal investigation 678
Northern Ireland Community Relations Council 690w

Cook, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 810, 850-2
Questions
CFE talks, Tanks 543w
Debts, Advisory services 582w
Ethiopia, Disaster relief 394-5w
Hazardous wastes, Waste disposal 1w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 42w

Cook, Mr Robin
Questions
District health authorities, Public appointments 515-6w
Family credit, Social security recipients 524w
Family doctors, Budgeting 493w, 512w
Group practices, Budgeting 620w
Hospital beds, West Berkshire Health Authority 516w
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90, Departmental publications 753-8w
NHS, Information technology 748-9w
NHS hospital trusts 513-5w
NHS hospital trusts, Opinion polls 275w
NHS review, Plain language 513w
Smoking, Advisory services 677w

Cook-chill catering
Hospital catering 149w

Cookstown
279-83w

Coombs, Mr Anthony
Questions
Compulsory purchase, Housing improvement 639-40w
Confederation of British Industry, Investment 587-8w
Matrimonial proceedings, Legal aid 390w

Coombs, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 512-5
Questions
M4, Road works 69w
Sunday trading 314w

Coordinating Committee on Export Controls
383-4w
South Africa 119w

Coordinating Committee on Export Controls —continued
USA 399w

***Cope, Rt Hon John**, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office*
Questions
Belfast prison, Violence 687w
Debts, Northern Ireland 694w
Energy analysis, Northern Ireland Office 30w
Energy conservation, Northern Ireland Office 285w
Energy consumption, Northern Ireland Office 30w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 687-8w
Human rights, Northern Ireland 694w, 1104-5
Kincora Children's Home, Inquiries 29w
Life imprisonment, Prisoners' release 28w
Northern Ireland Office, Ministers' domestic visits 366w
Offences against the administration of justice, Sexual offences 1107
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Police misconduct 693w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Television programmes 691w
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry 688-9w
Slane, Gerard, Death 688w
Terrorism, Death 518w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Death 689w

Corbett, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 300
Questions
Airport security 63w
Cambodia, Bilateral aid 394w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 690w
Feldberg, Wilhelm, Animal experiments 622-3w
National Institute for Medical Research, Licensing 663w
Packaging, Environment protection 592w

Corby
City technology colleges 559w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc.
Abolition of Deer Hunting Bill, 1R (19:06:90) 804-6
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1049
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 759-61
Oral question time point of order (19:06:90) 791-2
Private Members' Bills, 2R order read (22:06:90) 1300
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 801
Questions
Agriculture, Nuclear accidents 267w
Albania, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 261-2w
Ambulance services, South West Thames Regional Health Authority 235w
Astra Holdings, Defence equipment 791
Educational finance, Inner London boroughs 172w
El Salvador, Human rights 253w
Evidence, Bombings 311w
Explosives, Waste disposal 550w
HMS Invincible, Nuclear weapons deployment 789
Housing, Greater London 96w
Mortgage defaulters, Homelessness 635-6w
Mortgage defaulters, Repossession orders 196w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Arms control negotiations 244w
Notting Hill carnival, North Kensington task force 666w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Nuclear non proliferation 262w
Nuclear non proliferation, International conferences 262w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy—continued
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Non-governmental organisations 261w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Technical assistance 261w
Nuclear weapons, International cooperation 244w
Nuclear weapons tests, USA 243w
Open skies proposals, International conferences 263w
Plutonium, Nuclear physics 239w
Repossession orders, Greater London 636w
Trident missiles, Defence expenditure 244w

Corfield Committee
see Defence & Civil Spectrum Review Committee

Corlan Housing Association
Inquiries 441-2w

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 418
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1181, 1197-8, 1209

Coroners
Black, John 552w

Corporate manslaughter
Industrial accidents 679

Corruption
Ministry of Defence 647w

Corwin
Committee on Safety of Medicines 675w
Death 676w
Drug side effects 675-6w, 750w
Prescriptions 675-6w

Cost benefit analysis
East London Rail Study 444-5w

Cost effectiveness
Defence procurement 539w
Dept of Education & Science 184w
Dept of Health 404w
Dept of Social Security 166w
Police 14w

Cost of living
Uniform business rate 294-5w

Cost per pupil
Secondary education 167w

Cot deaths
Care of the next infant programme 752-3w

Couchman, Mr James
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 496-7
Questions
Beaches, Sea pollution 480-1w

Council for National Academic Awards
278w

Council tenants
House purchase 631w

Countryside
532w
Road construction 187w

Countryside premium scheme
Agricultural land 466w

County court bailiffs
731w
Educational qualifications 731-2w
Manpower 733w

County Hall
London Residuary Body 635w
Property development 482w

Court of Appeal
387w
Criminal appeals 661-2w

Courts
Armagh 290w
Flags 290w

Courts martial
World War II 141w

Cousins, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 493
Questions
Baby milks, Soya beans 236w
Blood transfusion services, Expenditure 373-4w
Bombings, Birmingham 311w
Coffee, Prices 489w
Company law 595w
Company registration, Limited liability 489w, 600w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Civil servants' business appointments 599w
Dunsdale Securities 642w
Export credit, OECD countries 490w
Financial Reporting Council, Accountants 491w
Financial Reporting Council, Public appointments 210w
Food Advisory Committee 622-4w
Hospital waiting lists, Management consultants 507w
Housing benefits, Domestic rates 51w
Inland Revenue, Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1988 413w
National Front, Limited liability 596w, 642w
North Sea, Sewage 487w
Offshore structures 432-3w
Personal pensions, National Insurance Fund 524w
Petroleum revenue tax, North sea oil 413w
Pollution monitoring, Algae 567w
Professional liability 642w
Radioactive waste disposal, Licensing 566-7w
Radioactive waste disposal, Pollution monitoring 566w
Regional health authorities, Public appointments 677-8w
Uniform business rate, Enterprise zones 566w
Waste disposal, Insulation 564w

Cox, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 626-30
Questions
Business statements 1117
Developing countries, Debts 395w
Educational exchanges, Eastern Europe 180w
Low flying, Armed forces training 31w
Low flying, Canada 31w
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 102w
Ministers' visits abroad, USSR 539w
Packaging, Environment protection 592w
Police custody 360w
Prisons, Sanitation 17w, 315w
Road traffic, Greater London 64w
Sri Lanka, British Council 397w

Crabs
132w
Food contamination 467-8w
North East region 467-8w

Cran, Mr James
Questions
Humberside College of Higher Education 181w

Creutzfeldt-Jakob dementia
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 275w
Regional health authorities 237w

Cricket
Crowd safety 569w

Crime
309w
Cumbria 308w

Crime—continued
Derbyshire 309w
Detection rates 13w
Greater Manchester 309w
Gwent 308w
Leicestershire 309w
Staffordshire 308-9w
Surrey 309w
Sussex 309w
Warwickshire 308w
Wiltshire 309w

Crime prevention
463
Banks 103w
Drug crimes 316w
Insider trading 640w
West Yorkshire 310w

Crime victims
Crimes of violence 314-5w

Crimes against property
Further education 1099
Northern Ireland 1099

Crimes of violence
Crime victims 314-5w
Police 498-9w

Criminal Appeal Act 1968
Questions
661-2w

Criminal appeals
Court of appeal 661-2w

Criminal investigation
Arson 190w
Lockerbie 458
Meibion Glyndwr 190w
Murrell, Hilda 15w, 677-8
War crimes 320w

Criminal proceedings
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 742w

Criminal records
322w
Teachers 101w, 183-4w
Trevi Group 104w

Criminal statistics
463
Basildon 100w
Homicide 18w
Lancashire 100w
Police 499w

Crisis loans
731-2w

Critchley, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 840-1

Crops
Drug crimes 276

Cross border cooperation in Ireland
Bombings 1097
Extradition 1096-7

Cross community contact scheme
691-2w

Crossroads Care
234w

Crowd safety
Air displays 60w
Cricket 569w

Crown Agents
Postage stamps 643w

Crown immunity
Prisons 665w

Crown Office for Scotland
528w

Crown proceedings
Ebrahimi, Saied 528w

Crown Suppliers
Privatisation (11:06:90) 108-10

Crowther, Mr Stan
Questions
Industry Act 1980, Stocks & shares 490w
Rover Group, Government assistance to industry 426-7w

Croydon
Sunday trading 454-5

Cruise missiles
Nuclear weapons deployment 379w, 721w
USA 435w

Cryer, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1048, 1056, 1064-6, 1083
Bombings, Birmingham (12:06:90) 269
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 808, 809
European Communities (11:06:90) 89-93
Greenwich Hospital Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (19:06:90) 899
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 936, 937
Oral question time intervention (12:06:90) 126
Oral question time point of order (11:06:90) 16
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 140
Procedure (20:06:90) 928
Property Services Agency & Crown Suppliers Bill, Lords amendts (11:06:90) 109, 110
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 521-3
Questions
Astra Training Services, Civil servants' business appointments 15-6
Bradford 269w
Business statements 479-80
City grants 632w
City grants, Expenditure 481w
City grants, St Helens 482w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community 917
Prison staff, Pay 317w
Railway electrification, West Yorkshire 3
Schools, Bradford 667w
Skillcentres, Privatisation 669w
Terrorism, International cooperation 458
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 1100-1
3D, City grants 481-2w
Trident 541w
United Nations 486w

CSCE
see European Security Conference

CSM
see Committee on Safety of Medicines

Cultural heritage
14
Finance 13
Northern Ireland 1097-8
Taxation 14

Cultural relations
Eastern Europe 46w

Cumbria
Crime 308w

Cumbria Education Authority
170-1w

Cummings, Mr John
Questions
Astra Holdings, Arms exports 545w
Crime, Cumbria 308w
Mobility allowance, Handicapped children 131-2
Packaging 211w
South Africa, Overseas aid 396w
Teachers, Manpower 181w

Cunliffe, Mr Lawrence
Questions
Advisory services, Community charge 592-3w
Building societies, Pay 136

Cunningham, Dr John
Questions
Business statements 469-70

Curriculum
Arts 46w
History education 172w
Northumberland 173w
Private education 354w
Wales 439w

Currie, Mrs Edwina
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 995, 1010, 1012, 1014-8
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1146, 1197
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 242, 246
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 518-21
Questions
Railway network, East Midlands 8

***Curry, Mr David**, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture*
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Fees & charges 335w
Agricultural research, Pest control 624w
Agriculture, Government grants 267w
Agriculture, Nuclear accidents 267w
Baby milks, Soya beans 236w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Exports 265w
Decommissioning grants 334w
Drift nets, North east region 378w, 471w
EC free food scheme, Voluntary organisations 469w
Fisheries, Decommissioning grants 131w
Fisheries, Public expenditure 334w
Fishing gear, Members' correspondence 746w
Fishing gear, Research 265w
Fishing quotas, Shipping registration 746-7w
Flood control, Maidenhead 470w
Food, Irradiation 133w
Hill livestock allowances, Administrative delays 335w
Manure, Pollution control 469w
Marginal land, EC action 134w
National Fruit Collection, Brogdale Experimental Horticulture Station 651w
Seas & oceans, Environment protection 335-6w
Set-aside schemes, Grazing land 268w
Sheep premiums 469-70w
Shellfish, Health warnings 131-2w, 651w
Suckler cow premiums 470w
Turtles, Nature conservation 333w
Wylfa power station, Pollution monitoring 134w

Custodial treatment
Fine defaulters 347w
Sri Lanka 121w

Custody
Northern Ireland 289-90w
Treaties 645w

Customs
Channel tunnel 20w
Railway travel 72w
Waterloo Station 72w

Customs & Excise
(18:06:90) 776-82
Brixham 337w
Civil service manpower 336-7w
Food exports 735-6w
Torbay 336-7w
Transport of radioactive materials 151w

Cyprus
Foreign policy 384w
Police 427w

Czechoslovakia
Elections 258-9w

DAFS
see Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland

Dale, Pat
Inquiries 501w

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc.
British Museum (Natural History), Arts grants (20:06:90) 1086-7, 1089, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093-4
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 690, 764-7, (19:06:90) 815
European Communities (11:06:90) 29, 77-81
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 940, 950-1, 956, 960
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 167, 171, 172, 173, 225
Oral questions (20:06:90) 926
Property Services Agency & Crown Suppliers Bill, Lords amendts (11:06:90) 108-9
Questions
Agricultural research 532w
Agricultural research, Pest control 624w
Agricultural research, Scotland 527w
Ancient monuments, Metal detectors 616-7w
Aquagard sea lice treatment, Licensing 125w
Archaeology, Radar 616w
Basic education, Teacher training 123w
British Museum (Natural History), Collections 557w
British Museum (Natural History), Redundancy 18
British Museum (Natural History), Disease control 512w
British Museum (Natural History), Environmental policy 741w
British Museum (Natural History), Medical research 513w
Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry 34w
Community education, Scotland 122-3w
Distance learning, Scotland 123w
Energy research, Diatoms 485w
Energy research, Fossil fuels 485w
Environment protection, USSR 96w
Environmental policy, Fossils 567w
Film industry 487w
Fish, Sea lice 128w
Fish conservation, Road construction 49w
Fish conservation, Seals 127w
Fish conservation, Soil erosion 126w
Fish conservation, Trout 125w
Fish diseases, Agricultural research 128w
Fisheries, Agricultural research 125-6w
Fishing, Tourists 125w
Fishing catches, Nature conservation 127w
Fishing gear, Coastal areas 48w
Fishing offences, Minch 48w
Genetic engineering, Safety 122-3
Genetically modified organisms, Pollution monitoring 161w
Greenhouse effect, Research 487-8w
Japan, BBC External Services 399w
Kincora Children's Home, Inquiries 29w
Marine nature reserves, Minch 49w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Inquiries 581w
Murrell, Hilda, Criminal investigation 15w, 677-8
National Fruit Collection, Brogdale Experimental Horticulture Station 651w
NATO, Japan 648w
Offences against the administration of justice, Sexual offences 1107
Overseas aid, Agricultural research 483w
Rain forests, Forest protection 397-8w
Rain forests, Forestry research 397w
ROF Bishopton, Journalists 50w, 365-6w
Salmon, Loch Eriboll 127w
Salmon Advisory Committee, Trout 128w
Sandeels, Fish conservation 48-9w
Ships, Agricultural research 128-9w

***Dalyell, Mr Tam**—continued*
South America, Environment protection 278
Theme parks, Rainham Marshes 425-6w
Trout, Agricultural research 128w
USSR, Ecology 405w
VAT, Repairs & maintenance 414w
Wallace, Colin 207w
Wallace, Colin, Convictions 196w

Danbury
Bypasses 189w

Dangerous Substances (Conveyance by Road in Road Tankers & Tank Containers) Regulations 1981
Questions
Law enforcement 302w

Darling, Mr Alistair
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 293-6, 329-36, 347, 357-9, 371, 373-4, 440
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 158, 168, 216-8, 230
Questions
Advisory services, Community charge 592-3w
Antarctic, Environment protection 259w
Burns International Security Services, Government buildings 49w
Burns International Security Services, Public buildings 49w
Business statements 480-1
Defence review 534w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 14w
Scottish Office, Security industry 129w
Summertime 457

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil
Debates etc.
Factory closures, Standing Order No 20 applications (14:06:90) 501
Questions
Committee on Safety of Medicines, Allergies 402w
Foreign investment in UK, West Wales 672-3
House renovation grants, Wales 441w

Davies, Mr Quentin
Questions
Armed forces, Women's employment 538w
British Steel Corporation, Overseas investment 912
Community charge exemptions, Elderly 1w
Homicide, Criminal statistics 18w

Davies, Mr Ron
Questions
Advisory services, Community charge 361-2w
Aquagard sea lice treatment, Licensing 297w
Arctic fox 530w
Avoparcin, Animal feed 620w
Beef, Exports 530w
Beef, Wales 671-2
Blood, Imports 271w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Animal feed 468w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Compensation 332w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Disease control 135w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Public expenditure 333w
Colorado beetles 333w
Community workshops, Northern Ireland 1105-6
Countryside 532w
Countryside premium scheme, Agricultural land 466w
Crime, Surrey 309w
Dichloros, Sea pollution 2w
Export of live animals, Spain 133-4w
Factor VIII, Imports 231-2w
Farms, Furs 529w

Davies, Mr Ron*—*continued
Farms, Mink 528-9w
Forestry Commission, Land acquisition 450w
Functional foods, Food labelling 133w
Haemophilia, HIV infection 231w, 245w
House of Commons catering, Tuna 297w
Livestock, Animal welfare 531w
Meat, Enzymes 334-5w
Mink, Aleutian disease 529-30w
Mink, Isle of Wight 529w
National parks, Planning appeals 630w
National parks, Planning permission 340w, 629-32w
Official engagements 100w
Over-the-horizon radar, Public opinion 784
Planning appeals, National parks 366-8w
Scrapie, Sheep 267-8w
Set-aside schemes, Grazing land 268w
Set-aside schemes, Land use 466-7w
Slaughterhouses, Standards enforcement 466w
Tourist industry, EC grants & loans 55w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 332-3w

Davies Committee
see History Committee for Wales

Davis, Mr David
Questions
Military aid to civil community 544w
School administration, Budgeting 170w

Davis, Mr Terry
Questions
Action for jobs, Advertising 57w, 723w
Action for jobs, Expenditure 57w
Birmingham Prison, Prisoners' clothing 14-5w, 724w
Roll-on roll-off ships, Safety standards 76w, 717w
Tuberculosis, Vaccination 38w

Day, Michael
18

Day, Mr Stephen
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Publicity 183w
Cars, Security 310w

Day nurseries
Educational institutions 714-5w
Employment training 723w

DCDB
see Devon & Cornwall Development Bureau

Deaf
Barry College 442w
Interpreters 442-3w
Student loans 182w
Telephone exchanges 52w
Wales 442-3w

Deal barracks
Explosions 722w

Death
British embassies 683-4w
British nationality 684w
Broadmoor Hospital 274w
Corwin 676w
Moyle, Jonathan 207w, 795
Palestine 120w
Pedestrian crossings 187w
Road accidents 695-6w
Slane, Gerard 688w
Terrorism 518w
Tourists 684w
Toxic shock syndrome 35-6w
Ulster Defence Regiment 689w
Underground railways 562-3w

Debenhams
Belfast 689-90w

Debt collection
Dept of Social Security 53w, 711w
Privatisation 53w

Debt collection*—*continued
Social Fund 607w

Debts
Advisory services 361w, 582w
Bankruptcy 51w
Developing countries 395w
Namibia 392w
Northern Ireland 694w

Decommissioning grants
334w
Fisheries 131w, 527w

Deer
Blood sports (19:06:90) 804-6

Defective housing
Newport 442w

Defence
328w, 533w
Arms control negotiations 538w
Europe 535w
France 325-6w
NATO 542w
Netherlands 545w, 792
USA 543w
USSR 537w
West Germany 795
Western European Union 494-5w

Defence & Civil Spectrum Review Committee
426w

Defence contracts
AWE Aldermaston 243w
Computer industry 908
ROF Nottingham 436w
Warsaw Pact 537-8w

Defence Council
647w

Defence equipment
Astra Holdings 791
CFE talks 143-4w
Low flying 139w
Middle East 329w

Defence Estimates
(18:06:90) 687-774, (19:06:90) 807-97

Defence expenditure
534w, 538w, 548w
Army 381w
Territorial Army 328w
Trident missiles 244w

Defence industries
535-6w
Defence review 143w
Manpower 785

Defence land
Army 326-7w
Environment protection 790
Land acquisition 789-90
National parks 790
RAE Bedford 547w
RAF Quedgeley 611w
Scotland 436-7w
Tipping of waste 328w

Defence procurement
785-6
Cost effectiveness 539w
European fighter aircraft 546w
Harrier aircraft 325w
Military aircraft 380w
Trident submarines 541w
Type 23 frigates 535w

Defence research
Guided weapons 647-8w
West Lavington Research Establishment 720w

Defence review
329-30w, 379w, 534w, 785-7, 794-5
Defence industries 143w
Foreign policy 300w
NATO 329w
Public expenditure 329w

Defence Select Committee
Low flying 536-7w

Delors report
(15:06:90) 592-656

Democracy
British dependent territories 259w

Demonstrations
Arrests 192-4w
Community charge 192-4w

Dental hygienists
Career structure 400w

Dentists
Pay 145w

Departmental circulars
Religious education 612w
Young offenders 737w

Departmental coordination
Child abuse 99w

Departmental correspondence
Administrative delays 269w
Community charge 224w
Product safety 211-2w

Departmental forms
Dept of Social Security local offices 409w
Unemployment benefits 117w

Departmental leaflets
Absent voting 104w

Departmental publications
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90 753-8w
NHS hospital trusts 146w
Regional planning & development 5w

Departmental responsibilities
Mineral waters 204-5w
Rockall 9w

Dependants
National insurance benefits 53w, 376-7w
Patients 234w

Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland
Overtime 125-6w

Dept of Education & Science
Cost effectiveness 184w
Management consultants 217-8w
Nuclear accidents 22w, 277w
Research finance 460w

Dept of Employment
709w

Dept of Energy
Management consultants 362w

Dept of Health
Cost effectiveness 404w
Members' correspondence 269w
Nuclear accidents 272w

Dept of Social Security
164w, 709w
Contracts for services 164w
Cost effectiveness 166w
Debt collection 53w, 711w
Management consultants 701-7w
Ministers 708-9w

Dept of Social Security local offices
710w
Departmental forms 409w
Leeds 707w
Wath upon Dearne 407w
West Yorkshire 707w

Dept of the Environment
4-5w, 417-8w
Consultants 358w
Contracts for services 159w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 740w
Nuclear accidents 358w
Research 737-8w

Dept of the Registers of Scotland
47-8w, 680-1w

Dept of Trade & Industry
111w, 213w, 915-6
Civil servants' business appointments 599w
Regional planning & development 584w

Dept of Trade inquiries
Harrods 586w

Dept of Transport
Civil service manpower 563w
Management consultants 302w

Derbyshire
Crime 309w
Employment 461-2w

DES
see Dept of Education & Science

Desalination
Water treatment 357w, 362w

Design
Shopping centres 200-1w

Detection rates
Crime 13w
Police 725-7w

Developing countries
Debts 395w
Environment protection 276w
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 393w
Irrigation 276w
Nuclear non proliferation 275
Nuclear power 260w

Development aid
Expenditure 356w

Development areas
Government grants 641w

Development Board for Rural Wales
577-8w

Development Control (Protection of Greenfield Sites) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (12:06:90) 154-5

"Developments in the European Community Six Monthly Report"
(11:06:90) 20-107

Devlin, Mr Tim
Questions
Active citizenship 459
British Refugee Council, Government grants 501w
Defence, Arms control negotiations 538w
Defence, France 325-6w
Income support, Political refugees 406-7w
Income support, Refugees 407w
Kirkham Prison, Prisoners 101w
Regional aid 489-90w
Temporary immigrants, China 571w

Devolution
Northern Ireland 692w

Devon
Foreign investment in UK 590w
Oil pollution 5w, 54w
Sea pollution 5-6w
Sea rescue 1-2
Tourism 54w

Devon & Cornwall Development Bureau
590w

Devon & Cornwall Police
311w, 453, 459-60

Devonport dockyard
Radioactive waste disposal 32w

Dewar, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 175-85, 200

Dewar, Mr Donald*—*continued
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Young people 346w
Charities, Scotland 347w
Community service orders, Expenditure 427w
Community service orders, Local government expenditure 446w
Community service orders, Working hours 449w, 658w
Conveyancing, Fees & charges 348w
Divorce, Legal aid 247-8w
Divorce, Scotland 348w
Estate agents, Scotland 525w
Fine defaulters, Custodial treatment 347w
Fine defaulters, Prison population 347w
Fines enforcement officers, Scotland 249w
Government buildings, Security industry 348w
Hostels, Offenders 249-50w
Licensed conveyancers 388w
Licensed conveyancers, Educational qualifications 388w
Marriage, Scotland 348w
Mental patients, Hospital admissions 248-9w
Probation, Expenditure 428w
Probation, Scotland 447-8w
Public houses, Opening hours 346w
Scottish Office, Security industry 250w, 446w
Social work, Local government expenditure 249w
Tax allowances, Charities 377w
Trusts, Scottish courts 347w

Diabetes
150w
Wales 94w

Dial-a-ride
Local government expenditure 444w
Mobility of disabled (15:06:90) 591
Public petitions (15:06:90) 591

Diatoms
Energy research 485w

Dichloros
Sea pollution 2w

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 801
Questions
Astra Holdings, Arms exports 791

Diesel vehicles
Exhaust emission controls 63w

"Dietary & Nutritional Survey of British Adults"
336w

Dioxins
232w

Diplomatic relations
Iran 279-80
Syrian Arab Republic 464-5

DIR76/160/EEC
203w

Director General of Water Services
199w

Director of Public Prosecutions
197w, 389w, 677-8
Complaints against police 289w

Directors
Company liquidations 423w

Disability allowance
Mobility allowance 708w

Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944
Questions
58w

Disabled Persons (Service Consultation & Representation) Act 1986
Questions
400-1w

Disabled workers
Civil servants 551w
Employment training 453w
Local enterprise companies 617w
Prison staff 105w
Scotland 50w, 129-30w, 352w, 453w
Sheltered placement scheme 130w
Training 50w, 129-30w
Urban development corporations 200w

Disablement resettlement officers
Manpower 117w

Disaster relief
Ethiopia 394-5w
Ministry of Defence 547w

Disclosure of information
Adoption 507-8w
Economic policy 405w
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland 1104
Government departments 10w
NHS hospital trusts 146w
Personal pensions 331w
Police cautions 570-1w
Royal Armament Research & Development Establishment 329w

Disease control
AIDS 372-3w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 80w, 135w, 332w, 378-9w, 622w
British Museum (Natural History) 512w
Caseous lymphadenitis 77-8w, 650w
Insects 512w
Scrapie 78-9w, 622w
Sheep scab 649-50w

Disposable syringes
372-3w
Isle of Cumbrae 252w

Distance learning
Scotland 123w

District health authorities
147w
Baby milks 679w
NHS complaints 147w
Pay 146w
Population distribution 234w
Public appointments 515-6w
Storms 404-5w
Wales 93w, 437-8w

Divorce
Legal aid 247-8w
Scotland 247-8w, 348w

Divorce settlements
197w

Dixon, Mr Don
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1068
Exports (22:06:90) 1261

Dobson, Mr Frank
Questions
British Nuclear Fuels, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 288-9w
Civil service agencies 644w
Community programme, Housing insulation 117w
Electricity generation, Greenhouse effect 363-5w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 287-8w
Energy analysis, Northern Ireland Office 30w
Energy conservation, Northern Ireland Office 285w
Energy consumption, Cabinet Office 747w
Energy consumption, Home Office 430-1w
Energy consumption, Northern Ireland Office 30w
Energy consumption, Privy Council 299w, 741w
Government buildings, Energy consumption 419w

***Dobson, Mr Frank**—continued*
HMSO, Contracts 21w
Housing insulation 205-6w
Housing insulation, Camden 118w, 481w
Housing insulation, Electricity consumption 136w
Housing insulation, Energy conservation 239w
Housing insulation, Insulation grants 94w
Hunterprint, Contracts 213w
Hunterprint, Gas supply industry 8w
Hunterprint, Water supply industry 6w
Leukaemia, Children 50-1w
Loft insulation 420w
Neighbourhood energy action scheme, Camden 137w
Neighbourhood energy action scheme, Housing insulation 136-7w
Nuclear power stations, Leukaemia 375w
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Nuclear physics 363-4w
Vallin Pollen International, Ministers' domestic visits 487w

Docklands light railway
65-6w

Dockyards
Health physics 540-1w

Doctors
Handicap benefits 408w

DOE
see Dept of the Environment

Dog fighting
Prosecutions 103w

Dogs
Law reform 103w
Rabies 379w
Transmissible encephalopathies 79-80w
Travel 60w

Dogs Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:06:90) 656

Domestic appliances
Home energy efficiency scheme 288w

Domestic rates
Community charge 479-80w
Housing benefits 51w
Income support 51w

Domestic violence
Police 320w

Doncaster
477-8w

Doran, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1186-9
Questions
Defence expenditure 538w
Higher education, Educational standards 168w
Southern African Development Coordination Conference 396w
Trading standards departments 587w

***Dorrell, Mr Stephen**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Dept of Health*
Debates etc.
Catheters, Prescription charges exemptions (14:06:90) 587-90
Robens Institute of Industrial & Environmental Health & Safety, Spectroscopy (19:06:90) 903-6
Questions
Abortion, Sheffield 511w
Alcoholism, Residential care 35-6w, 375w
Alzheimer's disease, Water supply 678-9w
Birth registration, Welsh language 752w
Blood transfusion services, Expenditure 373-4w
British Museum (Natural History), Disease control 512w

***Dorrell, Mr Stephen**—continued*
British Museum (Natural History), Medical research 513w
Broadmoor Hospital, Death 274w
Cancer, Medical research 509w
Community health councils, NHS finance 508w
Cost effectiveness, Dept of Health 404w
Creutzfeldt-Jakob dementia, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 275w
Creutzfeldt-Jakob dementia, Regional health authorities 237w
Diabetes 150w
District health authorities, Population distribution 234w
Ethnic groups, Metropolitan counties 672-4w
Handicapped, Local authorities 400-1w
Health hazards, Hazardous wastes 232w
Health service staff, Pay 149w
Hip replacements, South Western Regional Health Authority 36w
Hospital beds, Swindon Health Authority 34-5w
Hospital beds, West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority 400w
Hospital catering, Cook-chill catering 149w
Hospitals, Income 404w
Leukaemia, Medical research 235-6w
Lindane, Head lice 508w
Medical treatments, Negligence 273w
Meningitis, Medical research 39w
Mental health community care, Local government finance 369w
Mental illness, Hospital admissions 148-9w
Mental illness, Mental health community care 148w
NHS, Information technology 748-9w
NHS complaints 273w
NHS complaints, District health authorities 147w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 233w
Nuclear accidents, Dept of Health 272w
Nuclear power stations, Leukaemia 375w
Parliamentary constituencies, Hampshire 36w
Patients, Dependants 234w
Patients' money, Hospital length of stay 553w
Perinatal mortality, Regional health authorities 144-6w
Resource management initiative, Hospitals 146w
Sheppey General Hospital 273-4w
Smoking, Advisory services 677w
Stepping Hill Hospital, Hospital beds 403w
Stepping Hill Hospital, Nurses 403w
Storms, District health authorities 404-5w
Toxic shock syndrome 508
Toxic shock syndrome, Death 35-6w
Transplant surgery, Special health authorities 35w, 509w
Tuberculosis, Regional health authorities 38-40w
Tuberculosis, Vaccination 38w
Vaccination, Drug side effects 671w
Vaccination, Ethnic minorities 672w
Vaccination, Handicapped 671w
Vaccination, Inner city areas 672w
Vaccination, Preventive medicine 671w
Vaccination, Take-up 671-2w
Water pollution, Camelford 403w
Water supply, Aluminium 678w
Working mothers 369-70w

Dorset
Roads 9

Double glazing
Housing construction 479w

Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Italy) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(13:06:90) 289

Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Netherlands) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(13:06:90) 289

Douglas, Mr Dick
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 807-8, 812, 854-6, 857
Questions
Business statements 477, 1115, 1122
Defence 533w
Fife Regional Council Child Care Inquiry 131w
Government departments, Disclosure of information 10w

Douglas Haig Memorial Homes
House renovation grants 442w

***Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James**, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 193-4, 224-31
Questions
Agricultural research, Scotland 527w
Ancient monuments, Metal detectors 616-7w
Archaeology, Radar 616w
Bankruptcy, Debts 51w
Beaches, Pollution monitoring 619w
Beaches, Sea pollution 526w, 619w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Criminal proceedings 742w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Scotland 525w, 742w
Bridges, Irish Sea 349w
British Rail, Government grants 741w
Bypasses, Road construction 252w
Charities, Scotland 49w
Community charge, Administrative costs 680w
Community charge, Non-payment 680w
Community charge, Official residences 745w
Community charge, Students 526w
Community charge, Voluntary organisations 613-4w
Disposable syringes, Isle of Cumbrae 252w
Divorce, Legal aid 247-8w
Ebrahimi, Saied, Crown proceedings 528w
Farms, Pollution control 452-3w
Farms, Pollution monitoring 452w
Fisheries, Shellfish 681w
Forestry Commission, Land acquisition 450w
Forestry Commission, Scotland 124w
Gas supply industry, Methane 527-8w
Gourock Ropeworks, Listed buildings 251w
Hazardous wastes, Imports 246w, 746w
Hazardous wastes, Incinerators 345w
Housing, Rural areas 614w
Land registration, Fees & charges 680-1w
Land registration, Scotland 47-8w
Lead pipes, House renovation grants 48w, 247w
Marine nature reserves, Minch 49w
Prisoners, Handicapped 526w, 681w
Railway transport, Government grants 742w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Scotland 615w
Road traffic control, Gateside 615w
Roads, Strathclyde 611-2w
ROF Bishopton, Journalists 34w, 50w, 365-6w
Scottish Homes, Capital investment 252w
Scottish Homes, Housing construction 252-3w
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Legal costs 250w
Sheep, Radioactivity 345w
Sheriff officers, Scotland 745w
Transport, EC internal trade 679-80w
Waste disposal, Incinerators 345w
Waste disposal, Planning appeals 345w
Waste disposal, Pollution control 246w
Water supply, Capital investment 247-8w
Water supply, Scotland 245-6w
Water treatment, Scotland 349w

DPP
see Director of Public Prosecutions

DREH Resources
Turbines 7w

Drift Net Fishing Inquiry
471w

Drift nets
80w
Birds 80w
Inquiries 378w
North East region 378w, 471w

Drinking & driving
Age 71w

Drinking Water Inspectorate
633w
Professional qualifications 740w

Driving
Information services 76w

Driving instruction
71w
Motorcycles 75-6w

Driving licences
British dependent territories 627w

Droughts
Birds 291w

Drug abuse
Budgeting 370-1w
Medical treatments 525-6w
Prisoners 452-3
Scotland 525-6w

Drug crimes
Arrests 18w
Caribbean 262w
Crime prevention 316w
Crops 276
International cooperation 276
North Wales 18w
Saudi Arabia 560w
Trevi Group 316w

Drug side effects
373w
Committee on Safety of Medicines 674-5w
Compensation 275w
Corwin 675-6w, 750w
Myodil 342w, 367w
Steroid drugs 372w, 676-7w
Vaccination 671w
Yellow card scheme 676-7w, 749-50w

Drugs
Licensing 674-5w

Druridge bay
Sand 2W

DTI
see Dept of Trade & Industry

DTP
see Dept of Transport

Duchy of Cornwall
651w

Duffy, Mr A E P
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 829-33
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 947-9
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1151-3
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 142
Questions
Abortion, Sheffield 511w
Defence review 786-7
Former ministers, Privatisation 795-6
Security, Northern Ireland 693w
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry 688-9w
South Yorkshire Fire & Civil Defence Authority, Fire services 319-20w

Dunn, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 494
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 250

Dunn, Mr Bob*—*continued
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 4-5
Military aid to civil community 544w
Pelican crossings, Blind 629w
Schools, Ammunition 23w
Teachers, Greater London 126-7

Dunnachie, Mr Jimmy
Debates etc.
Ban of Imports (Child Labour) Bill, 1R (13:06:90) 288
Questions
Defence, Netherlands 545w
International Monetary Fund 413w
Trading standards departments 587w

Dunnet Committee
see Salmon Advisory Committee

Dunsdale Securities
642w

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 490
European Communities (11:06:90) 25, 29, 104
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 236, 254-5
Questions
Iraq 254w
Teacher training, School holidays 457w
Trading standards departments 587w

Duty free allowances
EC internal trade 21w

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 31-2, 42, 48, 50, 55-9
Questions
Business statements 1118-9
Cross border cooperation in Ireland, Bombings 1097
Defence expenditure 548w
European Parliament 486w
Harrods' Bank, Banking supervision 210w
Heathrow Airport, Railway network 67w
Intergovernmental conference, EC institutions 257w
Scholarships, EC countries 173w

Dyslexia
Teachers 491-2w
Wales 491-2w

Eadie, Mr Alexander
Questions
Eastern Europe, International assistance 394w
EC Consumer Affairs Council 586w

EAEC
see EURATOM

Earnings rules
Income support 375w

East Africa
Peace negotiations 282-3

East Anglia
Otters 157w

East coast railway line
63w
Railway electrification 3, 62-3w

East Cumbria
507w

East Dyfed Health Authority
654w
NHS review 440w

East Germany
EC external relations 285, 487w

East London Rail Study
Cost benefit analysis 444-5w

East London river crossing
65-6w
Public inquiries 354-5w

East Midlands
Arts finance 45w
Employment 461-2w
Railway network 8
Textile industry 915

Eastbourne
Railway network 64w

Eastern Europe
Antisemitism 386w
Cultural relations 46w
EC external relations 136
Educational exchanges 180w
International assistance 394w
International cooperation 256w
Know-how Fund 213-4w
Overseas aid 256w
Travel requirements 41w
Visas 256w

Eastham, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 526-8
Questions
AWE Aldermaston, Construction 543w
EC Consumer Affairs Council 423w
Teachers, Recruitment 175w

Ebrahimi, Saied
Crown proceedings 528w

EBRD
see European Development Bank

EC action
Air transport 59w
Animals (11:06:90) 110
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 671-2
Building industry 203w
EC social charter 601w
Fish (11:06:90) 110
Marginal land 134w
Nature conservation 157w, 159-61w
Railway transport (12:06:90) 235-60
Television programmes 304w
Veterinary drugs (21:06:90) 1225

EC budget
Germany 257w

EC Commission
see European Commission

EC Cons Doc 4478/90
(12:06:90) 235-60

EC Consumer Affairs Council
423w, 586w

EC countries
Extradition 1102
Identity cards 497-8w
Inflation 466
Retirement pensions 608-9w
River pollution 200w
Scholarships 173w
Sea pollution 203w
Tobacco duties 734-6w

EC Development Council
390w, 392w

EC Draft 8062/88
(12:06:90) 153, (21: 06: 90) 1225-6

EC Draft 4228/89
(12:06:90) 153, (21:06:90) 1225

EC Draft 10270/89
(21:06:90) 1135

EC Draft 4699/90
(11:06:90) 110

EC Draft 4748/90
(19:06:90) 899-900

EC Draft 4779/90
(11:06:90) 110

EC Draft 4783/90
(11:06:90) 110

EC Draft 4796/90
(11:06:90) 110

EC Draft 6298/90
(12:06:90) 153, (21:06:90) 1225

EC Economic & Finance Council
see EC Finance Council

EC economic policy
Private Members' motions (15:06:90) 592-656

EC Environment Council
159-61w, 634w

EC external relations
258w
East Germany 285, 487w
Eastern Europe 136

EC Finance Council
186w

EC Foreign Affairs Council
120w, 257w, 684-5w
EC law 260w

EC free food scheme
Voluntary organisations 469w

EC grants & loans
Shipbuilding 589w
Tourist industry 55w
Universities 460w

EC Industry Council
305-6w, 587w
Iron & steel industry 587w

EC institutions
Intergovernmental conference 257w

EC integration
277-8

EC Internal Market Council
729-30w

EC internal trade
Bananas 393w
Car industry 595w, 917-8
Duty free allowances 21w
EC law 489w, 583-4w
Foreign investment in UK 916-7
Manufactured goods 584-6w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 209-10w
Office of Fair Trading 209-10w
Offshore suppliers 552w
Summertime 458
Transport 679-80w
Veterinary services (21:06:90) 1225-6

EC Labour & Social Affairs Council
55w

EC law
Banks 212w
Bar code equipment 424-5w
Computer privacy 498w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 260w
EC internal trade 489w, 583-4w
Environmental impact assessment 2w
Extradition 1097
Migrant workers 604-5w
Polychlorinated biphenyl 632w
Sea pollution 566w
Travel allowances 596w

EC nationals
Immigration 312-3w

EC social charter
EC action 601w
Part-time employment 466-8

ECGD
see Export Credits Guarantee Department

ECJ
see European Court of Justice

ECOFIN
see EC Finance Council

Ecology
USSR 405w

Economic & monetary union
135-6, 652-3w
European currency unit 1108-11

Economic growth
Overseas aid 390w

Economic policy
132-4, 405w
Disclosure of information 405w
Ministerial policy advisors 406w

Economic regions
Grant maintained schools 175w
Mortgages 558w

Economic sanctions
South Africa 271-2

Economic situation
Scotland 1109-10

"Economics of the Environment"
2w

EDF
see Electricite de France

Edinburgh
49w, 129w

Education
Community charge capping 123-4, 179w
Inner London boroughs 178-9w
Mid Glamorgan 438w
Northern Ireland 1099

Education Act 1981
Questions
459w

Education & industry
173w

Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements in English Mathematics & Science) Orders 1990
Questions
458w

Education (Recognised Awards) (Amendment) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(13:06:90) 288

Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
Questions
696w

Education Science & Arts Select Committee
181w

Educational administration
Calderdale (21:06:90) 1227-34

Educational aid
Armenia 747w
Malawi 395-6w
South Africa 395-6w

Educational broadcasting
Radio frequencies 100w

Educational buildings
Access to buildings 458-9w

Educational exchanges
Eastern Europe 180w

Educational finance
Grant maintained schools 177w
Higher education 173w
Inner London boroughs 172w, 625w
London boroughs 172w
Polytechnics 506w
School boards 745w
Scotland 612-4w
Student loans 179w

Educational finance*—*continued
Universities 506w

Educational institutions
Day nurseries 714-5w

Educational qualifications
County court bailiffs 731-2w
Licensed conveyancers 388w
Sixth form education 169w

Educational standards
Higher education 168w

EEC
see European Economic Community

Efficiency scrutinies
669w, 711w
Northern Ireland Railways 362w
Social security abuse 709w

EFTA
see European Free Trade Association

***Eggar, Mr Tim**, Minister of State, Department of Employment*
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 507, 538-42
Questions
Action for jobs, Advertising 57w, 723w
Action for jobs, Expenditure 57w
Disablement resettlement officers, Manpower 117w
EC social charter, EC action 601w
Employment Service local offices 264w, 462w
Job interview guarantee scheme, Take-up 54w
Migrant workers, EC law 604-5w
National insurance credits, Appeals 264w
National insurance credits, Social security benefits disqualification 460w
New businesses, Employment opportunities 600w
Quota of disabled workers, Codes of practice 58w
Restart programme 115w
Sheltered placement scheme, Take-up 601w
Skillcentres, Privatisation 669w
Special training needs, Finance 304w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Expenditure 463-6w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Lancashire Education Authority 670w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Local education authorities 604w
Training & enterprise councils, Expenditure 263-4w
Training & enterprise councils, Managers 603w
Unemployment 601w
Unemployment, Unemployment benefits 116w
Unemployment benefit offices 462w, 670-1w
Unemployment benefit offices, Office closures 305w
Unemployment benefits, Departmental forms 117w
Unemployment benefits, Interviews 117w
Unemployment benefits, Vacancies 602w

Eggs
Food imports 133w
Marketing 24w
Salmonella 470w
Wales 24w

EIB
see European Investment Bank

El Salvador
Human rights 253w

Elderly
Community charge exemptions 1w
Means tested benefits 700w

Elections
Colombia 255w
Czechoslovakia 258-9w

Elections—continued
Myanmar 561w
Romania 256w, 287

Electoral register
British residents abroad 14w, 319w, 361w
Community charge (22:06:90) 1302-8
Publicity 361w

Electric shock
Animal welfare 334w

Electricite de France
Electricity supply industry 287w

Electricity consumption
Housing insulation 136w

Electricity distribution
Rathlin Island 1103-4
Rural areas 239w

Electricity generation
Greenhouse effect 363-5w
Nuclear power stations 7w

Electricity supply industry
Advertising 288w, 719w
Advertising agencies 719w
Electricite de France 287w
Kleinwort Benson 287w
Non-fossil fuel obligation 287w
Privatisation 8w, 287-8w, 719w
Public expenditure 719w
Shares 287w, 719w
Television advertising 288w

Electricity tariffs
South Western Electricity Board 485w

Electronic equipment
Safety standards 599w

Elephants
686-7w

ELRS
see East London Rail Study

Elvin, Paul
679

Emergency planning
Mid Glamorgan 318w

Emery, Sir Peter
Questions
Air transport, Competition 59w
Business statements 471

Emigration
USSR 384w

Employees' contributions
406w

Employment
601-2w
Derbyshire 461-2w
East Midlands 461-2w
Iron & steel industry 84w

Employment discrimination
Northern Ireland 690w, 1104

Employment level
Manufacturing industries 460w
North West region 460-1w
Northern Ireland 688w

Employment opportunities
Fishguard 226w
Inverclyde initiative 617w
New businesses 600w
Tyne & Wear Development Corporation 296w

Employment protection
Pregnant women 462w

Employment schemes
Wales 578-80w

Employment Select Committee
Members' visits abroad 398w

Employment Service
54w, 116-7w, 460w, 462w, 670-1w

Employment Service local offices
264w, 462w

Employment Subsidies Act 1978 (Renewal) (Great Britain) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(11:06:90) 19

Employment training
50w, 129-30w, 304w, (14:06:90) 502-42, 603w
Day nurseries 723w
Disabled workers 453w
Expenditure 680w
Finance 93w
Handicapped 352w
Mid Glamorgan 671
Take-up 669w
Training Agency 603w
Wales 93w, 439w, 670-1

Energy analysis
Northern Ireland Office 30w

Energy conservation
717w
Civil service manpower 285w
Greenhouse effect 798
Housing insulation 239w
Northern Ireland Office 285w

Energy consumption
Cabinet Office 747w
Government buildings 419w
Home Office 430-1w
Northern Ireland Office 30w
Privy Council 299w, 741w

Energy policy
Northern Ireland 687w

Energy research
Diatoms 485w
Fossil fuels 485w

Enforcement officers
Manpower 733w

Engineering industries
Mining 594w
West Yorkshire 594w

Engineering qualifications
Labour market 443w

Engineers
Wales 443w

England
Rents to mortgages scheme 637w

English education
Scotland 349w

Enterprise initiative
Lancashire 488-9w

Enterprise zones
Sunderland 297w
Tax allowances 293w
Tyne & Wear 566w
Uniform business rate 566w

Entry clearances
300-1w
Bangladesh Porishad 431w
Genetics 431w
Primary purpose rule 431w

Environment
Conferences 4-5w

Environment protection
Antarctic 120w, 259w, 280-2, 286-7
Costs 799-800
Defence land 790
Developing countries 276w
EUREKA 640w
Government departments 737w
Industry 579-80w
M2 482w

Environment protection—continued
Ministry of Defence 545-6w, 789-90
Overseas aid 11w, 391w
Packaging 592w
Railway transport 66w
Road works 482w
Seas & oceans 335-6w
South America 278
Television programmes 159w
Transport 473w
Urban areas 6-7w
USSR 96w
Veterinary drugs 80-1w

Environmental health
Slaughterhouses 268w

Environmental health officers
665w

Environmental impact assessment
418w, 528w
Armed forces deployment 549-50w
EC law 2w

Environmental policy
797-8
British Museum (Natural History) 741w
Fossils 567w

Environmental Protection Bill 1989/90
Questions
161w, 246w, 416w

Environmental protection technology scheme
633w

Enzymes
Meat 334-5w

EP
see European Parliament

Equal opportunities
Omagh 207-8w
Public bodies 207-8w

Equipment
Marine Pollution Control Unit 303-4w
Recycling 569w

Eritrea
394-5w

Erythropoietin
Licensing 39w

Essex
Road construction 153w

Essex County Council
(15:06:90) 659-66

Estate agents
Scotland 525w

Estates Directorate
Civil service agencies 751w

Estimates days
Low incomes (14:06:90) 543-64
Training (14:06:90) 502-42

Ethics
Biotechnology 557-8w

Ethiopia
Disaster relief 394-5w
Famine 394w
Overseas aid 276w

Ethnic groups
Metropolitan counties 672-4w

Ethnic minorities
School population 353-4w
Vaccination 672w

EURATOM
8w

EUREKA
362w
Environment protection 640w

EUROCAE
626-7w

Europe
Defence 535w
International cooperation 284

European Assembly
see European Parliament

European Bank for Reconstruction & Development
see European Development Bank

European Commission
79w, 131-2w, 134w, 213w, 304w, 349w, 632w

European communities
(11:06:90) 20-107, 133, 278

European Communities Select Committee (HL)
Languages education 178w

European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes 1976
529w

European Court of Justice
454-5, 462, 497w, 566w, 608w, 746-7w, (20:06:90) 923-4

European currency unit
Economic & monetary union 1108-11

European Development Bank
Newham 284-5
UK contributions 378w

European Economic Community
497w, (15:06:90) 592-656
Nuclear non proliferation 260w

European Economic space
684-5w

European fighter aircraft
Defence procurement 546w

European Free Trade Association
684-5w

European Investment Bank
Loans 21w, 484w

European monetary system
Exchange rates 150w

European Organisation for Civil Aviation Electronics
see EUROCAE

European Parliament
(11:06:90) 20-107, 106w, 486w

European Security Conference
42-3w, 284
Human rights 258w

European Space Agency
398w

European Year of Tourism
55w

Eurorail
(14:06:90) 482-500

Eurotunnel
Loans 21w

Evans, Mr David
Debates etc.
Electoral register, Community charge (22:06:90) 1306, 1307
Questions
Homicide, Life imprisonment 106w
Israel, Terrorism 272-3
Road tax, Tax evasion 71w
School discipline 180w
Science & Technology Select Committee (HL) 748w
Sunday trading, Croydon 454-5

Evans, Mr John
Questions
Community health councils, NHS finance 508w
Cruise missiles, USA 435w

Evans, Mr John—continued
HMS Warspite, Shipbuilding 138w
Insider trading 580-1w
Merseyside Police Authority, Finance 17-8w
Middle East, Hostages 279
Nuclear weapons, Explosives 435w
Occupational deafness, Civil service manpower 709w
Occupational deafness, Glass industry 710w
Occupational deafness, Social security benefits rules 709w
Occupational deafness, Social security claims 709-10w
Opposition parties, Finance 269w
Romania, AIDS 395w
St Helens 556w
Trident missiles, Safety 435w

Evennett, Mr David
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1240-1, 1246-51
Questions
Defence industries 536w
East London Rail Study, Cost benefit analysis 444-5w
John Ball School, Judgments 219-20w
Metropolitan Police, Manpower 318w
Teachers, Pay settlements 177w
Underground railways, Thamesmead 445w

Evidence
Bombings 310-2w, 459-60
Child abuse 573-4w
Children 570w, 573-4w
Facsimile transmission 290w, 323w
Forensic science 679-80

Ewing, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 170, 190-5, 201, 204
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 152
Questions
Postal services, Privatisation 918

Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 160, 162-3, 165, 174, 210-3, 229
Questions
Adult education, Scotland 349w
Adult education, Teacher training 682w
Bankruptcy, Debts 51w
Bankruptcy, Scotland 245w
British Steel Corporation, Overseas investment 909-11
Business statements 475, 1121
Community education, Scotland 681-2w
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 62-3w
Excise duties, Whisky 652w
Family doctors, Budgeting 247w
Family planning, Lothian Health Board 350w
Fisheries, Decommissioning grants 527w
Germany, Foreign policy 256-7w
Hepatitis, Health service staff 453-4w
Land registration, Fees & charges 680-1w
Land registration, Scotland 47-8w
Local enterprise companies, Disabled workers 617w
Medical education, Government grants 350w
Official engagements 269-70w
Religious education, Departmental circulars 612w
Romania, Overseas aid 43w
Scottish health boards, Finance 248w
Scottish Legal Aid Board, Legal costs 250w
Step up the Wordpower, Government grants 349-50w
Teaching hospitals, Finance 274w
Transport of radioactive materials 6
Whisky, Trade barriers 652w

Examinations
Certificated bailiffs 732-3w

Exchange rates
European monetary system 150w

Excise duties
Whisky 652w

Exclusion orders
Football 318-9w

Exercise JMC 90/2
610w
Low flying 610w
Stornoway Airport 610w

Exhaust emission controls
154w
Diesel vehicles 63w
Motor vehicles 187w

Exhaust emissions
Jet aircraft 188w

Exhibitions
Israel 273
Ulster Museum 1098

Exmouth Docks Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1093

Explosions
Deal barracks 722w

Explosives
Nuclear weapons 325w, 435-6w
Scotland 615-6w
Waste disposal 550w, 615-6w

Export credit
Iraq 596w
OECD countries 490w

Export credit guarantees
Iraq 212w

Export Credits Guarantee Department
490w, 596w
Confederation of British Industry 593-4w
Iraq 729w

Export licensing
308w
Companies 308w
Iraq 735-6w
Nuclear power 285w

Export of live animals
Cattle 79w
Horses 82w, 212-3w
Spain 133-4w

Export promotion
585w
Oil industry 485w

Exports
556w
Arms trade 722w
Art works 13-4
Beef 79w, 81w, 342-3w, 530w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 265w
Furs 361w
Hazardous wastes 634w
Nuclear fuels 96w
Private Members' motions (22:06:90) 1236-98
Textiles 915
Whisky 652w

Exservicemen
House renovation grants 25w
Mailing lists 720w

Extractive industries
Sand 2w

Extradition
Cross border cooperation in Ireland 1096-7
EC countries 1102
EC law 1097
Republic of Ireland 687-8w, 1102
Terrorism 1102

Eye disorders
Eye tests 510w

Eye tests
Children 227w, 339w
Eye disorders 510w
NHS charges exemptions 510w
NOP Market Research 275w
Northern Ireland 697w
Optical charges 697w
Optical charges exemptions 492w, 553w, 577w, 654w, 677w, 748w
Regional health authorities 371w
Social security recipients 401-2w
Statistics 402w
Take-up 509w
Wales 441w, 492w, 577w, 654w

FAC
see Food Advisory Committee

Facsimile transmission
Evidence 290w, 323w

Factor VIII
271w
Imports 231-2w

Factory closures
Brymbo steelworks 668-9
Ravenscraig steelworks 306w, 343-4w, 466, 583w
Standing Order No 20 applications (14:06:90) 501

Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland
207-8w, 1104
Companies 279-83w
Disclosure of information 1104

Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989
Questions
1104

Fair Employment Tribunal for Northern Ireland
1104

Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 162, 169, 185-90, 195, 198, 201, 227

Falkland Islands
Hong Kong 120w
Telephones 495w

Family courts
Northern Ireland 289-90w

Family credit
Social security recipients 216w, 524w
South West region 162w
Take-up 165w
Wales 52-3w

Family doctors
Ambulance services 86-7w
Budgeting 124-5w, 247w, 370-1w, 403w, 492-3w, 511-2w, 619-20w
Contracts of employment 671-2w
Greater Manchester 403w
Scotland 124-5w, 247w, 619-20w
Wales 492-3w

Family planning
507-8w
Lothian Health Board 350w

Family practitioner committees
Finance 37w
Public appointments 515-6w
Wirral 37w

Famine
Ethiopia 394w

Farm & Conservation Grant (Variation) Scheme 1990
Debates etc.
(13:06:90) 290

Farm & conservation grants scheme
284w

Farm Animal Welfare Council
531w

Farm woodland scheme
Wales 85-6w

Farms
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 620-1w
Fences 284w
Furs 529w
Mink 528-9w
Pollution control 452-3w
Pollution monitoring 452w
Radioactivity 134w
Scotland 345w, 452-3w

Farr, Sir John
Questions
Complaints against police, Members' correspondence 663w
Low flying, Military aircraft 548w

Fatchett, Mr Derek
Questions
Leeds Development Corporation, Finance 568w
Leeds Development Corporation, Government grants 479-80w
Teachers, Vacancies 127
Technical & vocational education initiative, Expenditure 463-6w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Local education authorities 604w

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 803

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1291, 1296-8
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Scotland 912
Germany, EC budget 257w
Middle East, Tactical nuclear weapons 274
Police custody, Prisoners on remand 321w
Stepping Hill Hospital, Hospital beds 403w
Stepping Hill Hospital, Nurses 403w
Teachers, Recruitment 174w

FCO
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Fearn, Mr Ronnie
Debates etc.
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 256-8
Questions
Baby milks, District health authorities 679w
Beaches, Pollution control 3w
Beaches, Tourist industry 198w
Channel ferries, Fire regulations 445w
Channel tunnel, Security 61w
Environment protection, Road works 482w
Greenbelt, Land use 568w
Juno project, Finance 919
Local government politics 635w
Planning permission, Brentwood 3w
Sea rescue, Isle of Man 2
Shipping 67w
Tourism, Sea pollution 54w

Fees & charges
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 335w
Conveyancing 348w
Land registration 680-1w

Feldberg, Wilhelm
Animal experiments 662-3w

Felgate, Lorne
Special education 183w

Fences
Farms 284w
Northern Ireland 284w

Ferries
Fishguard 577w
Transport of radioactive materials 5-6

Field, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 757-8
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 552-3
Thompson, Peter, Public petitions (22:06:90) 1235
Questions
Crown Agents, Postage stamps 643w
Czechoslovakia, Elections 258-9w
Driving licences, British dependent territories 627w
Droughts, Birds 291w
Non-domestic rates, Manufacturing industries 293w
Overseas aid, AIDS 391-2w
Prisons, Isle of Wight 318w
RNAD Beith, Armed forces civilians 722w
Shipping registration, British dependent territories 627w
Teacher training, Shortage subjects 130-1
Turtles, Nature conservation 333w

Field, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 937-8, 939, 941, 942, 945, 951-2, 960, 961, 963, 969-71
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1165-6, 1200
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 543-6, 563, 564
Questions
AIDS, Mersey Regional Health Authority 553-4w
Ambulance services, Industrial disputes 679w
Bidston-Wrexham railway line, Investment 75w
EC Consumer Affairs Council 586w
Family practitioner committees, Wirral 37w
Industry, Peace 111-2w
Teachers, Professional organisations 171w

Fields, Mr Terry
Questions
Defence 533w
Dept of Social Security local offices, Departmental forms 409w
Director of Public Prosecutions, Complaints against police 289w
Handicap benefits, Doctors 408w
Social Security Benefits Agency 164w

Fife
Child care 131w

Fife Regional Council Child Care Inquiry
131w

Film industry
487w
International cooperation 488w

Finance Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
(13:06:90) 410
Procedure (future taxation) res* (22:06:90) 1300
Ways & means res* (22:06:90) 1300
Questions
653-4w

Financial Intermediaries Managers & Brokers' Association
642w

Financial Reporting Council
Accountants 491w
Public appointments 210w

Financial services
Agriculture 650w
Investor protection 210-1w, 588-9w, 593w

Financial Services Act 1986
Questions
306w

Finchley
667w

Fine defaulters
Custodial treatment 347w
Prison population 347w
Scotland 347w

Fines
Minimum wage 57w

Fines enforcement officers
Scotland 249w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 691, 721-4

Fire prevention
17w
Furniture 112-3w, 593w
Motor vehicles 473-4w

Fire regulations
Caravans 211w
Channel ferries 445w

Fire services
101w
Mid Glamorgan 318w
South Yorkshire Fire & Civil Defence Authority 319-20w

Fire stations
17w

Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988
Questions
319w

Firing ranges
Contractorisation 435-6w
Pembrokeshire 435-6w

First Key
750-1w

Firth of Clyde
Waste disposal 613w
Water pollution 613w

Fish
EC action (11:06:90) 110
Poisoning 125w
Sea lice 128w

Fish conservation
Fishing gear 245w
Road construction 49w
Sandeels 48-9w
Scotland 49w, 125w, 127w
Seals 127w
Soil erosion 126w
Trout 125w

Fish diseases
Agricultural research 128w
Scotland 128w

Fish farming
Antibiotics 81w
Pest control 251w
Pesticides 81w

Fishburn, Mr Dudley
Questions
Ministry of Defence, Disaster relief 547w
Seas & oceans, Environment protection 335-6w

Fisher, Mr Mark
Debates etc.
British Museum (Natural History), Arts grants (20:06:90) 1087-8, 1092
Questions
British Army Equipment Exhibition, Arms exports 540w
British Museum (Natural History), Finance 14-5
Civil servants, Recruitment 16
Furniture, Fire prevention 593w
Independent Broadcasting Authority, Commercial television 725w
Teachers, Pay 177w

Fisheries
Agricultural research 125-6w

Fisheries—continued
Compensation 131w, 486w
Decommissioning grants 131w, 527w
Public expenditure 334w
Scotland 527w
Shellfish 681w

Fishery protection
Scotland 48w, 251w
Seals 251w
Warships 541-2w

Fishguard
Employment opportunities 226w
Ferries 577w

Fishing
Strangford Lough 422w
Tourists 125w

Fishing catches
Law enforcement 127w
Nature conservation 127w

Fishing crews
Social security benefits 165w

Fishing gear
Coastal areas 48w
Fish conservation 245w
Members' correspondence 746w
Research 265w

Fishing offences
Minch 48w

Fishing quotas
Shipping registration 746-7w

Flags
Courts 290w
Southern Health & Social Services Board 284-5w

Flags of convenience
68w

Flannery, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 801
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, Civil servants 695w
AWE Aldermaston, Defence contracts 243w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 690w
Evidence, Bombings 310w
Grant maintained schools 119-20
Museums & galleries, Admission charges 44w
Trident submarines, Defence procurement 541w

Flats
Leasehold housing 293w

Flexi-ownership scheme
Wales 578w

Flood control
Maidenhead 470w

Floods
Wales 440w

Flynn, Mr Paul
Questions
Beaches, Radiation hazards 159w
Cancer, Ondansetron 150w
Cancer, Prescription drugs 149-50w
Crime, Gwent 308w
Disablement resettlement officers, Manpower 117w
Food, Irradiation 133w
Income support, Mortgages 163-4w
Income support, Unemployed 165w
Iron & steel industry 583w
Military exercises, Urban areas 540w
Norman Shaw buildings, Central heating 419w
Overseas aid, Population 716w
Pensioners, Personal income 164w

Flynn, Mr Paul—continued
Romania, Elections 256w
Social security benefits reductions, Income support 712w
Social Security Commissioners, Administrative delays 389-90w
Unemployment benefits, Departmental forms 117w
Unemployment benefits, Interviews 117w
Unemployment benefits, Social security benefits disqualification 166-7w
Uniform business rate, Holiday accommodation 199w
Wetlands, Gwent 673
Wylfa power station, Pollution monitoring 134w

FMA
see Football Membership Authority

Food
Irradiation 133w

Food Advisory Committee
622-4w

Food contamination
Animal feed 268w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 621w
Crabs 467-8w
Shellfish 165w

Food exports
Customs & Excise 735-6w

Food hygiene
Beef 27w
Food microbiology 147-8w
Prisons 665w

Food imports
Eggs 133w

Food labelling
Functional foods 133w

Food microbiology
Food hygiene 147-8w

Food prices
Common agricultural policy 667w

Food Safety Bill (HL) 1989/90
Questions
204-5w, 665w

Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 716-20

Football
Arrests 482w
Attendance 482w
Exclusion orders 318-9w
Public order offences 318-9w
Public order policing 315-6w, 500w

Football Licensing Authority
575-6w
Manpower 322w
Offices 322w
Public appointments 323w, 360w

Football Membership Authority
575-6w

Football Trust
564w

Footwear industry
GATT 597w
Government assistance 595w

Foreign adoptions
428w

Foreign aid
682

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
119w
Ministerial policy advisors 299w
Repairs & maintenance 288

Foreign companies in UK
Car industry 595w

Foreign investment in UK
424w, 591w
Balance of trade 913-4
Devon 590w
EC internal trade 916-7
Iron & steel industry 39w
Japan 916-8
Manufacturing industries !0w
Northern Ireland 688w
West Wales 672-3

Foreign policy
Cambodia 684
Cyprus 384w
Defence review 300w
Germany 256-7w
South America 278
Taiwan 561w

Foreign relations
Baltic Republics of USSR 465-6
Iran 561w
Libyan Arab Republic 257-8w
Romania 256w
Yemen 385-6w

Forensic science
Evidence 679-80

Forest protection
Overseas aid 397w
Rain forests 397-8w
Remote sensing 398w

Forestry Commission
85w
Land acquisition 450w
Scotland 124w

Forestry research
Rain forests 397w

Forests
565-6w
Access to countryside 450w

Forman, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 597, 642-7
Questions
Bus services, Greater London 7

Former ministers
Privatisation 134, (12:06:90) 153, 795-6

Former Ministers (Interests) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (12:06:90) 153

***Forsyth, Mr Michael**, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland*
Questions
Drug abuse, Medical treatments 525-6w
Family doctors, Budgeting 124-5w, 247w, 619-20w
Family planning, Lothian Health Board 350w
Geriatric hospitals, Scotland 743-4w
Haemophilia, HIV infection 245w
Hepatitis, Health service staff 453-4w
HIV infection, Scotland 451w
HIV infection, Tuberculosis 452w
Infant mortality, Scottish health boards 122w
Lead poisoning, Scotland 124w
Lead pollution, Publicity 246-7w
Leukaemia, Children 50-1w
Medical education, Government grants 350w
Scottish health boards, Finance 248w
Self-governing hospitals, Greenock 615w
Waste disposal, Health hazards 246w
Water supply, Lead 445-6w

Forsythe, Mr Clifford
Questions
Energy policy, Northern Ireland 687w
Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 552w

***Forth, Mr Eric**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs*
Questions
Advisory services, Community charge 361-2w, 592-3w

***Forth, Mr Eric**—continued*
Advisory services, Debts 361w
Balance of payments, Information technology 582w
Balance of trade, Textile industry 590w
Bar code equipment, EC law 424-5w
Bar code equipment, Price labelling 424-5w
Caravans, Fire regulations 211w
Chemicals, Industrial production 306-7w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Refrigerators 114w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Solvents 112w, 114-5w
Computer industry 907-9
Computer industry, Defence contracts 908
Computer industry, Production 594w
Computer software, Industrial health & safety 589-90w
Computers, Safety standards 598-9w
Debts, Advisory services 582w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Civil servants' business appointments 599w
EC Consumer Affairs Council 423w, 586w
Electronic equipment, Safety standards 599w
Estate agents, Scotland 525w
EUREKA, Environment protection 640w
Film industry, International cooperation 488w
Furniture, Fire prevention 112-3w, 593w
Glue sniffing, Young people 595w
Holiday accommodation, Safety standards 730w
Industrial wastes, Waste disposal 209w
Industry, Environment protection 579-80w
Insider trading 580-1w
Motor vehicles, Fraud 113w
National Consumer Council 307w
National Consumer Council, Accountability 307w
National Consumer Council, Finance 308w
National Consumer Council, Public expenditure 307w
Packaging 211w
Packaging, Environment protection 592w
Paper, Recycling 111w
Personal computers 425w
Personal computers, Product safety 597-8w
Post Office 111w
Post Office, Industrial relations 918
Post Office, Monopolies 585-6w, 919
Postal services, Greater London 113w
Postal services, Privatisation 918
Product safety, Departmental correspondence 211-2w
Radio frequencies 426w
Solvents, Codes of practice 115w
Textile industry, Balance of trade 914-5
Textile industry, East Midlands 915
Textiles, Exports 915
Tour operators, Holiday accommodation 642w
Trading standards departments 587w
Water treatment, Desalination 362w

Fossil fuel levy
433w

Fossil fuels
Energy research 485w

Fossils
Environmental policy 567w

Foulkes, Mr George
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 326, 368, 393-4, 395, 396, 402-5, 417-8
European Communities (11:06:90) 37
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 157, 159, 164, 170, 177, 188
Oral question time point of order (20:06:90) 921-2
Questions
Air force, Armed forces training 242w
Antarctic, Environment protection 282
Ebrahimi, Saied, Crown proceedings 528w
EC Industry Council, Iron & steel industry 587w

***Foulkes, Mr George**—continued*
Harrier aircraft, Defence procurement 325w
Low flying, Air safety 243w
Low flying, Borders region 325w
Low flying, Military aircraft 240-1w
Low flying, Noise 241w
Low flying, Noise control 241w
Low flying, Sea Harrier aircraft 243w
Means tested benefits, Capital rules 708w
Military exercises, Air force 242w
Military exercises, Low flying 242w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 118w
Nuclear weapons tests 380w
Pensioners, Retirement age 215w
Prestwick Airport 11
Redundant mineworkers' payments scheme 718w

Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths
752-3w

Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 506-7

Fox, Sir Marcus
Questions
Air transport, EC action 59w
Public order policing, Football 315-6w

Foxes
Urban areas 357w

France
Defence 325-6w

Franks, Mr Cecil
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 824, 843-5, 886
Questions
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 313w, 321w
School administration, Budgeting 170-1w

Fraser, Mr John
Questions
Appeals 680-1
Community charge benefits, Lambeth 408-9w
Housing action trusts, Lambeth 200w
Leasehold housing, Flats 293w
Police cautions, Disclosure of information 570-1w
Political refugees, Immigration applications 319w

Fraud
Motor vehicles 113w
National insurance 408w

Free movement of labour
Architects 419w

***Freeman, Mr Roger**, Minister for Public Transport*
Debates etc.
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 235-44
Questions
Bidston-Wrexham railway line, Investment 75w
British Rail, Bus services 301w
British Rail, Government grants 301w, 474w
British Rail, Public service obligation grant 301w
Bus services, Competition 7, 62w
Bus services, Greater London 7
Bus services, West Yorkshire 62w
Buses, Speed limits 7
Central London Rail Study 66w
Channel tunnel, Motor vehicles 189w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 62w
Channel tunnel, Road traffic 474-5w
Channel tunnel, Roads 61w
Channel tunnel, Rolling stock 628w
Channel tunnel, Security 61w, 188-9w
Channel tunnel, Transport of radioactive material 304w

Freeman, Mr Roger*—*continued
Concessionary fares, Greater London 153w
Dial-a-ride, Local government expenditure 444w
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 3, 62-3w
East London Rail Study, Cost benefit analysis 444-5w
Heathrow Airport, Railway network 67w
Level crossings, Safety 70w
London Regional Transport 61w
London Regional Transport, Capital investment 61w
London Regional Transport, Concessionary fares 71w
London Regional Transport, Government grants 70w
London Underground, Safety 562-3w, 716-7w
London Underground, Transport police 628w
Network SouthEast, Greater London 63-4w
Network SouthEast, Transport subsidies 64w
Railway electrification, Scotland 63w
Railway electrification, West Yorkshire 3
Railway freight transport 60w
Railway network, Eastbourne 64w
Railway network, Public service obligation grant 682w
Railway network, South Yorkshire 68w
Railway network, Subsidies 628-9w
Railway safety, Norwich 303w
Railway stations, Handicapped 475w
Railway track, Harmonisation of standards 67w
Railway transport, Environment protection 66w
Railway transport, Transport subsidies 72w
Railway travel, Customs 72w
Railway travel, Greater London 68w
Railway travel, Railway network 563w
Railway travel, Smoking 302w
Railway travel, South London 474w
Rapid transit systems, Greater Manchester 68w
Road traffic, Tyne & Wear 6-7
Stagecoach, Road safety 11
Transport, London docklands 65-6w
Travel, Dogs 60w
Underground railways, Thamesmead 445w
Waterloo Station, Customs 72w

French, Mr Douglas
Questions
Flexi-ownership scheme, Wales 578w
Maintenance, Retail price index 493w
RAF Quedgeley, Defence land 611w
Rents to mortgages scheme 637w
Rents to mortgages scheme, England 637w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Scotland 615w
Tenants' incentive scheme 637-9w

Frontiers
Poland 497w
Western European Union 495w

Fry, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 238

FSID
see Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths

Functional foods
Food labelling 133w
Retail trade 133w

Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments
194-5w

Funerals
Social Fund 730w

Furniture
Fire prevention 112-3w, 593w

Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Amendment Regulations 1989
Questions
211w

Furs
Animal welfare 529w
Exports 361w
Farms 529w
Isle of Wight 529w

Further education
Crimes against property 1099
North Eastern Education & Library Board 1098-9

Further education colleges
Religious discrimination 520-1w

Further education teachers
North Eastern Education & Library Board 520w
Part-time employment 520w
Redundancy 520w

Future
AIDS 515-6w

Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 976, 1003
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1155-7
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 160, 169, 182, 218-9
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 583w
Ravenscraig steelworks, Factory closures 466
Travel, Dogs 60w

Galbraith, Mr Sam
Questions
Dental hygienists, Career structure 400w
Geriatric hospitals, Scotland 743-4w
Resettlement units, Bishopbriggs 521-2w

Galloway, Mr George
Questions
Bora, Alexander, Immigration applications 189w
Iron & steel industry 306w, 583w
Trade fairs, Chile 795

Gamete intrafallopian transfer treatment
233-4w, (20:06:90) 933-1046
Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists 516-7w

***Garel-Jones, Mr Tristan**, Treasurer of Her Majestys Household*
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1068

Garrett, Mr John
Questions
Business statements 1120
Higher education, Educational finance 173w
Norman Shaw Buildings, Water pollution 296w

Garrett, Mr Ted
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1242-6, 1247, 1256, 1266-7, 1276, 1282
Questions
Furniture, Fire prevention 593w

Gas gathering
North Sea 656w

Gas supply industry
Hunterprint 8w
Methane 527-8w
Sea pollution 201w

Gateside
Road traffic control 615w

GATT
213w, (22:06:90) 1236-98
Footwear industry 597w
Textiles 596-7w

Gatwick Airport
189w

Gaza strip
254w

GCE AS level
169w

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Local education authorities 167w

General Medical Council
273w

Genetic engineering
Industrial health & safety 304-5w
Safety 122-3

Genetic Manipulation Regulations 1989
Questions
304-5w

Genetically modified organisms
381w
Pollution monitoring 161w

Genetics
Entry clearances 431w

Geriatric hospitals
Scotland 743-4w

Germany
Armed forces deployment 379w
EC budget 257w
Foreign policy 256-7w
Nuclear weapons deployment 795
Treaties 495-6w

Gilbert, Rt Hon John
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 733-5

Gill, Mr Christopher
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 57, 85, 93-6
Questions
Government assistance to industry, Civil service manpower 915-6
Grant maintained schools, Teachers 178w
Official engagements 668-9w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community 277
Prison population 317-8w
Special education, Private education 183w
Warships 539w

Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Questions
Community charge, London boroughs 698-9w
Income tax, Community charge 152w

Glasgow
611-2w
Railway transport 742w
Urban development grants 448-9w

Glasgow Resettlement Unit
521-2w

Glass industry
Occupational deafness 710w

Glaucoma
150w, 371w, 510w, 577w, 654w
Wales 94w, 441w

Gloucestershire
School closures 24w

Glue sniffing
Young people 595w

Glyn, Sir Alan
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 336
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 878-9

***Glyn, Sir Alan**—continued*
Questions
Flood control, Maidenhead 470w

Goats
77w, 650-1w

Goddard Committee
see Civil Spectrum Review Committee

Godman, Dr Norman A
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 331
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 494
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 715, (19:06:90) 811-2, 813, 875-8
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 158, 184, 188, 195, 207-10, 225
Questions
Beaches, Pollution monitoring 619w
Beaches, Sea pollution 526w, 619w
Business statements 478
Community charge, Administrative costs 680w
Community charge, Non-payment 680w
Community charge, Voluntary organisations 613-4w
Defence land, Scotland 436-7w
Drug abuse, Medical treatments 525-6w
Educational finance, Scotland 612-4w
Employment training, Expenditure 680w
Fish farming, Pest control 251w
Fisheries, Compensation 486w
Furniture, Fire prevention 112-3w
Gourock Ropeworks, Listed buildings 251w
Inverclyde enterprise zone, Expenditure 618w
Inverclyde initiative, Employment opportunities 617w
Migrant workers, EC law 604-5w
Prisoners, Handicapped 526w, 681w
ROF Bishopton, Ministry of Defence police 611w
Seals, Fishery protection 251w
Seals, Nature conservation 250w
Self-governing hospitals, Greenock 615w
Shipbuilding, EC grants & loans 589w
Social workers' training, Legislation 619w
Tanker ships, Western Isles 153w
Urban programme, Inverclyde 617-8w
Warships, Fishery protection 541-2w
Water pollution, Firth of Clyde 613w

Golding, Mrs Llin
Questions
Crime, Staffordshire 308-9w
District health authorities 147w
District health authorities, Pay 146w

Goodhart, Sir Philip
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 409-10
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 496
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 508-9

Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 761-4
Questions
Defence review 534w

Gordon, Ms Mildred
Debates etc.
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 557-9

Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1030
Questions
Balance of trade, Foreign investment in UK 913-4
Devolution, Northern Ireland 692w

***Gorman, Mrs Teresa**—continued*
Employment training, Take-up 669w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Repairs & maintenance 288
House prices, Basildon Development Corporation 1-2w
Housing Corporation, Tenants' choice 565w
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 102w
Menopause, Out-patient clinics 24w
Ministerial Group on Women's Issues 19-20w
Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, Child care 19w
National insurance, Business 605-6w
Railway travel, Smoking 302w
Women's employment 115-6w
Working mothers 369-70w

Gorst, Mr John
Debates etc.
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1130

Gould, Mr Bryan
Questions
Government grants to voluntary organisations, Dept of the Environment 740w
Greenhouse effect, Air pollution control 138w
Nature conservation, EC action 161w

Gourock Ropeworks
Listed buildings 251w

Government achievements
Office of Arts & Libraries 185-6w

Government assistance
Footwear industry 595w
Shipbuilding 589w

Government assistance to industry
Beef 339w
Civil service manpower 915-6
Industrial development 425w
Rover Group 426-7w

Government buildings
Burns International Security Services 49w
Energy consumption 419w
Security industry 348w

Government departments
Disclosure of information 10w
Environment protection 737w
Ministry of Defence 244w

Government grants
Agriculture 267w
British Rail 301w, 474w, 741w
British Refugee Council 501w
Brymbo steelworks 113w
City technology colleges 714w
Development areas 641w
Leeds Development Corporation 479-80w
London Regional Transport 70w
Medical education 350w
Railway transport 742w
Rivers 9w
South Africa 255w
Step up the Wordpower 349-50w
Technology transfer 640-1w
United Engineering Steels 113w

Government grants to local authorities
Community charge 419-20w

Government grants to voluntary organisations
429w
Dept of the Environment 740w

Government laboratories
Finance 16w

Gow, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1241, 1254-64
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Border security in Ireland 1101-2
Business statements 475-6

***Gow, Mr Ian**—continued*
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 687w
Postal services, Privatisation 918
Railway network, Eastbourne 64w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Recruitment 537w

Gracewell Clinic
272w

Graduates
Nursery nurses 713w

Graham, Mr Thomas
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 879-80, 890, 891
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 162, 169
Questions
AWE Aldermaston, Construction 543w
Business statements 477
Post Office, Monopolies 585w

Granada Television
15w

Grant, Sir Anthony
Questions
Business statements 474

Grant, Mr Bernie
Questions
Blakelock, Keith, Homicide 324w
Post Office, Monopolies 585-6w
School choice, Racial discrimination 134-5

Grant maintained schools
119-20, 127-9, 175-8w
Capital investment 181-2w
Economic regions 175w
Educational finance 177w
Hendon School 127-8
Lancaster 129
School population 178w
Schools & parents 176-7w
Teachers 178w
Wales 341w

Grazing land
Set-aside schemes 268w

Great Yarmouth Port Authority Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1093-4

Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Authority
742w

Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Executive
742w

Greater London
Armed forces married quarters 140-1w
Bus services 7
Concessionary fares 153w
Homelessness 357-8w
Housing 96w
Network SouthEast 63-4w
Overseas students 354w
Postal services 113w
Railway travel 68w
Repossession orders 636w
Road traffic 64w
Roads 70w
Sleeping rough 738-40w
Teachers 126-7, 167-8w, 174w
Theatres 12

Greater Manchester
Crime 309w
Family doctors 403w
Planning appeals 291-2w
Rapid transit systems 68w

Greater Manchester Police Authority
102w, 197w, 389w

Green Flag Exercises
242w

Greenbelt
Land use 568w

Greenhouse effect
Air pollution control 138w
Bilateral aid 392w
Chemicals 306-7w
Chlorofluorocarbons 798
Electricity generation 363-5w
Energy conservation 798
Incinerators 415w
International conferences 797-8
International cooperation 486w
Research 487-8w
Science & technology research 293w

Greenock
Self-governing hospitals 615w

Greenpeace
477w

Greenway, Mr Harry
Questions
Business statements 472
Cricket, Crowd safety 569w
Dentists, Pay 145w
Developing countries, Irrigation 276w
Legal aid 387w
London Underground, Safety 716-7w
London Underground, Transport police 628w
New businesses, Employment opportunities 600w
Official engagements 270w, 488w
Railway travel, Greater London 68w
Religious education, Northern Ireland 696w
Teachers, Vacancies 125-6
Theatres, Greater London 12

Greenway, Mr John
Questions
Diesel vehicles, Exhaust emission controls 63w
Military aid 535w

Greenwich
Nuclear accidents 22w, 106w, 142w, 272w, 277w, 323w, 330w, 358w, 788

Greenwich Health Authority
Acute beds 371-2w

Greenwich Hospital
(19:06:90) 899

Greenwich Hospital Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep* & 3R (19:06:90) 899

Greenwich Hospital School
(19:06:90) 899

Gregory, Mr Conal
Questions
Patents, Administrative delays 580w
School meals, Prices 225w
School meals, Wales 225w

Griffiths, Mr Nigel
Questions
Bar code equipment, EC law 424-5w
Bar code equipment, Price labelling 424-5w
British embassies, Death 683-4w
British nationality, Death 684w
Caravans, Fire regulations 211w
Costs, Tax thresholds 215w
Holiday accommodation, Safety standards 730w
Legal aid, Treaties 645w
NATO 539w
Pensions 337w
Personal computers 425w
Personal computers, Product safety 597-8w
Product safety, Departmental correspondence 211-2w
Regional planning & development, North West region 920
Tour operators, Holiday accommodation 642w
Tourists, Death 684w

Griffiths, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency & Crown Suppliers Bill, Lords amendts (11:06:90) 109

Griffiths, Mr Win
Debates etc.
Natural Beauty Products, Company liquidations (18:06:90) 776-9
Questions
Beaches, Sea pollution 566w
Inflation, EC countries 466
Ozone, Air pollution monitoring 675
Post Office, Monopolies 585w
Sunday trading 314w
Teacher training, Shortage subjects 131
Teachers, Pay 177w

***Grist, Mr Ian**, Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Acid rain, Wales 85w, 338w
Algae, Liverpool Bay 88w
Ambulance services, Family doctors 86-7w
Arthritis, Wales 225w
Beaches, Pollution control 226w
Beaches, Pollution monitoring 227w, 443w, 492w
Beaches, Sea pollution 93w, 578w
Beef, Food hygiene 27w
Cancer, Medical treatments 93w
Children Act 1989, Wales 737w
Corlan Housing Association, Inquiries 441-2w
Defective housing, Newport 442w
Diabetes, Wales 94w
District health authorities, Wales 93w
Douglas Haig Memorial Homes, House renovation grants 442w
Eye tests, Children 227w, 339w
Eye tests, Optical charges exemptions 492w, 577w, 654w
Eye tests, Wales 441w
Family doctors, Budgeting 492-3w
Flexi-ownership scheme, Wales 578w
Gwynedd Health Authority, Capital investment 438w
Gwynedd Health Authority, Land acquisition 225w
Hazardous wastes, Imports 655-6w
Health services, Ceredigion 654w
Heart diseases, Hospital waiting lists 340-1w
Heart diseases, Surgery 339-40w
Herbalism, Harmonisation of legislation 84w
HIV infection, Wales 95w
House renovation grants, Exservicemen 25w
House renovation grants, Wales 224w, 441w
Housing & elderly, Wales 441w
Housing insulation, Insulation grants 94w
Housing problems, Wales 492w
Infant mortality, Wales 84-6w
Irish Sea, Health hazards 88w
Menopause, Out-patient clinics 24w
Mental health services, Gwynedd Health Authority 26w
Mental health services, Wales 26w
Mentally handicapped, Housing & handicapped 24-5w
Myodil, Drug side effects 342w, 367w
NHS administration, Public appointments 368w
NHS finance, Wales 341w
NHS hospital trusts, Wales 341w
Nurses' training, Wales 83w
Ophthalmic services, Out-patients 27w, 227w
Ophthalmology, Out-patient clinics 93-4w
Physiotherapy, Pupils 25-6w
Psychiatric nurses, Wales 338w
Rheumatology, Hospital consultants 226w
St David's Hospital Bangor, Hospital closures 26-7w
Welsh Water, Travelling expenses 94w

Grocott, Mr Bruce
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 311w
Business statements 1113-4
EC internal trade, Manufactured goods 584-6w
Prime Minister, Ministers' visits abroad 270-1w, 668w
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry 688-9w
Women's prisons, Per capita costs 324w

Ground, Mr Patrick
Questions
Heathrow Airport, Air traffic 63w

Group practices
Budgeting 620w

Grylls, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1256, 1261, 1271, 1275-6, 1286-9
Questions
Car industry, EC internal trade 917-8

Guaranteed minimum pensions
407w

Guided weapons
Defence research 647-8w
Iraq 138w

Guildford
Bombings 679-80

Guildford Four Inquiry
9w, 329w, 454, 679-80

***Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn**, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*
Questions
Agriculture, Financial services 650w
Animal diseases, Import of live animals 650w
Beef 335w
Caseous lymphadenitis 77w
Caseous lymphadenitis, Disease control 77-8w, 650w
Caseous lymphadenitis, Import of live animals 650-1w
Drift nets, Birds 80w
Fish farming, Antibiotics 81w
Fish farming, Pesticides 81w
Pigs, Animal feed 78w
Salmon, Antibiotics 81w
Slaughterhouses, Veterinary services 622w
Veterinary drugs, Environment protection 80-1w

Guyana
258w

Gwent
Coastal protection 673
Crime 308w
Wetlands 673

Gwynedd
Physiotherapy 25-6w

Gwynedd Health Authority
25-7w
Capital investment 438w
Land acquisition 225w
Mental health services 26w

Haberdashers' Aske's School
City technology colleges 23-4w, 182-3w, 625w, 715w

Habitual offenders
Child abuse 728-9w

Haemophilia
HIV infection 231w, 245w

Hague, Mr William
Debates etc.
Radio reception, North Yorkshire (11:06:90) 111-3
Questions
Community relations, Northern Ireland 691-2w

Hague, Mr William—continued
Company pensions, Retirement age 608w
Exclusion orders, Football 318-9w
Higher education admission 168w
Motorcycles, Driving instruction 75-6w
Research finance 581w

Halogens
Paper (21:06:90) 1134-5

Halons
416w

***Hamilton, Mr Archie**, Minister of State for the Armed Forces*
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 808-17, 820, 825
Greenwich Hospital Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (19:06:90) 899
Questions
Air force, Armed forces recruitment 140w
Air force, International cooperation 380-1w
Aircraft noise, Helicopters 645w
Armed forces, Intimidation 540w
Armed forces, Security 720w
Armed forces, Women's employment 538w
Armed forces cadets, Schools 33-4w
Armed forces deployment, Germany 379w
Armed forces deployment, Peace keeping operations 543-4w, 789
Armed forces discharges, Training 142w
Armed forces housing 141w
Armed forces housing, Repairs & maintenance 141w
Armed forces housing, Resignations 141w
Armed forces married quarters, Greater London 140-1w
Armed forces pay, Additional pensions 609w
Armed forces pay, Social security benefits 609-10w
Armed forces pay, Widowers' benefits 609w
Armed forces reserves, Armed forces recruitment 542w
Armed forces strength 545w
Armed forces training 142w
Armed forces training, Aircrew 548w
Arms control 379w
Arms control, Nuclear weapons 533w
Army, Armed forces punishment 33w
Army, Armed forces strength 327w
Army, Convictions 33w
Army, Defence expenditure 381w
Army, Defence land 326-7w
Army, Public sector assets 328w
Army, Tanks 324-5w
BAOR, Nuclear weapons 544-5w
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 537w
CFE talks, Defence equipment 143-4w
CFE talks, Tanks 543w
Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry 34w
Conventional weapons, USSR 544w
Courts martial, World War II 141w
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 379w, 721w
Cruise missiles, USA 435w
Defence 328w
Defence, Arms control negotiations 538w
Defence, France 325-6w
Defence, NATO 542w
Defence, USA 543w
Defence, USSR 537w
Defence land, Scotland 436-7w
Defence land, Tipping of waste 328w
Defence review 329-30w, 534w
Defence review, NATO 329w
Defence review, Public expenditure 329w
Firing ranges, Contractorisation 435-6w
Guided weapons, Iraq 138w
HMS Invincible, Nuclear weapons deployment 788-9
HMS Warspite, Shipbuilding 138w
Military aid 535w
Military aid to civil community 544w
Military aircraft, Air travel 645-6w
Military exercises, Urban areas 540w
Ministry of Defence, Disaster relief 547w

Hamilton, Mr Archie—continued
Ministry of Defence, Nuclear accidents 142w, 330w
NATO 142w, 539w, 546w
NATO, Armed forces deployment 142w
NATO, Japan 648w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Arms control negotiations 244w
Navy, USSR 540w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Arms control negotiations 240w
Nuclear submarines, USA 328w
Nuclear weapons, Explosives 325w, 435-6w
Nuclear weapons, Nuclear safety 435w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 435w, 534w
Nuclear weapons deployment 533-4w
Nuclear weapons deployment, BAOR 787-8
Nuclear weapons tests 380w, 538w
Nuclear weapons tests, USA 243w
Pirbright range, Tipping of waste 722w
RAF Akrotiri, Military aircraft 380w
RAF Biggin Hill, Armed forces recruitment 546w
RAF Biggin Hill, Property transfer 140w
RAF Cranwell, Construction costs 140w
RAF Quedgeley, Defence land 611w
RNAD Coulport, Nuclear accidents 611w
Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Antisubmarine warfare 646w
Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Warships 646w
Stornoway Airport, Exercise JMC 90/2 610w
Submarines, Holy Loch 646w
Tactical nuclear weapons 379w, 541w
Tain bombing range, Noise control 546w
Territorial Army, Armed forces recruitment 548w
Territorial Army, Defence expenditure 328w
Trident, Arms control negotiations 535w
Trident submarines, Defence procurement 541w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Compensation 783-4
Ulster Defence Regiment, Recruitment 537w
UN Transition Assistance Group, Namibia 544w
US bases, Holy Loch 646w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering, Security 139w
Wallace, Colin, Inquiries 542-3w
War widows' pensions, Army in Northern Ireland 783-4
Warsaw Pact, Defence contracts 537-8w
Warships 539w, 646-7w
Warships, Fishery protection 541-2w
Warships, Navy strength 545w
Warships, Nuclear weapons 140w
Western European Union, UK contributions 545w

Hamilton, Mr Neil
Questions
Business statements 1121
Community charge, Non-payment 1w
Industry, Professional organisations 595w
Training & enterprise councils, Expenditure 263-4w

Hampshire
Parliamentary constituencies 36w

Handicap benefits
Doctors 408w
Mentally handicapped 708w
Mentally ill 708w
Social security benefits rules 163w
Student loans 182w

Handicapped
Employment training 352w
Local authorities 400-1w
Local government social services 553w
Overseas aid 561-2w
Prisoners 105w, 526w, 681w
Prisoners' release 105w
Probation & aftercare 105w
Railway stations 475w

Handicapped—continued
Vaccination 671w

Handicapped children
Attendance allowance 163w
Mobility allowance 131-2

Handicapped students
Access funds 506w
Higher education 22w
Higher education admission 22w
Student grants 22w
Teacher training 459w

"Handling Juvenile Crime in Wales"
737w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Questions
Air traffic control, International cooperation 69w
Armed forces deployment, Peace keeping operations 543-4w
Economic & monetary union 652-3w
Prisoners on remand, Trials 451-2
Research finance 581w

Hannam, Mr John
Questions
Cancer, Medical research 509w
Community charge benefits, Mobility allowance 698w
Deaf, Telephone exchanges 52w
Disability allowance, Mobility allowance 708w
Economic policy 132-3
Handicap benefits, Mentally handicapped 708w
Industrial health & safety, Cancer hazards 604w
Mobility allowance 608w
Overseas aid, Handicapped 561-2w
Vaccination, Drug side effects 671w
Vaccination, Inner city areas 671-2w
Vaccination, Preventive medicine 671w
Vaccination, Take-up 671-2w

Harbours Docks & Piers Clauses Act 1847 (Amendment) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (22:06:90) 1299

Hard core unemployed
Job interview guarantee scheme 54w

Hardy, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1047-8, 1058-9, 1063-4, 1071-2
Business questions point of order (21:06:90) 1124
Questions
Business statements 1120-1
Defence procurement 785
Export credit guarantees, Iraq 212w
Government grants to local authorities, Community charge 419-20w
Iron & steel industry 583w
Social Fund, Loans 52w
Social Fund, Wath upon Dearne 407w
Standard community charge, Local authority powers 158-9w

Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:06:90) 656

Hargreaves, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Bombings, Birmingham (12:06:90) 263-4

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Questions
Employment protection, Pregnant women 462w
Eye tests, Optical charges exemptions 748w
Romania, Know-how Fund 399w
Yellow card scheme, Drug side effects 676-7w, 749-50w

Harman, Ms Harriet
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 951-5, 970, 999, 1004, 1010

Harman, Ms Harriet—continued
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1136-9, 1148, 1188, 1190
Questions
NHS hospital trusts 145-6w
NHS hospital trusts, Departmental publications 146w
NHS hospital trusts, Disclosure of information 146w

Harmonisation of legislation
Herbalism 84w

Harmonisation of standards
Railway track 67w

Harrier aircraft
Defence procurement 325w

Harris, Mr David
Questions
Fishing quotas, Shipping registration 746-7w
Road construction, Construction costs 68w

Harrods
Dept of Trade inquiries 586w

Harrods' Bank
Banking supervision 210w

Haselhurst, Mr Alan
Questions
Air transport, USA 70w
Crime prevention, Banks 103w
VAT repayment, Housing construction 483w

Hasmonean High School Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (19:06:90) 781
2R* (20:06:90) 905

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc.
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1126-8, 1134
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 454, 461

Hawkshurst moor
Planning inquiries 434w

Hawkshurst moor mine
Planning inquiries 482w

Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Questions
Sharkey, Katharine, Special education 353w

Haynes, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1287
Questions
Textile industry, Balance of trade 914-5

Hazardous wastes
Exports 634w
Health hazards 232w
Imports 246w, 290w, 655-6w, 746w
Incinerators 232w, 345w
Romania 600w
Scotland 246w, 746w
Wales 655-6w
Waste disposal 1w, 634w

HBMD
see Historic Buildings & Monuments Directorate

HCW
see History Committee for Wales

HEA
see Health Education Authority

Head lice
Lindane 508w

Health & Safety Executive
161w, 603-4w

Health Education Authority
671w

Health hazards
Hazardous wastes 232w
Irish Sea 88w
Waste disposal 246w

Health physics
Dockyards 540-1w

Health Service Commissioner
273w

Health service staff
Hepatitis 453-4w
Pay 149w

Health services
Ceredigion 654w
NHS internal market 371w
Northern Ireland 689w

Health warnings
Shellfish 131-2w, 651w

Heap, John
Conferences 120w

Heart diseases
Hospital waiting lists 340-1w
Surgery 339-40w
Wales 339-41w

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David,
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of the Environment
Debates etc.
Water pollution, Coastal areas (13:06:90) 445-8
Questions
Beaches, Pollution control 3w
Beaches, Sea pollution 203w, 566w
Beaches, Tourist industry 198w
Commission for Local Administration in England, Costs 3w
Countryside premium scheme, Agricultural land 466w
County Hall, Property development 482w
Dichloros, Sea pollution 2w
"Economics of the Environment" 2w
Environment, Conferences 4-5w
Environment protection, Television programmes 159w
Forests 565-6w
Genetically modified organisms, Pollution monitoring 161w
Hazardous wastes, Waste disposal 1w
Hunterprint, Water supply industry 6w
Hydrofluorocarbons, Pollution control 6w
Lake acidification, Pollution control 156w
Local government, Legislation 201-2w
Local government constituencies 636-7w
Local government politics 635w
London Residuary Body 634w
London Residuary Body, County Hall 635w
Methyl chloroform, Pollution control 6w
Nature conservation, International cooperation 7w
Oil pollution, Devon 5w
Pollution monitoring, Algae 567w
Recycling, International conferences 564w
Recycling, Iron & steel 568w
River pollution, Pollution monitoring 200w
Sea pollution, Devon 5-6w
Sea pollution, Gas supply industry 201w
Sewage, Viruses 200w
Sewage, Waste disposal 633w
Waste disposal, Contracts for services 568-9w
Water charges 198w
Water meters, Costs 198w
Water pollution, West Firle 418w
Water storage, Algae 4w
Water supply industry, Competition 199w
Water treatment, Aluminium 635w
Water treatment, Desalination 357w

Heathrow Airport
58-9w
Air traffic 63w
Railway network 67w

Heathrow Express Railway Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1094

Helicopters
Aircraft noise 645w
Army 324-5w
Low flying 31w

Henderson, Mr Doug
Questions
Defence expenditure 538w
School administration, Budgeting 170w

Hendon School
Grant maintained schools 127-8

Hepatitis
Health service staff 453-4w
Scotland 453-4w

Herbalism
Harmonisation of legislation 84w

Herons
291w

Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 702

Hexham
Air accidents 546w

Heyhoe Committee
see Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry

Hicks, Mrs Maureen
Questions
Armed forces, Women's employment 538w
Care of the next infant programme, Cot deaths 752-3w
GCE AS level 169w
Video recordings, Retail trade 317w

Hicks, Mr Robert
Questions
Foreign investment in UK, Devon 590w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 253-4w
Sheep premiums 469-70w
Sunday trading 313-4w

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 487
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1182
Questions
Buses, Speed limits 7
Drinking & driving, Age 71w

Higher education
Construction 217w
Educational finance 173w
Educational standards 168w
Handicapped students 22w
Retirement 217w
Science & technology research 218-9w
Student numbers 736-8w
Wales 736-8w

Higher education administration
Access funds 505-6w
Student loans 504w

Higher education admission
168w
Handicapped students 22w

Higher education teachers
Age 218w

Hill, Mr James
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 302, 303
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 619, 620-1, 624-5
Questions
Antarctic, Environment protection 281

***Hill, Mr James**—continued*
Germany, Treaties 495-6w
Prisoners, Drug abuse 453
Western European Union, Armed forces deployment 494w
Western European Union, Defence 494w
Western European Union, Frontiers 495w
Western European Union, Treaties 494-5w

Hill livestock allowances
Administrative delays 335w

Hillsborough Stadium Inquiry
575-6w

Hinchliffe, Mr David
Questions
Dial-a-ride, Local government expenditure 444w
Hospital catering, Cook-chill catering 149w
Mining, Engineering industries 594w
Nursing homes, Income support 408w
Residential care, Income support 51w
School administration, Budgeting 170w
Social workers' training, Law 235w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 819
Exports (22:06:90) 1293-5
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 949-50, 961
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1133
Questions
Army, Tanks 324-5w
Beaches, Sea pollution 203w
Criminal statistics, Lancashire 100w
Education, Community charge capping 124
Employment training, Training Agency 603w
European fighter aircraft, Defence procurement 546w
Iran, Diplomatic relations 280
Middle East, Peace negotiations 253w
Rights of accused, Police interrogation 320w
"Road Accident Statistics English Regions" 153w
Sentencing, Appeals 387w
Traffic areas 475-6w

Hinkley Point C
Public inquiries 287w, 434w

Hip replacements
Hospital waiting lists 27-8w, 36-7w
Musgrave Park Hospital 27w
Northern Ireland 27-8w
South Western Regional Health Authority 36w

Historic buildings
Finance 13

Historic Buildings & Monuments Directorate
616w

History Committee for Wales
94-5w

History education
Curriculum 172w
Wales 94-5w, 439w

HIV infection
515-6w, 553-4w
Babies 515w
Haemophilia 231w, 245w
Regional health authorities 236-8w
Scotland 245w, 451-2w
Tuberculosis 374w, 452w
Wales 95w

HM Coastguard
1-2

HM Industrial Pollution Inspectorate
527-8w

HM Inspectorate of Pollution
566-7w

HM Inspectorate of Schools
354w

HMS Invincible
Nuclear weapons deployment 788-9

HMS Southampton
Shipbuilding 609w

HMS Warspite
Shipbuilding 138w

HMSO
Contracts 21w

Hoey, Miss Kate
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 492-3
Questions
British Museum (Natural History) 152w
Electricity distribution, Rathlin Island 1104
Post Office, Industrial relations 918
Sports centres, Licensing 659w

***Hogg, Mr Douglas**, Minister of State for Industry*
Debates etc.
Oral questions (20:06:90) 927-8
Questions
British Aerospace, Tax allowances 916
Brymbo steelworks 113-4w
Brymbo steelworks, Government grants 113w
Confederation of British Industry, Investment 587-8w
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 584w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Regional planning & development 584w
Development areas, Government grants 641w
EC Industry Council 305-6w, 587w
Engineering industries, West Yorkshire 594w
Enterprise initiative, Lancashire 488-9w
Footwear industry, Government assistance 595w
Foreign investment in UK 424w, 591w
Foreign investment in UK, Devon 590w
GATT, Footwear industry 597w
Government assistance to industry, Civil service manpower 915-6
Industrial development, Government assistance to industry 425w
Industry, Peace 111-2w
Industry, Public bodies 113w
Industry Act 1980, Stocks & shares 490w
Juno project, Finance 586w, 919
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 585w
Mining, Engineering industries 594w
North East Shipbuilders, Redundancy 593w
Patents, Administrative delays 580w
Regional aid 489-90w, 590-1w
Regional development grants, Regional selective assistance 920
Regional development grants, Tax burden 920
Regional planning & development 921-2
Regional planning & development, North West region 920-1
Regional selective assistance, West Cumbria 921
Research finance 581w
Rover Group, Government assistance to industry 426-7w
Science & technology research, Research finance 423-4w
Shipbuilding, EC grants & loans 589w
Shipbuilding, Government assistance 589w
Shipbuilding, Investment 588-9w
Spaceflight, Research finance 919-20
Technology transfer, Government grants 640-1w
Theme parks, Rainham Marshes 425-6w
United Engineering Steels, Government grants 113w

Hogg, Mr Norman
Questions
Balance of trade, Textile industry 590w

Holiday accommodation
Safety standards 730w
Tour operators 642w
Uniform business rate 199w

Holloway Prison
324w

Holt, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 802
Questions
Airport security, West Germany 10
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 912
Sea rescue, Radio engineering 2
Transport of hazardous materials, Northern Ireland 693w
War widows' pensions, Army in Northern Ireland 783

Holy Loch
Submarines 646w
US bases 646w

Home energy efficiency scheme
Advisory services 288w
Domestic appliances 288w
Loft insulation 287w
Thermal insulation 288w

Home Office
Energy consumption 430-1w
Management consultants 571-2w
Members' correspondence 324w
Nuclear accidents 323w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 858-60
Questions
Lebanon, Hostages 253w

Home visits
707w

Homelessness
420-1w, 481w
Greater London 357-8w
Mortgage defaulters 635-6w
Sunderland 204w
Young people 750-1w

Homeworking
Wages councils 56w

Homicide
Blakelock, Keith 324w
Convictions 324w
Criminal statistics 18w
Life imprisonment 106w

Hong Kong
British citizenship (13:06:90) 293-440, 431-2w
British national (overseas) 121w
Falkland Islands 120w
Ivory 9w, 685-7w
Vietnamese refugees 681-2

Hong Kong Legislative Council
(13:06:90) 293-440

Hood, Mr Jimmy
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1061, 1076-8, 1079-80
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 584w
Low flying, Armed forces training 793-4

Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(20:06:90) 926

Horses
Export of live animals 82w, 212-3w

Horticulture
Sunday trading 462

Hospital admissions
Mental illness 148-9w
Mental patients 248-9w
Phobias 148-9w

Hospital beds
Bath Health Authority 34-5w
Sheffield Health Authority 799
Stepping Hill Hospital 403w
Swindon Health Authority 34-5w
West Berkshire Health Authority 516w
West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority 400w

Hospital catering
Cook-chill catering 149w

Hospital closures
St David's Hospital Bangor 26-7w
Sheppey General Hospital (12:06:90) 261

Hospital consultants
Merit awards 232-3w
Rheumatology 226w

Hospital length of stay
Patients' money 553w

Hospital waiting lists
Heart diseases 340-1w
Hip replacements 27-8w, 36-7w
Information services 37-8w
Management consultants 507w

Hospitals
Income 404w
Resource management initiative 146w

Hostages
Lebanon 253w, 464-5
Middle East 279-80

Hostels
Offenders 249-50w
Scotland 249-50w

Hound ataxia
Transmissible encephalopathies 82w

Hounslow Education Authority
353w

House of Commons
Management consultants 297-8w
Smoking 551w

House of Commons accommodation
Members' secretaries 298w

House of Commons broadcasting
Sign language 398w
Television 398w

House of Commons catering
Tuna 297w

House of Commons debates
Orders & regulations 237w

House of Commons division of time
Speaker's rulings & statements (20:06:90) 1083-4

House of Commons divisions
Speaker's rulings & statements (19:06:90) 898, (21:06:90) 1221

House of Commons publications
Paper 110w

House of Commons questions
Bellingham, Henry 416w
Costs 237w
Vote bundle 237w

House of Commons reform of procedure
Private Bills 626w

House of Commons Refreshment Dept
see Refreshment Dept

House of Commons Select Committees
Attorney General 678-9
Public expenditure 463
Television 107-9w

House prices
Basildon Development Corporation 1-2w

House purchase
Council tenants 631w
Housing associations 567-8w

House renovation grants
Douglas Haig Memorial Homes 442w
Exservicemen 25w
Housing & handicapped 295-6w
Lead pipes 48w, 247w
Private sector housing 639w
Wales 25w, 224w, 441w

Households
206-8w

Housewives
Mothers 54-5w

Housing
Greater London 96w
Northern Ireland 518w
Planning permission 518w
Rural areas 614w
Scotland 614w

Housing Act 1985
Questions
442w

Housing action trusts
Expenditure 417-8w, 477w
Housing problems 417w
Lambeth 200w
Public opinion 417w
Southwark 417w

Housing & elderly
Wales 441w

Housing & handicapped
Calderdale 295-6w
House renovation grants 295-6w
Mentally handicapped 24-5w

Housing associations
421w
House purchase 567-8w
Housing completions 296w
Low cost home ownership schemes 294w
Merseyside 631w

Housing benefits
Community charge register 53w
Domestic rates 51w
Pensioners 377w
Public expenditure 331w
Social security benefits disqualification 53w
Students 523w

Housing completions
Housing associations 296w

Housing construction
635w
Double glazing 479w
Recreation spaces (12:06:90) 154-5
Scottish Homes 252-3w
VAT repayment 483w

Housing Corporation
294w, 296w, 567-8w, 631w
Tenants' choice 565w

Housing finance
Scotland 614w

Housing for Wales
441-2w, 492w

Housing improvement
Compulsory purchase 639-40w

Housing insulation
205-6w
Camden 118w, 481w
Community programme 117w
Electricity consumption 136w
Energy conservation 239w
Insulation grants 94w
Islington 481w
Neighbourhood energy action scheme 136-7w

Housing problems
Housing action trusts 417w
Wales 492w

***Howard, Rt Hon Michael**, Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 55w

***Howarth, Mr Alan**, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science*
Debates etc.
Educational administration, Calderdale (21:06:90) 1231-4
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Publicity 183w
Cathedrals, Choirs 182w
Computers in schools 180w
Curriculum, Private education 354w
Education & industry 173w
Educational buildings, Access to buildings 458-9w
Educational exchanges, Eastern Europe 180w
Felgate, Lorne, Special education 183w
Handicapped students, Teacher training 459w
Local education authorities, Capital investment 454-7w
National Youth Agency, Community work 458w
School buildings 171w
School buildings, Access to buildings 458-9w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 121-2, 171-2w
School closures, Gloucestershire 24w
School closures, Norfolk 353w
School discipline 180w
School population, Ethnic minorities 353-4w
Secondary education, Cost per pupil 167w
Sharkey, Katharine, Special education 353w
Special education 502w
Special education, Appeals 459w
Special education, Private education 183w
Special education, Teacher training 713-4w
Teacher training, Shortage subjects 130-1
Teachers, Criminal records 183-4w
Teachers, Greater London 126-7
Teachers, Manpower 181w
Teachers, Professional organisations 171w
Teachers, Vacancies 125-7

Howarth, Mr George
Questions
Health services, Northern Ireland 689w
National Association of Probation Officers, Sentencing 321w
Nuclear weapons tests 538w

Howarth, Mr Gerald
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 852-4
Questions
Business statements 1118
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 537w
Civil servants, Disabled workers 551w
Taxation, Actors 20w

***Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey**, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons*
Questions
Access to Parliament, Pedestrians 298-9w
Business statements 469-81, 1113-24
Employment Select Committee, Members' visits abroad 398w
Energy consumption, Privy Council 299w, 741w
House of Commons, Smoking 551w
House of Commons broadcasting, Sign language 398w
House of Commons catering, Tuna 297w
House of Commons publications, Paper 110w
House of Commons Select Committees, Television 107-9w
Management consultants, House of Commons 297-8w

Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey—continued
Management consultants, Privy Council 110w
Members' facilities, Telephones 106w
Members' secretaries, House of Commons accommodation 298w
Notice of motions, Costs 298w
Oral questions, Procedure Select Committee 109w
Orders & regulations, House of Commons debates 237w
Private Bills, House of Commons reform of procedure 626w
Vote bundle, Costs 109-10w
Vote bundle, House of Commons questions 237w

Howell, Rt Hon David
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 38-44, 74

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Eggs, Food imports 133w

Howells, Mr Geraint
Questions
Bypasses, Road construction 226w
Capital investment, Ceredigion 577w
Community charge, Wales 88w
District health authorities, Wales 93w
Employment opportunities, Fishguard 226w
Ferries, Fishguard 577w
Grant maintained schools, Wales 341w
Health services, Ceredigion 654w
Housing problems, Wales 492w
Local authority powers, Wales 341w
Water supply industry, Wales 438w
Welsh language, Primary education 655w

Howells, Dr Kim
Questions
Antarctic, Environment protection 286-7
Development areas, Government grants 641w
Education, Community charge capping 179w
Education, Mid Glamorgan 438w
Fire services, Mid Glamorgan 318w
National Economic Development Council 592w
Radar 536w
Railway travel, Maesteg 94w
Technology transfer, Government grants 640-1w

Howie Committee
see Scottish Secondary Education Review Committee

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 364
Questions
Balance of trade 914
Community charge, Advertising 358-9w
Harrods' Bank, Banking supervision 210w
National Economic Development Council 592w
NATO 539w
Science & technology research, Higher education 218-9w
USA, Tactical nuclear weapons 258w

HSE
see Health & Safety Executive

Hughes, Mr John
Questions
Defence 533w
National Economic Development Council 592w
School administration, Budgeting 170w

Hughes, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 946

Hughes, Mr Robert—continued
Questions
Former ministers, Privatisation 134
Political refugees, Immigration applications 319w
Railway electrification, Scotland 63w

Hughes, Mr Robert G
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 497
Dial-a-ride, Public petitions (15:06:90) 591
Questions
Armed forces deployment, Peace keeping operations 789
Civil servants' secondment, Civil service manpower 734w
Crime victims, Crimes of violence 315w
Education & industry 173w
Homelessness, Young people 750-1w
Summertime 573w
Sunday trading 190w, 314w
Transport infrastructure, Inner city areas 11-2
UN High Commissioner for Refugees 393-4w

Hughes, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Public petitions, Noise (18:06:90) 775
Questions
Dangerous Substances (Conveyance by Road in Road Tankers & Tank Containers) Regulations 1981, Law enforcement 302w
Defective housing, Newport 442w
House of Commons broadcasting, Sign language 398w
Radar 536w
Railway transport, Environment protection 66w
Science & Technology Select Committee (HL) 551w
Unemployment, Wales 439w

Hughes, Mr Sean
Questions
Bilateral aid, Greenhouse effect 392w
Passport Office, Telephone services 666w
Science & Technology Select Committee (HL) 551w

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 488
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1001-2
Private Members' Bills, 2R order read (22:06:90) 1299-300
Questions
Alternative energy, Non-fossil fuel obligation 433w
Alzheimer's disease, Water supply 678-9w
Animal welfare, Electric shock 334w
Antarctic, Environment protection 120w
Antarctic, Minerals 121w
Antarctic Treaty 121w
"Biological Defense Programme" 380w
Birds, Nature conservation 356w
Bradwell power station, Accidents 434w
Business, Rent increases 564w
Education, Inner London boroughs 178-9w
Environment protection, Government departments 737w
Genetically modified organisms 381w
Hazardous wastes, Waste disposal 634w
Heap, John, Conferences 120w
HMS Invincible, Nuclear weapons deployment 788
Jet aircraft, Ozone layer 188w
Magnox reactors, Nuclear safety 434w
Marine Pollution Control Unit, Equipment 303-4w
Metropolitan Police, Nuclear accidents 106w
MV Marchioness, Inquiries 630w
Nuclear accidents, Dept of the Environment 358w

Hughes, Mr Simon—continued
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Radioactive wastes 238w, 285-6w
Nuclear fuels, Magnox reactors 285w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Radioactive waste disposal 418w
Nuclear power stations, Electricity generation 7w
Oil pollution, Compensation 73-4w
Oil pollution, Prosecutions 153-4w
Oil pollution control 72-3w
Oil tankers, Shipping safety 73-4w
Piper Alpha platform, Polychlorinated biphenyl 350-1w
Prosecutions, Railway accidents 679
Radioactive waste disposal, Ionizing radiation 137-8w
River pollution, Pollution monitoring 200w
Sea pollution, Birds 291w
Sea pollution, Gas supply industry 201w
Sewage, Viruses 200w
Shipping safety, Research 74-5w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 271
South Africa, Educational aid 395-6w
Transport of radioactive materials, Ferries 5-6
Water pollution, Camelford 403w
Water pollution, West Firle 418w
Water supply, Aluminium 678w
Water treatment, Aluminium 635w

Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (20:06:90) 933-1046

Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Allocation of time motion* & Rep (20:06:90) 933-1046
Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1136-224

Human rights
El Salvador 253w
European Security Conference 258w
Northern Ireland 694w, 1104-5
Romania 1110
Zimbabwe 667w

Humberside College of Higher Education 181w

Hume, Mr John
Questions
Extradition, Terrorism 1102

***Hunt, Rt Hon David**, Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Assembly of Welsh Counties 25w
AWE Cardiff, Licensing 342w
Beef, Exports 342-3w
Beef, Government assistance to industry 339w
Beef, Sales promotions 224w
Beef, Wales 671-2
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Carmarthen 338w
Brymbo steelworks 669-70
Brymbo steelworks, Factory closures 668-9
Capital investment, Ceredigion 577w
Cattle, Animal husbandry 87w
Community charge, Administrative costs 88w, 676-7
Community charge, Departmental correspondence 224w
Community charge, Local government staff 675-6
Community charge, Non-payment 87-8w
Community charge, Transitional relief 224-5w
Community charge, Wales 88w, 440w, 676
District health authorities, Wales 437-8w
Eggs, Marketing 24w
Employment opportunities, Fishguard 226w
Employment schemes, Wales 578-80w
Employment training, Wales 439w
Farm woodland scheme, Wales 85-6w
Floods, Wales 440w
Foreign investment in UK, West Wales 672-3

Hunt, Rt Hon David—continued
Glaucoma, Wales 441w
History education, Wales 94-5w
Iron & steel industry, Employment 84w
Lactofol, Agricultural research 339w
Local authority powers, Wales 341w
Management consultants, Welsh Office 576-7w
NHS review, East Dyfed Health Authority 440w
Opencast mining, Buckley 96w
Organ donors, South Glamorgan Health Authority 674
Project 2000, Wales 439w
Sheep, Animal feed 337w
South Glamorgan Health Authority, Finance 673-5
Suckler cow premiums 736w
Unemployment, Wales 439w
Young offenders, Departmental circulars 737w

Hunt, Sir John
Questions
Air force, Armed forces recruitment 140w
Armed forces married quarters, Greater London 140-1w
Hunt, Peter, Members' correspondence 277w
RAF Biggin Hill, Armed forces recruitment 546w
RAF Biggin Hill, Property transfer 140w
RAF Cranwell, Construction costs 140w

Hunt, Peter
Members' correspondence 277w

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Questions
Road traffic, Basingstoke 61w
Security, Northern Ireland 692w
Zimbabwe, Human rights 667w

Hunterprint
21w
Contracts 213w
Gas supply industry 8w
Water supply industry 6w

***Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas**, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs*
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 20-30, 33, 36
Questions
East Germany, EC external relations 285
EC Foreign Affairs Council 684-5w
EC integration 277-8
European Communities 278
Israel, Exhibitions 273
Israel, Occupied territories 273
Israel, Terrorism 272-4
Middle East, Tactical nuclear weapons 274
Northern Ireland, Sovereignty 560w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community 277
Republic of Ireland, Shopping 277
South Africa, Economic sanctions 271-2
Tactical nuclear weapons 274
Tactical nuclear weapons, Modernisation 274-5
West Germany, Armed forces deployment 285

Hydrofluorocarbons
Pollution control 6w

Hythe Kent Marina Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to Com (13:06:90) 271

IAEA
see International Atomic Energy Agency

IBA
see Independent Broadcasting Authority

Ibbs Committee
see Members' Facilities & Services Review

ICSE
see Interdepartmental Committee on Software Engineering

Identity cards
EC countries 497-8w

ILEA
see Inner London Education Authority

Illsley, Mr Eric
Questions
Cattle, Meat 82-3w
Cattle, Slaughterhouses 83w
Education, Community charge capping 179w
Motor vehicle testing, Cars 188w
Motor vehicles, Fraud 113w
Railway network, South Yorkshire 68w
Slaughterhouses, Veterinary services 82w

IMF
see International Monetary Fund

Immigration
EC nationals 312-3w

Immigration & Nationality Division
574w

Immigration appeals
Philippines 43w, 359w

Immigration applications
Administrative delays 300w
Bora, Alexander 189w
Political refugees 319w

Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987
Questions
320w

Immigration controls
Israel 254-5w

IMO
see International Maritime Organisation

Import controls
Child workers (13:06:90) 288

Import of live animals
Animal diseases 650w
Caseous lymphadenitis 650-1w

Imports
Blood 271w
Factor VIII 231-2w
Hazardous wastes 246w, 290w, 655-6w, 746w

Improvement notices
304-5w

Incinerators
Alternative energy 415-6w
Greenhouse effect 415w
Hazardous wastes 232w, 345w
Offal 621w
Polychlorinated biphenyl 632-3w
Scotland 345w
Trafford Park 737-8w
Waste disposal 345w

Income
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 335w
Hospitals 404w

Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1988
Questions
377w
Inland Revenue 413w

Income support
Availability for work 330-1w
Community charge 700w, 707w
Domestic rates 51w
Earnings rules 375w
Knowsley 707-8w
Mortgages 163-4w
Nursing homes 408w
Pensioners 375-6w
Political refugees 406-7w
Refugees 407w
Residential care 51w, 214w
Sefton 707-8w
Social security benefits reductions 712w

Income support—continued
Social security benefits rules 330w
Take-up 165w
Unemployed 165w
Wales 52-3w, 216w
Widows' benefits 707w

Income tax
Community charge 152w

Independent Broadcasting Authority
Commercial television 725w

Independent Living Fund
215w
Finance 407w

India
259w

Indian subcontinent
Nuclear non proliferation 118w

Industrial accidents
Corporate manslaughter 679

Industrial development
Government assistance to industry 425w

Industrial disputes
Ambulance services 553w, 679w
Prison Officers' Association 461
Swansea Prison 12w

Industrial health & safety
603-4w
Cancer hazards 604w
Computer software 589-90w
Genetic engineering 304-5w

Industrial injury benefit
Northern Ireland 519w

Industrial investment
413-4w

Industrial production
Chemicals 306-7w
Manufacturing industries 556w

Industrial relations
British Steel Corporation 911-2
Post Office 918

Industrial wastes
Waste disposal 209w

Industry
Environment protection 579-80w
Peace 111-2w
Professional organisations 595w
Public bodies 113w

Industry Act 1980
Questions
Stocks & shares 490w

Infant mortality
Scottish health boards 122w
Wales 84-6w

Inflation
151w, 796-7
Confederation of British Industry 557w
EC countries 466

Information services
Driving 76w
Hospital waiting lists 37-8w

Information technology
Balance of payments 582w
NHS 748-9w

Ingram, Mr Adam
Questions
Biotechnology, Ethics 558w
Scottish Homes, Capital investment 252w
Scottish Homes, Housing construction 252-3w

Initial teacher training
714w

Injuries

Injuries—continued
Pedestrian crossings 187w

Inkatha
255w

Inland Revenue
Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1988 413w

Inner city areas
Transport infrastructure 11-2
Vaccination 671-2w

Inner London boroughs
Education 178-9w
Educational finance 172w, 625w

Inner London Education Authority
Expenditure 625w

Inquiries
Bombings 311w
Corlan Housing Association 441-2w
Dale, Pat 501w
Drift nets 378w
Kincora Children's Home 29w, 1107
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 581w
MV Marchioness 630w
Salmon 454w
Wallace, Colin 542-3w
West Midlands Police 11-2w

Insects
Disease control 512w
Science & technology research 741w

Insider trading
580-1w
Civil proceedings 640w
Crime prevention 640w

Institute of Metals
592w

Institute of Psychiatry
728-9w

Institute of Terrestrial Ecology
291w

Insulation
Waste disposal 564w

Insulation grants
Housing insulation 94w

Insurance
Waste disposal 634w

Insurance Companies (Amendment) Regulations 1990
Debates etc.
(18:06:90) 686

Inter-Authority Comparisons & Consultancy
507w

Interdepartmental Committee on Software Engineering
589-90w

Intergovernmental conference
EC institutions 257w

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
138w, 797-8
Developing countries 393w

Interior decoration
203-4w, 288

International assistance
Eastern Europe 394w
Refugees 681

International Atomic Energy Agency
8w, 238w, 286w, 418w, 717-9w

International conferences
Greenhouse effect 797-8
North Sea 295w
Nuclear non proliferation 262w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 42w, 118-9w, 260-1w, 286w

International conferences—continued
Open skies proposals 263w
Recycling 564w

International cooperation
Agricultural research 126w
Air force 380-1w
Air traffic control 69w
Drug crimes 276
Eastern Europe 256w
Europe 284
Film industry 488w
Greenhouse effect 486w
Nature conservation 7w
Nuclear weapons 244w
Terrorism 458

International Fund for Agricultural Development
(14:06:90) 566-83

International Fund for Agricultural Development Order 1990
Debates etc.
(14:06:90) 566-83

International Maritime Organisation
76w, 717w

International Monetary Fund
413w

International Nuclear Event Scale
717-8w

International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund
73w

International Service for National Agricultural Research
UK contributions 276-7w

International Stock Exchange of the UK & Republic of Ireland
see Stock Exchange

International Whaling Commission
99w

Interpreters
Deaf 442-3w

Interviews
Parole 102w
Unemployment benefits 117w

Intimidation
Armed forces 540w

Invalidity benefits
Retirement pensions 407w

Inverclyde
Urban programme 617-8w

Inverclyde enterprise zone
Expenditure 618w

Inverclyde initiative
Employment opportunities 617w

Invest in Britain Bureau
591w

Investment
Bidston-Wrexham railway line 75w
Confederation of British Industry 587-8w
Shipbuilding 588-9w

Investor protection
Financial services 210-1w, 588-9w, 593w
Stock Exchange 588w

IOM
see Institute of Metals

Ionizing radiation
Radioactive waste disposal 137-8w

IPCC
see Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Ipswich Airport
Regional airports 1111-2

Iran
Diplomatic relations 279-80
Foreign relations 561w

Iraq
254w
Arms exports 436w, 791-2
Export credit 596w
Export credit guarantees 212w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 729w
Export licensing 735-6w
Guided weapons 138w

Irish
Languages education 1099-100

Irish Sea
(13:06:90) 441-8
Bridges 349w
Health hazards 88w

Iron & steel
Recycling 568w

Iron & steel industry
306w, 582-3w
EC Industry Council 587w
Employment 84w
Foreign investment in UK 39w
Scotland 343-4w, 583w, 909-11
Wales 84w

Irradiation
Food 133w

Irrigation
Developing countries 276w

Irvine, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 96-7
Questions
Criminal statistics 463
EC Internal Market Council 729-30w
Ipswich Airport, Regional airports 1111-2
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Office of Fair Trading 581w
Northern Ireland Railways, Efficiency scrutinies 362w

Irving, Sir Charles
Questions
Prisons, Food hygiene 665w

Isle of Anglesey
18w

Isle of Cumbrae
Disposable syringes 252w

Isle of Man
Sea rescue 2

Isle of Sheppey
273-4w
Planning inquiries 567w

Isle of Wight
Furs 529w
Mink 529w
Prisons 318w
Turtles 333w

Islington
Community programme 118w
Housing insulation 481w
Neighbourhood energy action scheme 137w

ISNAR
see International Service for National Agricultural Research

Israel
Armed forces 400w
Exhibitions 273
Immigration controls 254-5w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 40w
Occupied territories 254w, 273
Palestine 286
Peace negotiations 286-8, 299-300w
Richardson, John 254-5w
Terrorism 272-4, 560-1w
Vanunu, Mordechai 40w

Italy
Birds 740w
Nature conservation 740w

ITE
see Institute of Terrestrial Ecology

ITE
see Stock Exchange

Ivory
Hong Kong 9w, 685-7w

Jack, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 773, (19:06:90) 846-7, 864-7
Water pollution, Coastal areas (13:06:90) 444-5
Questions
Arts grants, Music 644w
Computer industry, Defence contracts 908
EC Environment Council 159-61w
EC Finance Council 186w
Enterprise initiative, Lancashire 488-9w
Environment protection, Overseas aid 11w
Military aircraft, Defence procurement 380w
Teachers, Recruitment 174w
Training & enterprise councils, Managers 603w

***Jackson, Mr Robert**, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science*
Questions
Access funds 130
Access funds, Higher education administration 505-6w
Anglia Higher Education College, Polytechnics 716w
Biotechnology, Ethics 557-8w
Educational finance, Universities 506w
Genetic engineering, Safety 122-3
Handicapped students, Higher education 22w
Handicapped students, Higher education admission 22w
Handicapped students, Student grants 22w
Higher education, Construction 217w
Higher education, Educational finance 173w
Higher education, Educational standards 168w
Higher education, Retirement 217w
Higher education admission 168w
Higher education teachers, Age 218w
Humberside College of Higher Education 181w
Medical Research Council, Finance 121
Medical Research Council, Medical research 278-9w
Meningitis, Medical research 24w, 184w
Overseas students, Greater London 354w
Scholarships, EC countries 173w
Science & Engineering Research Council, Computers 354w
Science & technology research, Higher education 218-9w
Science & technology research, Research finance 216w
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 168-9w
Student loans 22w, 129-30, 179w, 503-5w
Student loans, Administrative delays 502-3w
Student loans, Bank services 503w
Student loans, Deaf 182w
Student loans, Educational finance 179w
Student loans, Higher education administration 504w
Student loans, Liaison officers 504w
Student loans, Orders & regulations 130
Student loans, Personal income 503w
Student loans, Public expenditure 22-3w
Student loans, Take-up 505w
Student Loans Company, Administrative costs 502w
Student Loans Company, Banks 503w, 505w
Student Loans Company, Consultants 502w

***Jackson, Mr Robert**—continued*
Student Loans Company, Personnel 504w
Student Loans Company, Student loans 503w
Tinnitus, Research finance 120-1
Trans European mobility scheme for university students 181w
Universities, EC grants & loans 460w
Universities, Expenditure 223-4w
Universities, Student numbers 457w
University of Wales, Student numbers 457w
University teachers, Pay settlements 277-8w

Janman, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 367, 384, 389-92, 425-7
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 498
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 503, 504
Questions
Defence, Arms control negotiations 538w
District health authorities, Population distribution 234w
Exclusion orders, Football 318-9w
Sunday trading, Law reform 456
Waste disposal, Contracts for services 568-9w

Janner, Mr Greville
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 148
Questions
Business statements 472-3
Curriculum, History education 172w
Shipping safety 60w
Textile industry, East Midlands 915
Vietnamese refugees, Repatriation 496-7w

Japan
Balance of trade 579w
BBC External Services 399w
Foreign investment in UK 916-8
NATO 648w
Overseas broadcasting 914
Porpoises 684w
War crimes 196w

Jet aircraft
Exhaust emissions 188w
Ozone layer 188w

Job interview guarantee scheme
Hard core unemployed 54w
Take-up 54w

John Ball School
Judgments 219-20w

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Defence procurement 785-6

Johnston, Sir Russell
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 604, 616, 617-26, 628, 642
European Communities (11:06:90) 37, 45, 51-5, 66, 87, 92, 94, 104
Questions
Antarctic, Environment protection 280-1

Joint funding scheme
561-2w

Joint ventures
Recycling 568w

Jones, Mr Barry
Questions
Algae, Liverpool Bay 88w
Armed forces deployment, Wales 33w
Arthritis, Wales 225w
Assembly of Welsh Counties 25w
Beef, Exports 342-3w
Beef, Government assistance to industry 339w
Brymbo steelworks 113-4w, 669-70
Brymbo steelworks, Government grants 113w

***Jones, Mr Barry**—continued*
Cancer, Medical treatments 93w
Cattle, Animal husbandry 87w
Community charge, Administrative costs 88w
Community charge, Non-payment 87-8w
Connah's Quay power station 8w
DREH Resources, Turbines 7w
Dyslexia, Teachers 491-2w
Dyslexia, Wales 491w
Employment schemes, Wales 578-80w
Employment training, Finance 93w
Employment training, Wales 671
Heart diseases, Hospital waiting lists 340-1w
Heart diseases, Surgery 339-40w
Irish Sea, Health hazards 88w
M4, Road traffic 25w
NHS finance, Wales 341w
NHS hospital trusts, Wales 341w
Opencast mining, Buckley 96w
Power stations, Clwyd 7w
Queensferry School Clwyd 93w
Rheumatology, Hospital consultants 226w
School population, Wales 89-92w
Schools, Capital investment 88w
Schools, Expenditure 87-92w
Teachers, Welsh language 227w
United Engineering Steels, Government grants 113w

Jones, Mr Gwilym
Questions
History education, Wales 94-5w
Organ donors, South Glamorgan Health Authority 674
School administration, Budgeting 667

Jones, Mr Ieuan Wyn
Questions
Community charge, Wales 440w
Corwin, Drug side effects 750w
Drug crimes, North Wales 18w
Student loans, Deaf 182w
Suckler cow premiums 470w
Universities, Student numbers 457w

Jones, Mr Martyn
Questions
Biotechnology, Ethics 557-8w
British Nuclear Fuels, Capital investment 484w
Brymbo steelworks, Factory closures 668-9
Common land, Legislation 416-7w
Independent Living Fund, Finance 407w
Lindane, Head lice 508w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Sellafield 484-5w
Nuclear power stations, Radioactive waste disposal 483-4w
Overseas aid 682
Summertime, Clwyd 456-7

Jones, Mr Robert B
Questions
Grant maintained schools, Educational finance 177w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 122
Youth training, Training allowances 463w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1222
Water pollution, Coastal areas (13:06:90) 444

Journalists
ROF Bishopton 34w, 50w, 365-6w

Judges
Retirement age 387w

Judgments
John Ball School 219-20w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community 1108
Sunday trading 462

Juno project
Finance 586w, 919

"Juvenile Crime in Wales"
737w

Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 22, 24, 30-8
Questions
Israel, Terrorism 273-4
Tactical nuclear weapons, Modernisation 274-5

Kearney Inquiry
see Fife Regional Council Child Care Inquiry

Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 305, 366, 384, 385, 397
European Communities (11:06:90) 22
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1195, 1196-7, 1202
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1132
Questions
Grant maintained schools, Lancaster 129

Kennedy, Mr Charles
Questions
Clinical Standards Advisory Group 233w
Clinical Standards Advisory Group, Public appointments 233w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 319w
Family doctors, Budgeting 492-3w, 511-2w, 619-20w
Lebanon, Hostages 253w
Level crossings, Safety 70w
Medical treatments, Negligence 273w
NHS complaints 273w
NHS complaints, District health authorities 147w
Offshore suppliers, EC internal trade 552w
Offshore Supplies Office 239-40w
Tain bombing range, Noise control 546w

Kent County Constabulary
Channel tunnel 11w

Key, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 741-7
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 949-50, 991-2
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1186, 1195, 1199, 1206
Questions
Air displays, Air safety 60w
Armed forces deployment, Local government services 794
British dependent territories, Democracy 259w
Cathedrals, Choirs 182w
Defence land, Environment protection 790
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Recruitment 751-2w
Medical Research Council, Finance 121
Public order, Law reform 316-7w

Kilfedder, Mr James
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 150
Questions
Business statements 480, 1117
Concessionary television licences, Northern Ireland 657-8w
Cultural heritage, Northern Ireland 1098
Shopping centres, Planning appeals 208w
Terrorism 460-1

Kincora Children's Home
Inquiries 29w, 1107

King, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Motor Vehicle Excise Licence (Amendment) Bill, 1R (20:06:90) 930-2
Questions
Balance of trade, West Germany 922

King, Mr Roger—continued
Business statements 1123
Ministry of Defence, Environment protection 789-90

King, Rt Hon Tom, Secretary of State for Defence
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 687-98, 765, (19:06:90) 815, 822-3
Questions
Armed forces, Career structure 787
Armed forces deployment 794-5
Armed forces deployment, Local government services 794
Armed forces deployment, Skilled workers 794
Defence 533w
Defence, Europe 535w
Defence, Netherlands 545w, 792
Defence, West Germany 795
Defence expenditure 534w, 548w
Defence review 534w, 786-7
Ministers' visits abroad, USSR 539w
Nuclear weapons, River Clyde 533w
Terrorism, Netherlands 792-3

King's Head Theatre
Finance 12-3

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 138-9
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 463-4
Economic & monetary union, European currency unit 1108-9
Inflation 796-7
Prime Minister, Ministerial policy advisors 132

Kirkham Prison
Prisoners 101w

Kirkhope, Mr Timothy
Questions
Debenhams, Belfast 689-90w
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 3
Roads, Urban areas 69w

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc.
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 553-5
Questions
Animal experiments 195w
Animal experiments, Animal welfare 194w
Animal experiments, LD50 toxicity test 194w
Animal experiments, Research 194w
Animal experiments, Research finance 194-5w
Antarctic, Environment protection 280-1
Defence Select Committee, Low flying 536-7w
Forestry Commission, Scotland 124w
GATT, Textiles 596-7w
Low flying, Armed forces training 139w
Low flying, Coastal areas 139w
Low flying, Defence equipment 139w
Low flying, Military aircraft 139w
Low flying, Weather 139w
Military aircraft, Aircraft noise 139-40w
Overseas aid, Rain forests 396w
Polling stations 105-6w
Western European Union, Low flying 121w

Kleinwort Benson
Electricity supply industry 287w

Knapman, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 498
European Communities (11:06:90) 35, 57, 81-4
Questions
Colombia, Elections 255w
Conservation, Northern Ireland 693-4w
EC internal trade, EC law 583-4w

Knapman, Mr Roger—continued
Medical Research Council, Medical research 278-9w
Meningitis, Medical research 24w, 39w, 184w
Royal Opera House, Arts Council grants 46w
Trevi Group, Drug crimes 316w

Knight, Dame Jill
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 943-4, 956, 964, 975, 1013
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1162-3
Questions
Eye tests, Statistics 402w
Video recordings, Retail trade 317w

Knight, Raymond
562-3w

Know-how Fund
46w
Eastern Europe 213-4w
Romania 399w

Knowles, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 63-8
Questions
Mineral waters, Departmental responsibilities 204-5w

Knowsley
Income support 707-8w

Knox, Mr David
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 584w
EC external relations 258w

Laboratories
Animal experiments 724w

Labour force survey
672-4w

Labour market
Engineering qualifications 443w

Lactofol
Agricultural research 339w

Lake acidification
Pollution control 156w

Lake Baikal
405w

Lambeth
Community charge benefits 408-9w
Housing action trusts 200w
Rate rebates 408-9w

Lambie, Mr David
Questions
Biotechnology, Ethics 557-8w

Lamond, Mr James
Questions
Computer industry, Production 594w

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman, Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Questions
Balance of trade, West Germany 556-7w
Exports 556w
Industrial investment 413-4w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 556w
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 556w
Public expenditure 150-1w

Lancashire
Criminal statistics 100w
Enterprise initiative 488-9w
School leaving certificates 353w

Lancashire Education Authority
Technical & vocational education initiative 670w

Lancaster
Grant maintained schools 129

Land acquisition
Defence land 789-90
Forestry Commission 450w
Gwynedd Health Authority 225w

Land ownership & tenure
Leasehold housing 389w

Land registration
Fees & charges 680-1w
Scotland 47-8w, 680-1w

Land Registration (Scotland) Act 1979
Questions
47-8w

Land use
Greenbelt 568w
Set-aside schemes 466-7w

Lang, Mr Ian, Minister of State for Scotland
Questions
Adult education, Scotland 349w
Adult education, Teacher training 682w
Aquagard sea lice treatment, Agricultural research 745w
Aquagard sea lice treatment, Licensing 125w
Basic education, Teacher training 123w
Battered wives, Refuges 131w
Community education, Scotland 122-3w, 681-2w
Disabled workers, Employment training 453w
Disabled workers, Training 50w, 129-30w
Distance learning, Scotland 123w
Educational finance, Scotland 612-4w
Employment training, Expenditure 680w
Employment training, Handicapped 352w
Explosives, Waste disposal 615-6w
Fife Regional Council Child Care Inquiry 131w
Fish, Sea lice 128w
Fish conservation, Road construction 49w
Fish conservation, Seals 127w
Fish conservation, Soil erosion 126w
Fish conservation, Trout 125w
Fish diseases, Agricultural research 128w
Fish farming, Pest control 251w
Fisheries, Agricultural research 125-6w
Fisheries, Decommissioning grants 527w
Fishing, Tourists 125w
Fishing catches, Nature conservation 127w
Fishing gear, Coastal areas 48w
Fishing gear, Fish conservation 245w
Fishing offences, Minch 48w
Inverclyde enterprise zone, Expenditure 618w
Inverclyde initiative, Employment opportunities 617w
Iron & steel industry, Scotland 343-4w
Local enterprise companies, Disabled workers 617w
Nursery schools, Strathclyde 124w
Piper Alpha platform, Polychlorinated biphenyl 350-1w
Pre-school education, Scotland 121-2w, 344w
Ravenscraig steelworks, Factory closures 343-4w
Religious education, Departmental circulars 612w
Salmon, Inquiries 454w
Salmon, Loch Eriboll 127w
Salmon Advisory Committee, Trout 128w
Sandeels, Fish conservation 48-9w
Sandeels, Shetland 124w
School boards, Educational finance 745w
Schools, Operating costs 744w
Scottish Secondary Education Review Committee, Public appointments 450-1w
Seals, Fishery protection 251w
Seals, Nature conservation 250w
Sheltered employment, Mentally ill 130-1w
Sheltered placement scheme, Disabled workers 130w
Sheltered placement scheme, Mentally ill 130w

Lang, Mr Ian—continued
Ships, Agricultural research 128-9w
Social workers' training, Legislation 619w
Special training needs, Scotland 251-2w
Step up the Wordpower, Government grants 349-50w
Training, Orkney 50w
Trout, Agricultural research 128w
Urban development grants, Glasgow 448-9w
Urban development grants, Strathclyde 449w
Urban programme, Inverclyde 617-8w
Water pollution, Firth of Clyde 613w

Langland Bay
Sea pollution 480-1w

Languages education
European Communities Select Committee (HL) 178w
Irish 1099-100
Northern Ireland 1099-100

Large & Associates
435w

Latham, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 599, 652
Questions
Black, John, Coroners 552w
Business statements 479, 1120
Community charge 667w
Community charge benefits, Married people 332w
Community charge exemptions, Personal savings 331-2w
Human rights, Northern Ireland 1105
Iran, Foreign relations 561w
Israel, Terrorism 560-1w
Police, Community charge 312w
Security, Northern Ireland 693w
Summertime, Building industry 457

Laurel Hill School
422w

Law
Social workers' training 235w

Law enforcement
Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 323w
Dangerous Substances (Conveyance by Road in Road Tankers & Tank Containers) Regulations 1981 302w
Fishing catches 127w
Speed limits 76w
Sunday trading 551-2w

Law of Distress Amendment Act 1888
Questions
733w

Law Officers' Dept
see Attorney General

Law reform
Dogs 103w
Public order 316-7w
Scotland (12:06:90) 156-234
Squatting 797
Sunday trading 454-6

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R & Money res* (12:06:90) 156-234
Questions
347w

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 615, 623
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 148
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1129
Questions
Attorney General, House of Commons Select Committees 679
Business statements 480, 1121-2

Lawrence, Mr Ivan—continued
Crime 309w
Terrorism, International cooperation 458

LD50 toxicity test
194-5w
Animal experiments 194w

LDDC
see London Docklands Development Corporation

Lead
Water supply 445-6w

Lead free petrol
Motor vehicle safety 473-4w

Lead pipes
124w
House renovation grants 48w, 247w
Scotland 48w, 247w

Lead poisoning
Scotland 124w

Lead pollution
Publicity 246-7w
Scotland 246-8w

Leadbitter, Mr Ted
Questions
Computer industry 907-8

Leasehold housing
Flats 293w
Land ownership & tenure 389w

Lebanon
Hostages 253w, 464-5

Leeds
Dept of Social Security local offices 707w

Leeds Development Corporation
Finance 568w
Government grants 479-80w

Leeds-Bradford railway
3

Legal aid
387w
Divorce 247-8w
Matrimonial proceedings 390w
Treaties 645w

Legal costs
Scottish Legal Aid Board 250w

Legal representation
Prison discipline 574-5w

Legislation
Common land 157w, 416-7w
Local government 201-2w
Local government finance 201-2w
Social workers' training 619w
Sunday trading 102-3w

Leicestershire
Crime 309w

Leigh, Mr Edward
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 498
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 699, (19:06:90) 881-2
European Communities (11:06:90) 21
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1141, 1157-8
Questions
Business statements 481, 1116
Vietnamese refugees, Hong Kong 681-2

Leigh Environmental
Planning permission 737-8w

Leighton, Mr Ron
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 491
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 502-8, 530

Lester, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
Overseas aid, Agriculture (14:06:90) 577-9
Questions
Air routes, Competition 58-9w

Lestor, Miss Joan
Questions
Incinerators, Trafford Park 738w

Leukaemia
Children 50-1w
Medical research 235-6w
Nuclear power stations 375w

"Leukaemia & Lymphoma"
235-6w

Leukaemia Research Fund
235-6w

Level crossings
Safety 70w

Lewis, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
Development Control (Protection of Greenfield Sites) Bill, 1R (12:06:90) 154-5
Questions
Adoption, Disclosure of information 507-8w
Computer industry, Production 594w
Defence, USA 543w
Local government, Legislation 201-2w
Planning appeals, Greater Manchester 291-2w
Shopping centres, Design 200-1w
Telephones, Obscenity 189w
Terrorism, Members' correspondence 101w

Leyton
Roads 9

LGBCE
see Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Liaison officers
Student loans 504w

Liberia
Overseas aid 386w

Libyan Arab Republic
Foreign relations 257-8w

Licensed conveyancers
388w
Educational qualifications 388w

Licensed premises
Scotland 346w

Licensed teachers
Local education authorities 220-3w

Licensing
Aquagard sea lice treatment 125w, 297w, 648-9w
AWE Cardiff 342w
Building industry 203w
Drugs 674-5w
Erythropoietin 39w
National Institute for Medical Research 663w
Radioactive waste disposal 566-7w
Sports centres 659w

Life imprisonment
Homicide 106w
Prisoners' release 18-9w, 28w

Lighting
M40 74w

Likierman Committee
see Professional Liability Steering Group

***Lilley, Mr Peter**, Financial Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 599, 600, 621, 622, 630-6, 639, 649, 650
Questions

***Lilley, Mr Peter**—continued*
Capital gains tax, Tax allowances 414w
Car allowances, Business travel 653-4w
Inland Revenue, Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1988 413w
Mortgage relief 378w
Mortgages, Economic regions 558w
Personal income, Taxation 151-2w
Personal income, Women 152w
Petroleum revenue tax, North Sea oil 413w
Society of Chartered Accountants 378w
Tax allowances, Charities 377w
Taxation, Actors 20w

Limavady
697w

Limited liability
Company registration 489w, 600w
National Front 596w, 642w

Lindane
Head lice 508w

Listed buildings
Gourock Ropeworks 251w
VAT 414w

Litherland, Mr Robert
Questions
Astra Holdings, Defence equipment 791

Lithuania
263w

Liverpool
631w

Liverpool Bay
Algae 88w
Waste disposal 88w

Livestock
Animal welfare 531w
Theft 501w

Livingstone, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 703, 752-7
Questions
Balance of payments, Information technology 582w
British dependent territories, Treaty of Tlatelolco 41w
Evidence, Bombings 312w
London Regional Transport 61w
Nuclear free zones 41-2w
Plutonium, Nuclear safeguards 8w
Tritium, Nuclear safeguards 8w
Wallace, Colin, Inquiries 542-3w

Livsey, Mr Richard
Questions
Opencast mining, Wales 440-1w
School administration, Powys 667-8

***Lloyd, Mr Peter**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office*
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 293, 309, 310, 312, 315-6, 327-8, 333, 335, 338-9, 341, 342-3, 344, 346-52, 387, 395-9, 428-31, 434, 439, 440
Electoral register, Community charge (22:06:90) 1307-8
Questions
Absent voting, British residents abroad 104w
Adoption, Romania 428w
Advocates for Animals, Animal experiments 724w
Alcoholic drinks, Public order offences 322w
Animal experiments 195w
Animal experiments, Animal welfare 194w
Animal experiments, LD50 toxicity test 194w
Animal experiments, Research 194w
Animal experiments, Research finance 194-5w
Animal experiments, Scientists 724w
Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, Law enforcement 323w

***Lloyd, Mr Peter**—continued*
Arson, Wales 190w
Astley Bridge Police Station, Construction costs 360w
Badgers Act 1973, Convictions 100-1w
Bora, Alexander, Immigration applications 189w
British citizenship 725w
British citizenship, Administrative delays 500-1w
British citizenship, Hong Kong 431-2w
British Refugee Council, Government grants 501w
Complaints against police, Members' correspondence 663w
Crime, Cumbria 308w
Crime, Detection rates 13w
Crime, Warwickshire 308w
Criminal records 322w
Criminal records, Teachers 101w
Dale, Pat, Inquiries 501w
Demonstrations, Community charge 192-4w
Dogs, Law reform 103w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 14w, 319w, 361w
Entry clearances, Bangladesh Porishad 431w
Entry clearances, Genetics 431w
Entry clearances, Primary purpose rule 431w
Exclusion orders, Football 318-9w
Feldberg, Wilhelm, Animal experiments 662-3w
Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 319w
Football, Arrests 482w
Government laboratories, Finance 16w
Home Office, Members' correspondence 324w
Immigration, EC nationals 312-3w
Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987 320w
Kent County Constabulary, Channel tunnel 11w
Local government constituencies, Northampton 323w
Longfield Upper School, Burglary 13w
Meibion Glyndwr, Criminal investigation 190w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 723w
Merseyside Police Authority, Finance 17-8w, 666w
Metropolitan Police, Complaints against police 19w
Metropolitan Police, Finance 359-60w, 725w
Metropolitan Police, Manpower 318w
Metropolitan Police, Road traffic control 318w
Murrell, Hilda, Criminal investigation 15w
National Institute for Medical Research 662w
National Institute for Medical Research, Licensing 663w
National Lottery Bill 1989/90 501w
Naturalisation, Administrative delays 574w
Northumbria Police Authority, Manpower 320w
Notting Hill carnival, North Kensington task force 666w
Passport Office, Telephone services 666w
Police, Community charge 312w
Police, Cost effectiveness 14w
Police, Cyprus 427w
Police, Domestic violence 320w
Police, Manpower 12-3w, 499-500w
Police, Warwickshire 316w
Police cautions, Disclosure of information 570-1w
Police civilians, Trade union membership 16w
Police Complaints Authority 102w
Police custody, Prison escapes 572w
Police housing, Rent allowances 314w
Police stations, Audit 191-2w
Police stations, Expenditure 191w
Political refugees, Immigration applications 319w

Lloyd, Mr Peter*—*continued
Political refugees, Temporary immigrants 16w
Polling stations 105-6w
Prosecutions, Dog fighting 103w
Public order, Law reform 316-7w
Public order policing, Chemical weapons 429-30w
Public order policing, Football 315-6w, 500w
Refugees, China 190-1w
Scientific Procedures Inspectorate, Manpower 724w
Summertime 309w, 457, 573w
Summertime, Building industry 457
Summertime, Clwyd 456-7
Summertime, EC internal trade 458
Summertime, Northern Ireland 457
Sunday trading 313-4w
Taylor, Kevin, Trials 429w
Temporary immigrants, China 571w
Temporary immigrants, Colombia 659w
Terrorism, International cooperation 458
Traffic wardens, Training 665-6w
Trevi Group, Criminal records 104w
Trevi Group, Drug crimes 316w
West Midlands Police, Inquiries 11-2w

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Questions
Balance of payments, Information technology 582w
Council tenants, House purchase 631w
Crime, Greater Manchester 309w
Debts, Northern Ireland 694w
Defence 533w
EC Labour & Social Affairs Council 55w
Homeworking, Wages councils 56w
Incinerators, Trafford Park 737-8w
Industrial health & safety 603-4w
Minimum wage, Fines 57w
Naturalisation, Administrative delays 574w
Nuclear weapons, Explosives 436w
Polychlorinated biphenyl, Incinerators 632-3w
Quota of disabled workers, Codes of practice 58w
Repetitive strain injury, Compensation 216w
Repetitive strain injury, Research 264w
RNAD Coulport, Nuclear accidents 611w
Sewage, Waste disposal 633w
Wages councils, Manpower 57w
Wages councils, Minimum wage 57-8w
Wages councils, Pay 57w
Wages councils, Questionnaires 57w
Wages Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 58w

Loans
European Investment Bank 21w, 484w
Eurotunnel 21w
Social Fund 52w, 607w

Local authorities
Handicapped 400-1w
Local government reform 565w
Nursing homes 402w

Local authority powers
Standard community charge 158-9w
Wales 341w

Local education authorities
Capital investment 181-2w, 454-7w
Contracts for services 182w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 167w
Licensed teachers 220-3w
Technical & vocational education initiative 604w

Local Education Authority Training Grant Scheme
713w

Local enterprise companies
129w
Disabled workers 617w
Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration 9w

Local enterprise companies*—*continued
Scotland 617w

Local government
Legislation 201-2w

Local Government & Housing Act 1989
Questions
635w

Local government audit
197w

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
323w, 636-7w

Local government constituencies
636-7w
Northampton 323w

Local government expenditure
Community service orders 446w
Dial-a-ride 444w
Social work 249w
Voluntary organisations 203w

Local government finance
Capital investment 478w
Legislation 201-2w
Mental health community care 369w
Walsall 1w

Local Government Finance Act 1988
Questions
477-8w

Local government functions
Airports 67w
Civil defence 570w

Local government politics
635w

Local government reform
Local authorities 565w

Local government services
Armed forces deployment 794

Local government social services
Child abuse 297w, 370w
Handicapped 553w

Local government staff
Community charge 675-6

Loch Coruisk
Trout 125w

Loch Eriboll
Salmon 127w

Loch Linnhe
Sea navigation 723w

Lockerbie
Criminal investigation 458
Syrian Arab Republic 399w

Loft insulation
205-6w, 420w
Home energy efficiency scheme 287w
Wales 94w

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Questions
Balance of payments, Information technology 582w
Crime prevention, West Yorkshire 310w

Lome Convention
Namibia 392w

London boroughs
Community charge 698-9w
Educational finance 172w
Metropolitan Police 359-60w

London City Airport
65-6w
Public inquiries 354-5w

London docklands
Transport 65-6w

London Docklands Development Corporation
200w

London Fire & Civil Defence Authority
17w

London Fire Brigade
Women 17w

London Regional Transport
61w
Capital investment 61w
Concessionary fares 71w
Government grants 70w

London Regional Transport (Penalty Fares) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1094

London Residuary Body
634w
County Hall 635w

London Underground
445w
Safety 562-3w, 716-7w
Transport police 628w

London Underground Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1093

Londonderry
697w
Unemployment 208w

Longfield Upper School
Burglary 13w

Lothian Health Board
Family planning 350w

Low cost home ownership schemes
Housing associations 294w

Low flying
536w
Air safety 243w
Ammunition 381w
Armed forces training 31w, 139w, 793-4
Borders region 325w
C130 aircraft 241w
Canada 31w
Coastal areas 139w
Compensation 31w
Complaints 793
Defence equipment 139w
Defence Select Committee 536-7w
Exercise JMC 90/2 610w
Helicopters 31w
Military aircraft 139w, 240-1w, 548w
Military exercises 242w
Noise 241w
Noise control 241w
Sea Harrier aircraft 243w
South Down 31-2w
South Yorkshire 381w
Weather 139w
Western European Union 121w

Low incomes
330w, 409w
Estimates days (14:06:90) 543-64

Low Voltage Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1989
Questions
599w

Lowermoor Water Treatment Works
403w

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Questions
Banks, Companies 133
Business statements 1124
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 1104
MV Derbyshire, Shipping accidents 717w
Nuclear weapons deployment 533-4w

LRT
see London Regional Transport

***Luce, Rt Hon Richard**, Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)*
Debates etc.
British Museum (Natural History), Arts grants (20:06:90) 1087, 1088-93
Questions
Art works, Exports 13-4
Arts, Administrative costs 44w
Arts, Curriculum 46w
Arts, Relocation of employees 45-6w
Arts Council, Regional arts associations 46-7w
Arts finance 44w, 46w
Arts finance, East Midlands 45w
Arts grants, Music 644w
Arts grants, Non-metropolitan counties 44-5w
Astra Training Services, Civil servants' business appointments 15-6
British Museum (Natural History) 152w
British Museum (Natural History), Finance 14-5
British Museum (Natural History), Redundancy 18
Business sponsorship incentive scheme 45w
Civil servants, Conditions of employment 15
Civil servants, Disabled workers 551w
Civil servants, Pay 17-8
Civil servants, Recruitment 16-7
Civil servants' secondment, Civil service manpower 734w
Civil service agencies 644w, 733-4w
Civil service agencies, Civil service manpower 31w
Civil service agencies, Conditions of employment 15
Cultural heritage 14
Cultural heritage, Finance 13
Cultural heritage, Taxation 14
Cultural relations, Eastern Europe 46w
Finance, Historic buildings 13
King's Head Theatre, Finance 12-3
Museums & galleries, Admission charges 44w
National Campaign for the Arts, Arts finance 47w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Finance 44w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Government achievements 185-6w
Royal Opera House, Arts Council grants 46w
Royal Shakespeare Company, Finance 12
Science & Technology Select Committee (HL) 551w
Television programmes, EC action 304w
Theatres, Greater London 12
Treasury & Civil Service Select Committee 31w

***Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas**, Solicitor-General*
Questions
Attorney General, House of Commons Select Committees 678-9

M1
76w
Road construction 473w, 476w

M2
Environment protection 482w

M4
76w
Road traffic 25w
Road works 69w

M6
473w
Road works 444w

M11
(18:06:90) 774-5
Public inquiries 188w

M25
Road traffic 9-10

M40
Lighting 74w
Oxfordshire 74w

***M40**—continued*
Warning signs 74w

McAllion, Mr John
Questions
Advocates for Animals, Animal experiments 724w
Animal experiments, Scientists 724w
Railway freight transport, Scotland 1110
Ravenscraig steelworks, Factory closures 306w
USA, Tactical nuclear weapons 118w
Wages councils 462w

Macao
Social security benefits rules 432w

McAvoy, Mr Thomas
Questions
European Communities Select Committee (HL), Languages education 178w
Human rights, Northern Ireland 694w
Plessey, Takeovers 582w
Type 23 frigates, Defence procurement 535w

McCartney, Mr Ian
Questions
Low flying 536w
Plessey, Takeovers 582w

McCrea, Rev William
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1154, 1157
Questions
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Companies 279-83w
Human rights, Northern Ireland 1105
Public bodies, Equal opportunities 207-8w
Security, Northern Ireland 693w

McCrindle, Sir Robert
Questions
Environment protection, Costs 799-800
Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987 320w
Kent County Constabulary, Channel tunnel 11w
Police, Channel tunnel 11w

Macdonald, Mr Calum
Questions
Defence review 534w
Exercise JMC 90/2 610w
Exercise JMC 90/2, Low flying 610w
Low flying, C130 aircraft 241w
Low flying, Military aircraft 241w
Stornoway Airport, Air traffic control 610w
Stornoway Airport, Exercise JMC 90/2 610w
Trans European mobility scheme for university students 181w

McFall, Mr John
Debates etc.
Beaches & Coastline (Regulation) Bill, 1R (13:06:90) 291-2
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 393
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 845-7
Questions
Deal barracks, Explosions 722w
ROF Bishopton, Journalists 34w, 365-6w
Student loans 129-30
Summertime 309w

Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Questions
Water treatment, Desalination 357w, 362w

McGrady, Mr Eddie
Questions
Beef premiums, Northern Ireland 519w
Cattle, Northern Ireland 421w
Christmas bonus, Northern Ireland 518w
Eye tests, Optical charges 697w
Fences, Farms 284w
Fishing, Strangford Lough 422w
Low flying, Helicopters 31w

***McGrady, Mr Eddie**—continued*
Low flying, South Down 31-2w
Radioactive wastes, Sellafield 238-9w
Sheep meat, Trade promotion 284w
Southern Education & Library Board, Primary education 284w

***MacGregor, Rt Hon John**, Secretary of State for Education & Science*
Questions
Council for National Academic Awards 278w
Schools, Ammunition 23w
Student loans, Administrative costs 559-60w

Machine readable passes
497-8w

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 696
Questions
Business statements 474
Defence, Europe 535w
Plessey, Takeovers 582w
Uniform business rate, Cost of living 294-5w

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Questions
Broadmoor Hospital, Death 274w
Car industry, Foreign companies in UK 595w
Israel, Occupied territories 273
Prisons, Sanitation 315w
Summertime, EC internal trade 458
Unemployment 601w

McKelvey, Mr William
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 163, 167
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 909-11
Warships, Navy strength 545w

***Maclean, Mr David**, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture*
Questions
Advisory Committee on Pesticides 530w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Conservation 530-1w
Agricultural research 532w
Agriculture, Census 531-2w
Animal feed 135w
Animal feed, Food contamination 268w
Animal quarantine, Animal diseases 77w
Animal welfare, Electric shock 334w
Animal welfare, Manpower 333-4w
Aquagard sea lice treatment, Licensing 297w, 648-9w
Arctic fox 530w
Avoparcin, Animal feed 620w
Beef, Exports 79w, 81w, 530w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 620w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Animal feed 468w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Cattle 266-7w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Compensation 135w, 332w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Disease control 80w, 135w, 332w, 378-9w, 622w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Farms 620-1w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Food contamination 621w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Milk 135w, 621w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Offal 134-5w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Public expenditure 333w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Research 265w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Slaughterhouses 79w

Maclean, Mr David—*continued*
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Waste disposal 80w
Cattle, Export of live animals 79w
Cattle, Meat 82-3w
Cattle, Slaughterhouses 83w
Colorado beetles 333w
Countryside premium scheme, Agricultural land 466w
Crabs, Food contamination 467-8w
Drift nets 80w
Eggs, Food imports 133w
Eggs, Salmonella 470w
Export of live animals, Spain 133-4w
Farms, Furs 529w
Farms, Mink 528-9w
Farms, Radioactivity 134w
Food Advisory Committee 622-4w
Functional foods, Food labelling 133w
Horses, Export of live animals 82w
Hound ataxia, Transmissible encephalopathies 82w
Livestock, Animal welfare 531w
Management consultants, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 468-70w
Meat, Enzymes 334-5w
Mink, Aleutian disease 529-30w
Mink, Isle of Wight 529w
Nutrition & health 336w
Offal, Animal feed 621-2w
Offal, Incinerators 621w
Pigs, Animal feed 470-1w, 622w
Poultry, Spain 268w
Rabies, Dogs 379w
Scrapie, Animal products 622w
Scrapie, Disease control 78-9w, 622w
Scrapie, Meat 78w
Scrapie, Milk 78w
Scrapie, Sheep 267-8w
Scrapie, Sheep meat 79w
Scrapie, Transmissible encephalopathies 622w
Set-aside schemes, Land use 466-7w
Sheep scab, Disease control 649-50w
Slaughterhouses, Environmental health 268w
Slaughterhouses, Standards enforcement 466w
Slaughterhouses, Veterinary services 82w
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee 135w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Agricultural research 332w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 332-3w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Dogs 79-80w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Pets 378-9w, 471-2w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Pigs 620-1w

McLeish, Mr Henry
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 535-8
Questions
EC Industry Council, Iron & steel industry 587w

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 298-300, 325, 327, 332, 334, 337-40, 345, 350, 368-9, 381-2, 413-4, 423-5, 440
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1129
Questions
BBC, Political refugees 322w
Child abuse, Local government social services 370w
Hong Kong, British national (overseas) 121w
Royal Shakespeare Company, Finance 12

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick, Under-Secretary of State for Transport
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1047, 1054, 1057-8, 1062-4
Questions
Air accidents, Aircraft equipment 562w
Air displays, Air safety 60w
Air routes, Competition 59w, 71w
Air routes, USA 356w
Air safety, Smoke hoods 563w
Air traffic control, Capital investment 69w
Air traffic control, International cooperation 69w
Air transport, Competition 59-60w
Air transport, EC action 59w
Air transport, Treaties 69-70w
Air transport, USA 70w
Aircraft, Ozone layer 302w
Airport security 63w
Airports, Local government functions 67w
Channel ferries, Fire regulations 445w
Flags of convenience 68w
Heathrow Airport, Air traffic 63w
Jet aircraft, Ozone layer 188w
Marine Pollution Control Unit, Equipment 303-4w
MV Derbyshire, Shipping accidents 717w
MV Marchioness, Inquiries 630w
Oil pollution, Compensation 73-4w
Oil pollution, Prosecutions 153-4w
Oil pollution control 72-3w
Oil tankers, Shipping safety 73-4w
Roll-on roll-off ships, Safety standards 76w, 717w
Sea navigation, Loch Linnhe 723w
Sea rescue, Devon 1-2
Sea rescue, Isle of Man 2
Sea rescue, Radio engineering 2
Shipping 67w
Shipping registration, British dependent territories 627w
Shipping safety 60w
Shipping safety, Research 74-5w
Smoke hoods, Standards specifications 626-7w
Supersonic aircraft, Ozone layer 302-3w
Tanker ships, Western Isles 153w

McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 963, 964, 966-7
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1183
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 151
Questions
Corwin, Drug side effects 675w
Devolution, Northern Ireland 692w
Drug side effects 373w
Drug side effects, Compensation 275w
Drugs, Licensing 674-5w
Local government audit 197w
Poland, Frontiers 497w
Steroid drugs, Drug side effects 372w
Transplant surgery, Special health authorities 509w

McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Questions
Private Bills, House of Commons reform of procedure 626w

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland 1101
EC law, Extradition 1097

McWilliam, Mr John
Questions
City technology colleges 175w
Computer software, Industrial health & safety 589-90w

Madden, Mr Max
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 306-8, 310, 311, 327, 331, 349, 359-62, 371, 397

Madden, Mr Max—*continued*
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 688
House of Commons divisions (19:06:90) 898
Questions
British citizenship 725w
Business statements 473
Day nurseries, Educational institutions 714-5w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 361w
Employment training, Day nurseries 723w
Entry clearances 300-1w
Entry clearances, Bangladesh Porishad 431w
Entry clearances, Genetics 431w
Entry clearances, Primary purpose rule 431w
Immigration applications, Administrative delays 300w
India 259w
NOP Market Research, Eye tests 275w
Soviet studies, University teachers 406w
Trident, Arms control negotiations 535w

Maesteg
Railway travel 94w

MAFF
see Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food

Maginnis, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 747-9
Questions
Cross border cooperation in Ireland, Extradition 1096-7
Social security recipients, Northern Ireland 689w

Magnox reactors
Nuclear fuels 285w
Nuclear safety 434w

Maguire, Annie
Convictions 387w

Mahon, Mrs Alice
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1071-2
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 802
Questions
Computer software, Industrial health & safety 589-90w
Evidence, Bombings 311w
Housing & handicapped, House renovation grants 295-6w
Low flying 536w
Nuclear accidents, Dept of Education & Science 277w
Nuclear accidents, Dept of Health 272w
Overseas aid, Environment protection 391w
Secondary education, Calderdale 123

Maidenhead
Flood control 470w

Mail Users' Association
Postal services 111w

Mailing lists
Exservicemen 720w

Maintenance
Retail price index 493w

Major, Rt Hon John, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Questions
EC Finance Council 186w
Economic & monetary union 652-3w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 150w
Income tax, Community charge 152w
Travel allowances, Republic of Ireland 651-2w

"Making Belfast Work"
Expenditure 208-9w

Malawi
Educational aid 395-6w

Malins, Mr Humfrey
Questions
Road traffic, South London 134

Mallon, Mr Seamus
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 965-6
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1155
Questions
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry 689w

Management consultants
Army 328w
Attorney General 388w
Cabinet Office 97-9w
Dept of Education & Science 217-8w
Dept of Energy 362w
Dept of Social Security 701-7w
Dept of Transport 302w
Home Office 571-2w
Hospital waiting lists 507w
House of Commons 297-8w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 468-70w
Prime Minister 97-9w
Privy Council 110w
Scottish Office 448w
Welsh Office 576-7w

Managers
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 328-9w
Training & enterprise councils 603w

Managing agents
227-30w

Manchester Airport
356w

Manchester Prison
Building repairs 102w, 313w, 321w
Police 102w

Mans, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 718, (19:06:90) 860-2, 865
European Communities (11:06:90) 74
Water pollution, Coastal areas (13:06:90) 443
Questions
Air transport, Treaties 69-70w
Cars, Security 310w
Foreign investment in UK, EC internal trade 916-7

Manual workers
Pay 603w

Manufactured goods
Balance of trade 579w, 922
EC internal trade 584-6w

Manufacturing industries
Confederation of British Industry 584w
Employment level 460w
Foreign investment in UK 10w
Industrial production 556w
Non-domestic rates 293w
Productivity 556w
Trade competitiveness 585w

Manure
Pollution control 469w

MANWEB
see Merseyside & North Wales Electricity Board

Maples, Mr John
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 594, 637
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 150
Questions
Defence procurement, Cost effectiveness 539w

Marek, Dr John
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 410-1
Questions
Access to Parliament, Pedestrians 298-9w
Brymbo steelworks, Factory closures 668-9
Civil servants, Recruitment 17
Falkland Islands, Telephones 495w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Ministerial policy advisors 299w
Sunday trading 314w
Syrian Arab Republic, Lockerbie 399w

Marginal land
EC action 134w

Marine nature reserves
Minch 49w
Strangford Lough 1106-7

Marine Pollution Control Unit
153-4w
Equipment 303-4w

Marketing
Eggs 24w

Marland, Mr Paul
Questions
Air transport, Competition 59-60w

Marlow, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 297-8, 299, 302, 305, 313, 324-7, 333, 334-5, 339, 340, 342, 345, 348, 352, 353-4, 361, 364-8, 373-4, 381, 393, 397, 399, 418-23, 429, 430, 433, 434
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 697
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 936
Procedure (20:06:90) 929
Questions
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Disease control 378-9w
Business statements 1117
Curriculum, Private education 354w
EC integration 277-8
Israel, Peace negotiations 299-300w
Local government constituencies, Northampton 323w
Motorways, Speed limits 76w
Road construction, Northamptonshire 70w
School population, Ethnic minorities 353-4w

Marriage
Scotland 348w

Marriage (Registration of Buildings) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep* & 3R* (22:06:90) 1299

Married people
Community charge benefits 332w, 700w

Married women
Retirement pensions 377w

Married women's half test
377w

Marshall, Mr David
Questions
British Rail, Government grants 741w
Computer software, Industrial health & safety 589-90w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 120w
EC Industry Council 306w
Railway network, Public service obligation grant 682w
Railway track, Harmonisation of standards 67w
Railway transport, Government grants 742w
Tachographs, Working hours 187w
Type 23 frigates, Defence procurement 535w
Vietnam, Overseas aid 275-6w

Marshall, Mr Jim
Questions
Community workshops, Northern Ireland 1106
Crime, Leicestershire 309w
EC Development Council 390w
Regional aid 591w
Sixth form education, Educational qualifications 169w

Marshall, Mr John
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 618, 651-6
Questions
Business statements 1124
Cross border cooperation in Ireland, Extradition 1096
Hendon School, Grant maintained schools 127-8
Local government reform, Local authorities 565w
M25, Road traffic 9-10
Miscarriages of justice 680
Nuclear weapons deployment, BAOR 787-8
Overseas aid, Economic growth 390w
Post Office 111w
Post Office, Monopolies 919
Postal services, Greater London 113w
USSR, Emigration 384w

Marshall, Sir Michael
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 694, (19:06:90) 848-50
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 140-1

Martin, Mr David
Questions
Arts, Relocation of employees 45-6w
Overseas broadcasting, Japan 914

Martin, Mr Michael J
Questions
Regional aid 591w

Martlew, Mr Eric
Questions
Northern Ireland Electricity 697w
Regional development grants, Regional selective assistance 920
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 168-9w
Tactical nuclear weapons 541w

Maternity leave
Police housing 663w

Mates, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 704, 708-16, 717

Matrimonial proceedings
Legal aid 390w

Maude, Mr Francis, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 370-4, 404, 414-5, 417, 432, 433-4
European Communities (11:06:90) 34, 56, 61-2, 64-5, 102-6
Questions
Cyprus, Foreign policy 384w
EC external relations 258w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 120w, 257w
EC Foreign Affairs Council, EC law 260w
Europe, International cooperation 284
European Development Bank, Newham 284-5
Foreign investment in UK, Iron & steel industry 39w
Germany, EC budget 257w
Hong Kong, British national (overseas) 121w
Intergovernmental conference, EC institutions 257w
Turkey, Prisoners' release 399w
USSR, Baltic Republics of USSR 285

***Mawhinney, Dr Brian**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Arts, Northern Ireland 690-1w
Community relations, Northern Ireland 691-2w
Cultural heritage, Northern Ireland 1097-8
Education, Northern Ireland 1099
Further education, Crimes against property 1099
Languages education, Irish 1099-100
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Further education 1098-9
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Further education teachers 520w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Redundancy 520w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Religious discrimination 520-1w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Staff-student ratios 521w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Teachers 519-20w
Northern Ireland Community Relations Council 690w
Religious education, Northern Ireland 696w
School admission, Northern Ireland 422w
Southern Education & Library Board, Primary education 284w
Ulster Museum, Exhibitions 1098

Maxton, Mr John
Debates etc.
Oral question time point of order (20:06:90) 909
Oral questions (20:06:90) 927
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 909-11
Community charge benefits, Scotland 697-8w
Pensioners, Housing benefits 377w
Pensioners, Income support 375-6w

Maxwell-Hyslop, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 491
Questions
Dept of Health, Members' correspondence 269w

May Inquiry
see Guildford Four Inquiry

***Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick**, Attorney-General*
Questions
Anton Piller orders 111w
Appeals 680-1
Bailiffs, Manpower 731w
Black, John, Coroners 552w
Certificated bailiffs, Examinations 732-3w
Certificated bailiffs, Manpower 733w
Company law, Prosecutions 387w
County court bailiffs, Educational qualifications 731-2w
County court bailiffs, Manpower 733w
Courts, Armagh 290w
Director of Public Prosecutions, Complaints against police 289w
Divorce settlements 197w
Evidence, Facsimile transmission 290w
Evidence, Forensic science 679-80
Family courts, Northern Ireland 289-90w
Guildford Four Inquiry 9w
Immigration appeals, Philippines 43w, 359w
Judges, Retirement age 387w
Leasehold housing, Land ownership & tenure 389w
Legal aid 387w
Legal aid, Treaties 645w
Licensed conveyancers 388w
Licensed conveyancers, Educational qualifications 388w
Maguire, Annie, Convictions 387w
Management consultants, Attorney General 388w

***Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick**—continued*
Matrimonial proceedings, Legal aid 390w
Miscarriages of justice 680
Mortgage defaulters, Repossession orders 196w
Motor vehicle testing, Northern Ireland 110w
Murrell, Hilda, Criminal investigation 677-8
Prosecutions, Railway accidents 679
Sentencing, Appeals 387w
Social Security Commissioners, Administrative delays 389-90w
Sunday trading, Torfaen Borough Council 551-2w
Taylor, Kevin, Trials 197w, 389w
Television licences, Northern Ireland 110-1w

Meacher, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 548-52, 562, 564
Questions
Dept of Social Security, Debt collection 53w, 711w
Dept of Social Security local offices 710w
Housing benefits, Public expenditure 331w
Income support, Community charge 707w
Low incomes 330w, 409w
Mobility allowance, Children 524w
National insurance benefits, Dependants 53w, 376-7w
Non-contributory benefits, Spouse additions 376w
Pensioners, Personal income 409-13w
Resettlement units 711-2w
Retirement age, Social security reform 377w
Retirement pensions, Costs 376w
Retirement pensions, Married women 377w
Social Fund, Social security recipients 731-2w
Social security benefits 52w, 710-1w
Unemployment benefit offices 670-1w

Meale, Mr Alan
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1078
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 311w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Regional planning & development 584w

Means tested benefits
Capital rules 708w
Elderly 700w
Women 700w

Meat
Cattle 82-3w
Enzymes 334-5w
Scrapie 78w

MEDIA programme
487-8w
Finance 304w

Medical appeal tribunals
Administrative delays 162-3w
Social security appeals 162-3w

Medical audit
232-3w

Medical education
401w, 555-6w
Government grants 350w
Scotland 350w

Medical laboratory scientific officers
Pay 751-2w
Recruitment 751-2w

Medical research
British Museum (Natural History) 513w
Cancer 509w
Leukaemia 235-6w
Medical Research Council 278-9w
Meningitis 24w, 39w, 184w

Medical Research Council
120, 184w, 678-9w
Finance 121

***Medical Research Council**—continued*
Medical research 278-9w

Medical treatments
Cancer 93w
Drug abuse 525-6w
Multiple births 233-4w
Negligence 273w

Medway Health Authority
273-4w

Medway Tunnel Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
Order for consideration read (14:06:90) 449, (21:06:90) 1093

Meibion Glyndŵr
Criminal investigation 190w

***Mellor, Mr David**, Minister of State, Home Office*
Debates etc.
Radio reception, North Yorkshire (11:06:90) 113-7
Questions
Astley Bridge Police Station, Prison escapes 360w
BBC, Political refugees 322w
BBC, Radio 321w
Birmingham Prison, Prisoners' clothing 14-5w, 724w
Category A prisoners 360-1w
Chelmsford Prison, Prison overcrowding 658-9w
Computer privacy, EC law 498w
Concessionary television licences 313w
Concessionary television licences, Northern Ireland 657-8w
Drug crimes, Crime prevention 316w
Evidence, Facsimile transmission 323w
Independent Broadcasting Authority, Commercial television 725w
Life imprisonment, Prisoners' release 18-9w
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 102w, 313w, 321w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 101w
Parole, Interviews 102w
Police custody 360w
Police custody, Prisoners on remand 321w, 461-2, 572-3w
Prison discipline, Legal representation 574-5w
Prison discipline, Remission 575w
Prison population 317-8w
Prison rules 315w
Prison staff, Disabled workers 105w
Prison staff, Pay 317w
Prison staff, Training 664-5w
Prison visitors, Car allowances 314w
Prisoners, Drug abuse 452-3
Prisoners, Handicapped 105w
Prisoners' home leave, Women's prisons 321-2w
Prisoners on remand, Prison accommodation 451-2
Prisoners on remand, Trials 451-2
Prisons 315w, 428-9w
Prisons, Building repairs 15w
Prisons, Food hygiene 665w
Prisons, Isle of Wight 318w
Prisons, Sanitation 17w, 315w
Radio frequencies, Educational broadcasting 100w
Sunday trading 190w, 314w
Sunday trading, Croydon 454-5
Sunday trading, Judgments 462
Sunday trading, Law reform 455-6
Sunday trading, Legislation 102-3w
Sunday trading, Shop staff 462
Sunday trading, Torfaen Borough Council 455
Sunday trading, Treaty of Rome 429w
Swansea Prison, Industrial disputes 12w
Video recordings, Retail trade 317w
Women's prisons, Per capita costs 324w

Members
Military aircraft 646w

Members' conduct
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:06:90) 171-3, (14:06:90) 456-7, 466, (18:06:90) 685, 686, (19:06:90) 786, 804, 887, 891, (20:06:90) 975, 976, 987, 1030, (21:06:90) 1106, 1110

Members' correspondence
Administrative delays 5w, 101w, 723w
Complaints against police 663w
Dept of Health 269w
Fishing gear 746w
Home Office 324w
Hunt, Peter 277w
Terrorism 101w

Members' dress
Speaker's rulings & statements (20:06:90) 1061-2

Members' facilities
Telephones 106w

Members' Facilities & Services Review
110w

Members' interventions
Speaker's rulings & statements (11:06:90) 65, 109-10, (12:06:90) 248, (13:06:90) 328, 410, (14:06:90) 456, 539, 541, (15:06:90) 647, (18:06:90) 680, (19:06:90) 876, (20:06:90) 956, 1028, 1063, 1087

Members' misconduct
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:06:90) 1192

Members' secretaries
House of Commons accommodation 298w

Members' speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (11:06:90) 78, (12:06:90) 140, 150, 151, 251, (13:06:90) 352, 366, (14:06:90) 487, 491, 498, 502, 552, (15:06:90) 661, (18:06:90) 721, 732, (19:06:90) 805, 852, 900, (20:06:90) 1062, (21:06:90) 1147, 1196, (22:06:90) 1307

Members' visits abroad
Employment Select Committee 398w

Meningitis
Medical research 24w, 39w, 184w

Menopause
Out-patient clinics 24w
Wales 24w

Mental health community care
Local government finance 369w
Mental illness 148w
Phobias 148w

Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984
Questions
248-9w, 619w

Mental health services
Gwynedd Health Authority 26w
Wales 26w

Mental illness
Hospital admissions 148-9w
Mental health community care 148w

Mental patients
Hospital admissions 248-9w

Mentally disadvantaged
Training Agency 54w, 245w

Mentally handicapped
Handicap benefits 708w
Housing & handicapped 24-5w
Wales 24-5w

Mentally ill
Handicap benefits 708w
Sheltered employment 130-1w
Sheltered placement scheme 130w
Training 263w, 343w

Merit awards
Hospital consultants 232-3w

Mersey Regional Health Authority
553w
AIDS 553-4w

Merseyside
Housing associations 631w
Rent control 564-5w

Merseyside & North Wales Electricity Board
7w

Merseyside Police Authority
Finance 17-8w, 666w

Metal detectors
Ancient monuments 616-7w
Archaeological sites 357w
Scotland 616-7w

Methane
Gas supply industry 527-8w
Scotland 527-8w

Methyl chloroform
295w
Air pollution control 269w
Pollution control 6w

Metropolitan counties
Ethnic groups 672-4w

Metropolitan Police
191-4w, 427w, 570-1w, 665-6w
Complaints against police 19w
Finance 359-60w, 725w
London boroughs 359-60w
Manpower 318w
Nuclear accidents 106w
Road traffic control 318w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Questions
Brymbo steelworks 669
Floods, Wales 440w

Michael, Mr Alun
Debates etc.
Members' conduct (18:06:90) 685, 686
Questions
Antarctic, Minerals 120w
Antarctic, Mining 40w
Beaches, Pollution control 226w
Beaches, Pollution monitoring 227w, 443w, 492w
Beaches, Sea pollution 93w, 578w
Children Act 1989 753w
Children Act 1989, Wales 737w
Diabetes 150w
Diabetes, Wales 94w
Douglas Haig Memorial Homes, House renovation grants 442w
Employment Service local offices 264w, 462w
Export of live animals, Horses 212-3w
Eye tests, Children 227w, 339w
Eye tests, NHS charges exemptions 510w
Eye tests, Optical charges exemptions 492w, 553w, 577w, 654w, 677w
Eye tests, Regional health authorities 371w
Eye tests, Social security recipients 401-2w
Eye tests, Wales 441w
Family credit, Social security recipients 216w
Family credit, Take-up 165w
Family credit, Wales 52-3w
Glaucoma, Wales 441w
Horses, Export of live animals 82w
House renovation grants, Exservicemen 25w
Motor vehicles, Fire prevention 473-4w
Myodil, Drug side effects 342w, 367w
Nature conservation, International cooperation 7w
Ophthalmic services, Out-patients 27w, 227w, 274w
Ophthalmology, Out-patient clinics 93-4w
Project 2000, Wales 439w
Social security abuse, Young people 731w
Social security recipients 331w
South Glamorgan Health Authority, Finance 674-5
Swansea Prison, Industrial disputes 12w

Michael, Mr Alun*—*continued
Treaties, Nature conservation 40-1w
Unemployment benefit offices, Office closures 305w
Welsh Water, Travelling expenses 94w
Young offenders, Departmental circulars 737w
Young offenders, Police cautions 725w

Michie, Mr Bill
Questions
Defence, Netherlands 792
Dept of Trade & Industry, Regional planning & development 584w
NHS finance 799
School administration, Budgeting 169-70w

Michie, Mrs Ray
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 815
Questions
Special training needs, Scotland 251-2w

Microbiological Safety of Food Advisory Committee
147-8w

Microbiological Safety of Food Steering Group
147-8w

Mid Glamorgan
Education 438w
Emergency planning 318w
Employment training 671
Fire services 318w

Middle East
Defence equipment 329w
Hostages 279-80
Nuclear non proliferation 275-6
Peace negotiations 253-4w, 272-3, 466
Tactical nuclear weapons 274
Technology transfer 329w

Midland Bank
596w

Midland Montagu
132

Migrant workers
EC law 604-5w

Mileometers
113w

Military aid
535w

Military aid to civil community
544w
Ambulance services 679w

Military aircraft
Air travel 645-6w
Aircraft noise 139-40w
Defence procurement 380w
Low flying 139w, 240-1w, 548w
Members 646w
RAF Akrotiri 380w

Military alliances
Nuclear power 668w

Military exercises
Air force 242w
Low flying 242w
Urban areas 540w

Milk
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 135w, 621w
Scrapie 78w

Miller, Sir Hal
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 149
Questions
Car industry, EC internal trade 917

Milligan, Allan
34w, 50w, 365-6w

Mills, Mr Iain
Questions
Hawkshurst moor, Planning inquiries 434w
Hawkshurst moor mine, Planning inquiries 482w

Milton Keynes
Parliamentary constituencies (21:06:90) 1224

Minch
Fishing offences 48w
Marine nature reserves 49w

Mineral waters
Departmental responsibilities 204-5w

Minerals
Antarctic 120-1w

Minimum wage
463w
Fines 57w
Wages councils 57-8w

Mining
Antarctic 40w
Engineering industries 594w

Ministerial Group on Women's Issues
19-20w
Child care 19w

Ministerial policy advisors
Economic policy 406w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 299w
Prime Minister 132

Ministerial statements
Channel tunnel (14:06:90) 482-500
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1125-34
Speaker's rulings & statements (11:06:90) 19, (19:06:90) 801
USSR (12:06:90) 137-53

Ministers
Dept of Social Security 708-9w

Ministers' domestic visits
Northern Ireland Office 366w
Vallin Pollen International 487w

Ministers' visits abroad
Armenia 741w
Northern Ireland Office 688w
Prime Minister 270-1w, 668w
USSR 405-6w, 539w, 747-8w

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food
204-5w
Management consultants 468-70w

Ministry of Defence
647w
Corruption 647w
Disaster relief 547w
Environment protection 545-6w, 789-90
Government departments 244w
Nuclear accidents 142w, 330w
Transport of radioactive materials 32w

Ministry of Defence police
British Aerospace 382w
Pay 382-3w
ROF Bishopton 611w
ROF Nottingham 382w

Mink
Aleutian disease 529-30w
Farms 528-9w
Isle of Wight 529w

Miscampbell, Mr Norman
Debates etc.
Water pollution, Coastal areas (13:06:90) 441-2

Miscarriages of justice
(12:06:90) 262-70, 679-80
Bombings 454, 460
Convictions 311-2w

Mitchell, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 749-52
Exports (22:06:90) 1258, 1261, 1262
Questions
Cars, Security 309-10w
Defence, USSR 537w

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Questions
Absent voting, British residents abroad 104w
Czechoslovakia, Elections 259w
Decommissioning grants 334w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Regional planning & development 584w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 150w
Fisheries, Public expenditure 334w
Fishing gear, Fish conservation 245w
Fishing gear, Research 265w
Insider trading, Civil proceedings 640w
Insider trading, Crime prevention 640w
Shellfish, Health warnings 131-2w

Mitchell, Sir David
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 493
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 623-6
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 237, 253
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 4
Parliamentary constituencies, Hampshire 36w
Planning appeals, Costs 292-3w
Regional planning & development, Departmental publications 5w

MMC
see Monopolies & Mergers Commission

Moate, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 494
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 239, 248-9
Sheppey General Hospital, Public petitions (12:06:90) 261

Mobil North Sea
656w

Mobility allowance
608w
Children 524w
Community charge benefits 698w
Disability allowance 708w
Handicapped children 131-2

Mobility of disabled
Dial-a-ride (15:06:90) 591

MOD
see Ministry of Defence

Modernisation
Tactical nuclear weapons 274-5

Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 141
Questions
Business statements 471, 1114
Human rights, Northern Ireland 1105
Security, Northern Ireland 693w

Monopolies
Post Office 585-6w, 919

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
362w, 489w
EC internal trade 209-10w
Inquiries 581w
Office of Fair Trading 581w
Takeovers 581w

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1076
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 176, 195-9

Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Questions
Aquagard sea lice treatment, Licensing 648-9w
Grant maintained schools, Economic regions 175w

Montgomery, Sir Fergus—continued
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 313w

Moonie, Dr Lewis
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1145, 1163-4
Questions
Computer industry 908
Nuclear weapons deployment 534w

Moorings
723w

Morgan, Mr Rhodri
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 341
Questions
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Managers 328-9w
AWE Cardiff, Licensing 342w
AWE Cardiff, Trident missiles 382w
Channel tunnel, Railway freight transport 443w
Corlan Housing Association, Inquiries 441-2w
Crime, Wiltshire 309w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 719w
Engineering qualifications, Labour market 443w
Hinkley Point C, Public inquiries 434w
Home energy efficiency scheme, Advisory services 288w
Home energy efficiency scheme, Loft insulation 287w
Home energy efficiency scheme, Thermal insulation 288w
Housing & elderly, Wales 441w
Non-fossil fuel obligation, Contracts 657w
Non-fossil fuel obligation, Wind power 657w
Non-fossil Fuel Purchasing Agency 657w
South Glamorgan Health Authority, Finance 673-4
Trident, Arms control negotiations 535w

Morley, Mr Elliot
Questions
Animal feed 135w
Armed forces, Security 720w
Crabs, Food contamination 467-8w
European Economic Community, Nuclear non proliferation 260w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Nuclear safeguards 286-7w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 260-1w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Trident 261w
Poaching, Convictions 571w
Regional aid 590-1w
Sandeels, Shetland 124w
School administration, Budgeting 170w
Social security benefits, Fishing crews 165w
Theft, Livestock 501w

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 489-90
Questions
Air routes, USA 356w
Armed forces pay, Additional pensions 609w
Armed forces pay, Social security benefits 609-10w
Armed forces pay, Widowers' benefits 609w
Attendance allowance, Handicapped children 163w
Child abuse, Evidence 573-4w
Crossroads Care 234w
Leukaemia, Medical research 235-6w
Ophthalmic services, Blind 234w
Prison staff, Disabled workers 105w
Prisoners, Handicapped 105w
Prisoners' release, Handicapped 105w
Taylor, Kevin, Trials 197w, 389w, 429w

Morris, Rt Hon John
Questions
Guildford Four Inquiry 9w

Morrison, Sir Charles
Questions
Air transport, Competition 59-60w

Morrison, Rt Hon Peter, Minister of State for Energy
Questions
Alternative energy, Non-fossil fuel obligation 433w
Alternative energy, Waste disposal 432w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 287-8w
Energy conservation 717w
Energy research, Diatoms 485w
Energy research, Fossil fuels 485w
Gas gathering, North Sea 656w
Greenhouse effect, Air pollution control 138w
Home energy efficiency scheme, Advisory services 288w
Home energy efficiency scheme, Loft insulation 287w
Home energy efficiency scheme, Thermal insulation 288w
Housing insulation, Electricity consumption 136w
Housing insulation, Energy conservation 239w
Hunterprint, Gas supply industry 8w
Neighbourhood energy action scheme, Camden 137w
Neighbourhood energy action scheme, Housing insulation 136-7w
Non-fossil fuel obligation, Contracts 657w
Non-fossil fuel obligation, Wind power 657w
Offshore structures 432-3w
Offshore suppliers, EC internal trade 552w
Offshore Supplies Office 239-40w
Wave power, Research finance 433w

Mortgage defaulters
Homelessness 635-6w
Repossession orders 196w

Mortgage relief
378w

Mortgages
Economic regions 558w
Income support 163-4w

Moss, Mr Malcolm
Questions
Conventional weapons, USSR 544w

Mother & baby units
Operating costs 324w

Mothers
Housewives 54-5w

Motions for the adjournment
Speaker's rulings & statements (20:06:90) 1068

Motor insurance
Road tax (20:06:90) 930-2

Motor Vehicle Excise Licence (Amendment) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (20:06:90) 930-2

Motor vehicle safety
Lead free petrol 473-4w

Motor vehicle testing
Cars 188w
Northern Ireland 110w
Prosecutions 188w

Motor vehicle type approval
(19:06:90) 899-900

Motor vehicles
Channel tunnel 189w
Exhaust emission controls 187w
Fire prevention 473-4w

Motor vehicles—continued
Fraud 113w
Wheelchairs 71-2w

Motorcycles
Driving instruction 75-6w

Motorways
Road construction 189w
Speed limits 76w

Mowlam, Ms Marjorie
Questions
Railway transport, North East region 7-8
Right to buy 479w
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 168-9w

Moyle, Jonathan
Death 207w, 795

Moynihan, Mr Colin, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)
Questions
City grants 632w
City grants, Expenditure 481w
City grants, St Helens 482w
Enterprise zones, Sunderland 297w
Enterprise zones, Tax allowances 293w
Environment protection, Road works 482w
Environment protection, Urban areas 6-7w
Environmental impact assessment, EC law 2w
Football Trust 564w
Greenbelt, Land use 568w
Hawkshurst moor mine, Planning inquiries 482w
Leeds Development Corporation, Finance 568w
Leeds Development Corporation, Government grants 479-80w
National parks, Planning appeals 630w
National parks, Planning permission 629-32w
Planning appeals, Greater Manchester 291-2w
Planning appeals, Opencast mining 565w
Planning permission, Brentwood 3w
Sand, Druridge Bay 2w
Shopping centres, Design 200-1w
3D, City grants 481-2w
Tyne & Wear Development Corporation, Employment opportunities 296w
Urban development corporations, Disabled workers 200w
Urban programme, Sunderland 203w
Vacant land registers, Administrative costs 565w

MPCU
see Marine Pollution Control Unit

MRC
see Medical Research Council

MUA
see Mail Users' Association

Mull of Kintyre
349w, 611-2w

Mullin, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Bombings, Birmingham (12:06:90) 262-6, 267, 268
Questions
Army, Armed forces punishment 33w
Army, Convictions 33w
Attendance allowance, Social security recipients 215w
Bombings, Birmingham 15w, 460
Evidence, Bombings 310w
Income support, Residential care 214w
Maguire, Annie, Convictions 387w
North East Shipbuilders, Redundancy 593w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 42w
Nuclear power, Technical assistance 8w
Public order policing, Chemical weapons 429-30w
Royal Armament Research & Development Establishment, Disclosure of information 329w

Mullin, Mr Chris—continued
Severe disablement allowance, Social security recipients 214-5w
UN General Assembly, Cambodia 283
West Midlands Police, Inquiries 11-2w

Multiple births
516-7w
Medical treatments 233-4w

Murder & Life Imprisonment Select Committee (HL)
106w

Murphy, Mr Paul
Questions
Community charge, Administrative costs 676-7
Crime, Sussex 309w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 257w
Higher education, Construction 217w
Higher education, Retirement 217w
Higher education teachers, Age 218w
Regional aid 590-1w
School administration, Budgeting 170w
Sunday trading, Torfaen Borough Council 455, 551-2w

Murrell, Hilda
Criminal investigation 15w, 677-8

Museums & galleries
Admission charges 44w

Musgrave Park Hospital
Hip replacements 27w

Music
Arts grants 644w

MV Derbyshire
Shipping accidents 717w

MV Marchioness
Inquiries 630w

MV Rosebay
54w
Shipping accidents 5w

Myanmar
Elections 561w

Myodil
Drug side effects 342w, 367w
Wales 342w, 367w

NACAB
see National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux

Namibia
Armed forces deployment 789
Debts 392w
Lome Convention 392w
UN Transition Assistance Group 544w

National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux
361-2w, 592-3w

National Association of Probation Officers
Sentencing 321w

National Audit Office
46-7w

National Board for Nursing Midwifery & Health Visiting NI
694-6w

National Campaign for the Arts
Arts finance 47w

National Coal Board
see British Coal Corporation

National Consumer Council
307w, 424-5w
Accountability 307w
Finance 308w
Public expenditure 307w

National Curriculum History Committee for Wales
see History Committee for Wales

National Economic Development Council
592w

National Front
Limited liability 596w, 642w

National Fruit Collection
Brogdale Experimental Horticulture Station 651w

National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90
Questions
Departmental publications 753-8w
Pay settlements 150w

National Heritage Memorial Fund
185-6w

National Institute for Medical Research
662-3w, 724w
Licensing 663w

National insurance
Business 605-6w
Fraud 408w

National insurance benefits
Dependants 53w, 376-7w

National insurance contributions
522-3w

National insurance credits
Appeals 264w
Social security benefits disqualification 460w

National Insurance Fund
Personal pensions 524w

National Lottery Bill 1989/90
Questions
501w

National Nursery Examination Board
713w

National parks
Defence land 790
Planning appeals 366-8w, 630w
Planning permission 340w, 629-32w
Wales 340w

National Power
719w

National Rivers Authority
85w, 342w, 470w, 673

National Youth Agency
Community work 458w

NATO
(11:06:90) 20-107, (12:06:90) 137-53, 142w, 242w, 284, 379w, 495w, 539w, 546w, (18:06:90) 687-774, 721w, (19:06:90) 807-97
Armed forces deployment 142w
Defence 542w
Defence review 329w
Japan 648w

NATO Defence Planning Committee
142w

NATO Nuclear Planning Group
Arms control negotiations 244w

Natural Beauty Products
Company liquidations (18:06:90) 776-82

Natural Environment Research Council
532w

Natural History Museum
see British Museum (Natural History)

Naturalisation
Administrative delays 574w

Nature Conservancy Council
49w, 417w

Nature conservation
Badgers 100-1w
Birds 356w

Nature conservation—continued
EC action 157w, 159-61w
Fishing catches 127w
International cooperation 7w
Italy 740w
Overseas aid 397w
Red squirrels 156-7w
Seals 250w
Transport of animals 633-4w
Treaties 40-1w
Turtles 333w

Navy
Arms control negotiations 300w
USSR 540w

Navy strength
Warships 545w

NCB
see British Coal Corporation

NCC
see National Consumer Council
see Nature Conservancy Council

NEA
see Nuclear Energy Agency

NEDC

NEDO
see National Economic Development Council

***Needham, Mr Richard**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Action for community employment, Belfast 155w
Action for community employment, Sponsorship 155w
Christmas bonus, Northern Ireland 518w
Community workshops, Finance 692w
Community workshops, Northern Ireland 1105-6
Debenhams, Belfast 689-90w
Electricity distribution, Rathlin Island 1103-4
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 690w, 1104
Employment level, Northern Ireland 688w
Energy policy, Northern Ireland 687w
Eye tests, Optical charges 697w
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Companies 279-83w
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Disclosure of information 1104
Health services, Northern Ireland 689w
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 27-8w
Housing, Northern Ireland 518w
Housing, Planning permission 518w
"Making Belfast Work", Expenditure 208-9w
NHS hospital trusts, Northern Ireland 690w
Northern Ireland Electricity 697w
Northern Ireland health & social services councils 155-6w
Northern Ireland Office, Ministers' visits abroad 688w
Nurses' training, Northern Ireland 694-6w
Perinatal mortality, Northern Ireland 28-30w
Public bodies, Equal opportunities 207-8w
Reduced earnings allowance, Northern Ireland 519w
Shopping centres, Planning appeals 208w
Social security recipients, Northern Ireland 689w
Southern Health & Social Services Board, Public appointments 284-5w
Unemployment, Londonderry 208w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 697w
Whiteabbey Hospital, Orthopaedics 28w

Negligence
Medical treatments 273w

Neighbourhood energy action scheme
Camden 137w
Housing insulation 136-7w

Neighbourhood energy action scheme—continued
Islington 137w

Neighbourhood watch schemes
458-9
Chelmsford 658w

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1061, 1067-71, 1080, 1083, 1084
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 151-2
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 507, 508, 539, 540, 541, 542
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 311-2w
British citizenship, Administrative delays 500-1w
Business statements 474, 1122
Demonstrations, Community charge 192-4w
Israel, Armed forces 400w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Television programmes 691w
Sri Lanka, Custodial treatment 121w
Sri Lanka, Overseas aid 154-5w
Teachers, Pay 124-5

Nelson, Mr Anthony
Questions
Tax burden 796

Neonatal mortality
Northern Ireland 28-30w
Regional health authorities 144-6w

NERC
see Natural Environment Research Council

Netherlands
Defence 545w, 792
Terrorism 792-3

Network SouthEast
65-6w, 301w, 474w
Greater London 63-4w
Transport subsidies 64w

***Neubert, Mr Michael**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces*
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 887-91
Questions
Air accidents, Hexham 546w
Air force, Armed forces training 242w
Armed forces deployment, Environmental impact assessment 549-50w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Managers 328-9w
AWE Aldermaston, Construction 543w
AWE Aldermaston, Defence contracts 243w
AWE Cardiff, Trident missiles 382w
"Biological Defense Programme" 380w
British Aerospace, Ministry of Defence police 382w
Chemical weapons, Waste disposal 32-3w
Deal barracks, Explosions 722w
Defence land, Environment protection 790
Defence land, National parks 790
Defence Select Committee, Low flying 536-7w
Dockyards, Health physics 540-1w
Exercise JMC 90/2 610w
Exercise JMC 90/2, Low flying 610w
Explosives, Waste disposal 550w
Genetically modified organisms 381w
HMS Southampton, Shipbuilding 609w
Low flying 536w
Low flying, Air safety 243w
Low flying, Ammunition 381w
Low flying, Armed forces training 31w, 139w, 793-4
Low flying, Borders region 325w
Low flying, C130 aircraft 241w
Low flying, Canada 31w
Low flying, Coastal areas 139w
Low flying, Complaints 793

Neubert, Mr Michael—continued
Low flying, Defence equipment 139w
Low flying, Helicopters 31w
Low flying, Military aircraft 139w, 240-1w, 548w
Low flying, Noise 241w
Low flying, Noise control 241w
Low flying, Sea Harrier aircraft 243w
Low flying, South Down 31-2w
Low flying, South Yorkshire 381w
Low flying, Weather 139w
Military aircraft, Aircraft noise 139-40w
Military exercises, Air force 242w
Military exercises, Low flying 242w
Ministry of Defence, Environment protection 545-6w, 789-90
Ministry of Defence, Government departments 244w
Ministry of Defence, Transport of radioactive materials 32w
Ministry of Defence police, Pay 382-3w
Nuclear submarines, Radioactive waste disposal 790-1
Procurement Executive, Air force bases 547w
RAE Bedford, Defence land 547w
RAE Bedford, Operating costs 548w
RAE Bedford, Population 547w
RAE Bedford, Property development 547w
RAE Bedford, United Parcels Service 547-8w
RAE Bedford, Wind tunnels 548w
RNAD Beith, Armed forces civilians 722w
ROF Bishopton, Ministry of Defence police 611w
ROF Nottingham, Ministry of Defence police 382w
ROF Nottingham, Security 381w
Rosyth dockyard, Radioactive waste disposal 32w
Royal Armament Research & Development Establishment, Disclosure of information 329w
Shackleton aircraft, Air accidents 721-2w
Stornoway Airport, Air traffic control 610w
Type 23 frigates, Defence procurement 535w
West Lavington Research Establishment, Defence research 720w
West Lavington Research Establishment, Official secrets 720w

New businesses
483-4w
Employment opportunities 600w

New clause 72
(13:06:90) 410

New clauses
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:06:90) 352-3, 392, 419

Newcastle upon Tyne
507w

Newham
European Development Bank 284-5

Newport
Defective housing 442w

***Newton, Rt Hon Tony**, Secretary of State for Social Security*
Questions
Social security abuse, Efficiency scrutinies 709w

Next steps initiative
644w, 733-4w, 751w

NHMF
see National Heritage Memorial Fund

NHS
Chiropractic 144w
Information technology 748-9w

NHS administration
Public appointments 368w

NHS & Community Care Bill 1989/90
Questions
513w

NHS charges exemptions
Eye tests 510w

NHS complaints
273w
District health authorities 147w

NHS finance
799
Community health councils 508w
Scotland 248w
Wales 341w

NHS hospital trusts
145-6w, 513-5w, 615w
Ambulance services 404w
Departmental publications 146w
Disclosure of information 146w
Northern Ireland 690w
Opinion polls 275w
Pay settlements 150w
Wales 341w

NHS internal market
Health services 371w

NHS review
748-9w, 753-8w
East Dyfed Health Authority 440w
Plain language 513w

***Nicholls, Mr Patrick**, Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Clothing industry, Manpower 604w
Community programme, Housing insulation 117w
Employment 601-2w
Employment, East Midlands 461-2w
Employment level, Manufacturing industries 460w
Employment level, North west region 460-1w
Employment protection, Pregnant women 462w
Employment Service 116w
Employment training 603w
Employment training, Day nurseries 723w
Employment training, Take-up 669w
Employment training, Training Agency 603w
Genetic engineering, Industrial health & safety 304-5w
Homeworking, Wages councils 56w
Housewives, Mothers 54-5w
Housing insulation, Camden 118w
Industrial health & safety 603-4w
Industrial health & safety, Cancer hazards 604w
Manual workers, Pay 603w
Minimum wage 463w
Minimum wage, Fines 57w
Pay 603w
Prisoners' release, Training 604w
Repetitive strain injury, Research 264w
Self-employed, Manpower 601w
Tourism, Devon 54w
Tourism, Sea pollution 54w
Tourist attractions, North West region 600-2w
Tourist industry, EC grants & loans 55w
Tourist industry, Manpower 670w
Training, Mentally ill 263w
Training Agency, Mentally disadvantaged 54w
Unemployment 602w
Unemployment, Burnley 461w
Unemployment, Colne Valley 602w
Wages councils 462w
Wages councils, Manpower 57w
Wages councils, Minimum wage 57-8w
Wages councils, Pay 57w
Wages councils, Questionnaires 57w
Wages Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 58w
Women's employment 115-6w
Youth training, Training allowances 463w

Nicholson, Mr David
Debates etc.
Football, International cooperation (19:06:90) 801
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 453-4
Business statements 1124
Child abuse, Admissibility of evidence 570w
Defence, NATO 542w
Northern Ireland Office, Ministers' visits abroad 688w
South Western Electricity Board, Electricity tariffs 485w
Tobacco duties, EC countries 734-6w

Nicholson, Miss Emma
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1149-51
Questions
Computer industry 908-9
Film industry, International cooperation 488w
Patients, Dependants 234w
Prison population 317-8w
Sheltered placement scheme, Take-up 601w
Teachers, Recruitment 174w

NII
see Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

NIREX
see Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive

NNEB
see National Nursery Examination Board

Noise
Low flying 241w
Public petitions (18:06:90) 775

Noise control
Low flying 241w
Tain bombing range 546w

Non-contributory benefits
Spouse additions 376w

Non-domestic rates
477-9w
Manufacturing industries 293w

Non-fossil fuel obligation
Alternative energy 433w
Contracts 657w
Electricity supply industry 287w
Wind power 657w

Non-fossil Fuel Purchasing Agency
657w

Non-governmental organisations
42w, 275-6w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 261w

Non-metropolitan counties
Arts grants 44-5w

Non-payment
Community charge 1w, 87-8w, 680w

NOP Market Research
Eye tests 275w

Norfolk
School closures 353w
Sea pollution 201w

Norman Shaw buildings
Central heating 419w
Water pollution 296w

Normanton
469w

Norris, Mr Steve
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1076, 1084
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 382-5, 387, 389, 398
Questions
Car allowances, Business travel 653-4w

Norris, Mr Steve—continued
Crime victims, Crimes of violence 315w
Teachers, South East region 125

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
see NATO

North East Drift Net Fishery Inquiry
see Drift Net Fishing Inquiry

North East region
165w, 651w
Crabs 467-8w
Drift nets 378w, 471w
Railway transport 7-8

North East Shipbuilders
Redundancy 593w

North East Thames Regional Health Authority
Finance 233w

North Eastern Education & Library Board
Further education 1098-9
Further education teachers 520w
Redundancy 520w
Religious discrimination 520-1w
Staff-student ratios 521w
Teachers 519-20w

North Kensington task force
Notting Hill carnival 666w

North Regional Association for the Blind
234w

North Sea
Gas gathering 656w
International conferences 295w
Sewage 487w

North Sea oil
Petroleum revenue tax 413w

North Wales
Cancer 93w
Drug crimes 18w

North Wales Police Force
190w

North West Durham Health Authority
232-3w

North West region
Employment level 460-1w
Regional planning & development 920-1
Tourist attractions 600-2w

North West Water Group
Waste disposal (13:06:90) 441-8

North Yorkshire
Radio reception (11:06:90) 111-8

Northampton
Local government constituencies 323w

Northampton North
323w

Northamptonshire
Road construction 70w

Northern Ireland
Aircraft noise 645w
Arts 690-1w
Beef premiums 519w
Cattle 421w
Christmas bonus 518w
Community relations 691-2w
Community workshops 1105-6
Concessionary television licences 657-8w
Conservation 693-4w
Crimes against property 1099
Cultural heritage 1097-8
Custody 289-90w
Debts 694w
Devolution 692w
Education 1099
Employment discrimination 690w, 1104
Employment level 688w
Energy policy 687w
Eye tests 697w

Northern Ireland—continued
Family courts 289-90w
Fences 284w
Foreign investment in UK 688w
Health services 689w
Hip replacements 27-8w
Housing 518w
Human rights 694w, 1104-5
Industrial injury benefit 519w
Languages education 1099-100
Motor vehicle testing 110w
Neonatal mortality 28-30w
NHS hospital trusts 690w
Nurses' training 694-6w
Perinatal mortality 28-30w
Poaching 688w
Prisoners' release 28w
Reduced earnings allowance 519w
Religious education 696w
Road accidents 695-6w
School admission 422w
Security 692-3w
Sheep meat 284w
Social security recipients 689w
Sovereignty 560w
Summertime 457
Television licences 110-1w
Terrorism 518w, 1100-1, 1105
Transport of hazardous materials 693w
Unemployment 697w

Northern Ireland Association of Community Workshops
1105-6

Northern Ireland Community Relations Council
690w

Northern Ireland Dept of the Environment
693-4w

Northern Ireland Electricity
697w, 1104

Northern Ireland health & social services boards
27-30w, 694-6w

Northern Ireland health & social services councils
155-6w

Northern Ireland Office
Energy analysis 30w
Energy conservation 285w
Energy consumption 30w
Ministers' domestic visits 366w
Ministers' visits abroad 688w

Northern Ireland Railways
Efficiency scrutinies 362w

Northern Ireland Training & Employment Agency
155w

Northern region
Regional health authorities 677-8w

Northumberland
Curriculum 173w

Northumberland Health Authority
673w

Northumberland Wildlife Trust
2w

Northumbria Police Authority
Manpower 320w

Norwich
Railway safety 303w

Notice of motions
Costs 298w

Notting Hill carnival
North Kensington task force 666w

Nottingham
45w

NRA
see National Rivers Authority

Nuclear accidents
Agriculture 267w
Dept of Education & Science 22w, 277w
Dept of Health 272w
Dept of the Environment 358w
Greenwich 22w, 106w, 142w, 272w, 277w, 323w, 330w, 358w, 788
Home Office 323w
Metropolitan Police 106w
Ministry of Defence 142w, 330w
Plutonium 196w
RNAD Coulport 611w

Nuclear artillery shells
Nuclear disarmament 792
Nuclear safety 787

Nuclear depth charges
647w

Nuclear disarmament
Arms control negotiations 119w
Nuclear artillery shells 792

Nuclear Electric
8w, 239w, 286-7w

Nuclear Energy Agency
717-8w

Nuclear free zones
41-2w

Nuclear fuel reprocessing
British Nuclear Fuels 288-9w
Capital investment 288-9w
Contracts 286w, 289w
Nuclear non proliferation 262w
Nuclear safeguards 286-7w
Radioactive wastes 238w, 285-6w
Sellafield 484-5w

Nuclear fuels
Exports 96w
Magnox reactors 285w
Nuclear safeguards 286w

Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive
Radioactive waste disposal 418w

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
238w, 434w

Nuclear non proliferation
Developing countries 275
European Economic Community 260w
Indian subcontinent 118w
International conferences 262w
Middle East 275-6
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 262w

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty
43w, 260w, 683w
Albania 261-2w
Arms control negotiations 240w
International conferences 42w, 118-9w, 260-1w, 286w
Israel 40w
Non-governmental organisations 261w
Publishing 238w
Technical assistance 261w
Technology transfer 285w
Trident 261w
USSR 486w
Video recordings 261w
Yemen 119w

Nuclear physics
Plutonium 239w
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority 363-4w

Nuclear power
Developing countries 260w
Export licensing 285w
Military alliances 668w
Technical assistance 8w

Nuclear power stations
Electricity generation 7w
Leukaemia 375w
Nuclear safety 717-8w

Nuclear power stations—continued
Radioactive waste disposal 483-4w
Scotland 50-1w

Nuclear safeguards
718w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 286-7w
Nuclear fuels 286w
Plutonium 8w
Tritium 8w

Nuclear safety
238w
Magnox reactors 434w
Nuclear artillery shells 787
Nuclear power stations 717-8w
Nuclear weapons 435w
Sellafield 238w

Nuclear submarines
32w, 646w
Radioactive waste disposal 790-1
Shipbuilding 138w
USA 328w

Nuclear test ban
Yemen 118w

Nuclear weapons
Arms control 533w
BAOR 544-5w
Explosives 325w, 435-6w
International cooperation 244w
Nuclear safety 435w
River Clyde 533w
Transport of radioactive materials 435w, 534w
Warships 140w, 196w

Nuclear weapons deployment
533-4w
BAOR 787-8
Cruise missiles 379w, 721w
Germany 795
HMS Invincible 788-9

Nuclear weapons tests
380w, 538w
USA 243w
War pensions 215w

Nursery nurses
Graduates 713w

Nursery schools
School population 173-4w
Strathclyde 124w

Nurses
Community charge 294w
Stepping Hill Hospital 403w

Nurses' training
Northern Ireland 694-6w
Wales 83w

Nursing homes
Income support 408w
Local authorities 402w

Nutrition & health
336w

NYA
see National Youth Agency

OAL
see Office of Arts & Libraries

O'Brien, Mr William
Questions
Community care, Personnel 402-3w
Community care, Social workers 403w
EC free food scheme, Voluntary organisations 469w
Engineering industries, West Yorkshire 594w
Nursing homes, Local authorities 402w
Parish councils, Uniform business rate 199w
Resource management initiative, Hospitals 146w
Water charges 198w
Water meters, Costs 198w

O'Brien, Mr William—continued
Water supply industry, Competition 199w

Obscenity
Telephones 189w

Occupational deafness
Civil service manpower 709w
Glass industry 710w
Social security benefits rules 709w
Social security claims 709-10w

Occupied territories
120w, 286-8, 299-300w, 466
Israel 254w, 273

ODA
see Overseas Development Administration

OECD
see Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development

OECD countries
Export credit 490w

Offal
79-80w, 621w
Animal feed 621-2w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 134-5w
Incinerators 621w

Offences against the administration of justice
Sexual offences 1107

Offenders
Hostels 249-50w

Office closures
Unemployment benefit offices 305w

Office of Arts & Libraries
Finance 44w
Government achievements 185-6w
Regional arts associations 46-7w

Office of Fair Trading
EC internal trade 209-10w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 581w

Office of the Social Security Commissioners
see Social Security Commissioners

Offices
Football Licensing Authority 322w

Official engagements
100w, 269-70w, 488w, 668-9w

Official hospitality
Codes of practice 647w
10 Downing Street 405w

Official residences
Community charge 745w

Official secrets
Theft 720w
West Lavington Research Establishment 720w

Offshore structures
432-3w

Offshore suppliers
EC internal trade 552w

Offshore Supplies Office
239-40w

OFT
see Office of Fair Trading

Oil industry
Export promotion 485w

Oil pollution
Civil liability 73-4w
Compensation 73-4w
Devon 5w, 54w
Prosecutions 153-4w

Oil pollution control
72-3w

Oil storage
Scotland 123-4w

Oil tankers
153w
Shipping safety 73-4w

Omagh
279-83w
Equal opportunities 207-8w

Omagh District Council
207-8w

Oman
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species 683w

Ondansetron
Cancer 150w
Prescription drugs 150w

O'Neill, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 698-708, (19:06:90) 811, 882-7
Questions
Armed forces discharges, Training 142w
Armed forces training 142w
Arms control negotiations, Navy 300w
Defence equipment, Middle East 329w
Defence procurement 786
Defence review 329-30w
Defence review, Defence industries 143w
Defence review, NATO 329w
Defence review, Public expenditure 329w
Foreign policy, Defence review 300w
NATO 142w
NATO, Armed forces deployment 142w

Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Questions
Defence land, Tipping of waste 328w
Drift nets, North East region 471w
Pirbright range, Tipping of waste 722w
Storms, District health authorities 404-5w

Open skies proposals
International conferences 263w

Open University
694-6w
Radio reception 100w

Opencast Executive
96w

Opencast mining
Buckley 96w
Planning appeals 565w
Wales 440-1w

Opening hours
Public houses 346w

Operating costs
Mother & baby units 324w
RAE Bedford 548w
Schools 744w
Ships 128-9w

Ophthalmic services
Blind 234w
Out-patients 27w, 227w, 274w
Wales 27w, 227w

Ophthalmology
Out-patient clinics 93-4w
Wales 93-4w

Opinion polls
NHS hospital trusts 275w

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 32, 61, 67, 84-9
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 912-3
Confederation of British Industry, Inflation 557w
Employment, East Midlands 461-2w
VAT registration 483-4w

Opposition parties
Finance 269w

Optical charges
Eye tests 697w

Optical charges exemptions
Eye tests 492w, 553w, 577w, 654w, 677w, 748w
Wales 227w, 339w

Oral questions
Procedure Select Committee 109w
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:06:90) 125, (13:06:90) 274, (20:06:90) 909, 925, 926, 927

Orders & regulations
House of Commons debates 237w
Student loans 130

Organ donors
South Glamorgan Health Authority 674

Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development
717-8w

Orkney
Training 50w

Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Questions
Arms control 42-3w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 43w
Parole, Interviews 102w
Regional aid 591w
Vietnam, Overseas aid 391w

Orthopaedics
Whiteabbey Hospital 28w

Otters
East Anglia 157w

Out-patient clinics
Menopause 24w
Ophthalmology 93-4w

Out-patients
Ophthalmic services 27w, 227w, 274w

Ove Arup
442w

Overseas aid
682-4
Agricultural research 483w
Agriculture (14:06:90) 566-83
AIDS 391-2w
Air pollution control 11w, 392-3w
Cambodia 684
Chile 259-60w
Eastern Europe 256w
Economic growth 390w
Environment protection 11w, 391w
Ethiopia 276w
Expenditure 643w
Forest protection 397w
Handicapped 561-2w
Liberia 386w
Nature conservation 397w
Population 716w
Rain forests 396w
Refugees 643-4w
Romania 43w
South Africa 396w
South America 279
Southern Africa 391w, 643-4w
Sri Lanka 154-5w
USSR 366w
Vietnam 275-6w, 391w
Zambia 396w

Overseas broadcasting
Japan 914

Overseas Development
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Overseas Development Administration
154-5w

Overseas investment
British Steel Corporation 909-12

Overseas students
Greater London 354w

Overseas trade
Profitability 211w

Over-the-horizon radar
536w, 784
Public opinion 784

Overtime
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland 125-6w

Oxford University
16

Oxfordshire
M40 74w

Oxfordshire Health Authority
Performance related pay 511w

Ozone
Air pollution monitoring 294w, 675
Wales 675

Ozone layer
Air pollution control 295w, 416w, 631w
Aircraft 302w
Jet aircraft 188w
Supersonic aircraft 302-3w

PAC
see Pan-Africanist Congress

Packaging
211w
Environment protection 592w

Page, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 772
Questions
Grant maintained schools 177w

Paice, Mr James
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 508, 528-32
Questions
Contracts for services, Dept of Social Security 164w
Contracts for services, Dept of the Environment 159w
Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 319w
Handicap benefits, Social security benefits rules 163w
Health service staff, Pay 149w
Income support, Community charge 700w
Local education authorities, Contracts for services 182w
Navy, USSR 540w
Road construction, Contracts for services 303w
Severe disablement allowance, Social security benefits rates 164w
Sixth form education, Costs 169w
Student loans, Educational finance 179w

Paisley, Rev Ian
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1153-5
Questions
Electricity distribution, Rathlin Island 1103-4
Further education, Crimes against property 1099
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 1100-1

Palace of Westminster
Recycling 3w

Palestine
Death 120w
Israel 286
Peace negotiations 253-4w

Palestine Liberation Organisation
272-3, 560-1w

Pan-Africanist Congress
255w

Paper
Halogens (21:06:90) 1134-5
House of Commons publications 110w

Paper—continued
Recycling 111w
Vote bundle 109-10w

Parish councils
Uniform business rate 199w

Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil, Secretary of State for Transport
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Ministerial statements (14:06:90) 482-500
Questions
Air routes, Competition 58-9w
Airport security, West Germany 10
Channel tunnel, Railway network 3-5
Prestwick Airport 11
Railway freight transport 8-9
Railway network, East Midlands 8
Railway network, Southend-on-Sea 8
Railway transport, North East region 7-8
Road construction, Countryside 187w
Roads, Capital investment 58w

Parkinson Committee
see British Merchant Shipping Industry Joint Working Party

Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration
Local enterprise companies 9w

Parliamentary constituencies
Boundary Commission for England 323w
Buckingham (21:06:90) 1224
Hampshire 36w
Milton Keynes (21:06:90) 1224

Parliamentary Constituencies (England) (Miscellaneous Changes) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(21:06:90) 1224

Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community
277, 917
Judgments 1108
Standing Order No 20 applications (20:06:90) 923-4

Parole
Interviews 102w

Parole Board
323w

Parry, Mr Robert
Questions
Defence, USA 543w
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry 688-9w

Partridge Committee
see Undergraduate Medical & Dental Education Steering Group

Part-time employment
EC social charter 466-8
Further education teachers 520w

Passport Office
Telephone services 666w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Bus services, Competition 62w
Financial services, Investor protection 589w, 593w
Ministers' visits abroad, USSR 539w
Retirement pensions, EC countries 608-9w
School administration, Budgeting 170w

Patents
Administrative delays 580w

Patients
Dependants 234w

Patients' money
Hospital length of stay 553w

Patten, Rt Hon Chris, Secretary of State for the Environment
Questions
Community charge capping 477-8w
Consultants, Dept of the Environment 358w

Patten, Rt Hon Chris—continued
Contracts for services, Dept of the Environment 159w
Government grants to voluntary organisations, Dept of the Environment 740w
Nature conservation, EC action 161w
Research, Dept of the Environment 737-8w

Patten, Rt Hon John, Minister of State, Home Office
Debates etc.
Bombings, Birmingham (12:06:90) 266-70
Questions
Active citizenship 458-9
Arson, Sentencing 102w
Blakelock, Keith, Homicide 324w
Bombings, Birmingham 15w, 311-2w
Cars, Security 309-10w
Child abuse 105w, 501w
Child abuse, Admissibility of evidence 570w
Child abuse, Evidence 573-4w
Child abuse, Habitual offenders 728-9w
Civil defence 189-90w
Civil defence, Local government functions 570w
Community service orders, Expenditure 427w
Community service orders, Working hours 658w
Court of appeal, Criminal appeals 661-2w
Cricket, Crowd safety 569w
Crime 309w
Crime, Derbyshire 309w
Crime, Greater Manchester 309w
Crime, Gwent 308w
Crime, Leicestershire 309w
Crime, Staffordshire 308-9w
Crime, Surrey 309w
Crime, Sussex 309w
Crime, Wiltshire 309w
Crime prevention, Banks 103w
Crime prevention, West Yorkshire 310w
Crime victims, Crimes of violence 314-5w
Criminal statistics 463
Criminal statistics, Basildon 100w
Criminal statistics, Lancashire 100w
Drug crimes, North Wales 18w
Evidence, Bombings 311-2w
Fire prevention 17w
Fire services 101w
Fire services, Mid Glamorgan 318w
Football Licensing Authority 575-6w
Football Licensing Authority, Offices 322w
Football Licensing Authority, Public appointments 323w, 360w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 429w
Home Office, Nuclear accidents 323w
Homicide, Criminal statistics 18w
Homicide, Life imprisonment 106w
Identity cards, EC countries 497-8w
Kirkham Prison, Prisoners 101w
London Fire Brigade, Women 17w
Maintenance, Retail price index 493w
Metropolitan Police, Nuclear accidents 106w
Ministerial Group on Women's Issues 19-20w
Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, Child care 19w
National Association of Probation Officers, Sentencing 321w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Chelmsford 658w
Poaching, Convictions 571w
Police, Arrests 727-8w
Police, Crimes of violence 498-9w
Police, Criminal statistics 499w
Police, Detection rates 725-7w
Police misconduct, Convictions 661w
Prerogative of mercy 659-61w
Prisoners' release, Handicapped 105w
Prisoners' release, Prison overcrowding 16w
Probation, Expenditure 428w
Prosecutions, Pedestrian crossings 187-8w
Rehabilitation of offenders 427w

Patten, Rt Hon John—continued
Rights of accused, Police interrogation 320w
South Yorkshire Fire & Civil Defence Authority, Fire services 319-20w
Sports centres, Licensing 659w
Telephones, Obscenity 189w
Theft, Livestock 501w
Touting, Tickets 321w
Wallace, Colin, Convictions 196w
War crimes, Criminal investigation 320w
Warships, Nuclear weapons 196w
Young offenders, Police cautions 725w
Young offenders, Prison sentences 15-6w

Pawsey, Mr James
Questions
Air transport, Competition 59-60w
Arson, Sentencing 102w
Criminal records, Teachers 101w
Grant maintained schools 120, 178w
M1, Road construction 473w
Medical appeal tribunals, Social security appeals 162-3w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 5w, 101w
Members' secretaries, House of Commons accommodation 298w
Police, Warwickshire 316w
Public expenditure 150-1w
Student loans, Administrative costs 559-60w
Teachers, Criminal records 183-4w
Vacant land registers, Administrative costs 565w

Pay
603w
Building societies 136
Civil servants 17-8
Dentists 145w
District health authorities 146w
Health service staff 149w
Manual workers 603w
Medical laboratory scientific officers 751-2w
Ministry of Defence police 382-3w
Police 314w
Postal workers 918
Prison staff 317w
Teachers 124-5, 177w
Wages councils 57w

Pay settlements
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90 150w
NHS hospital trusts 150w
Teachers 177w, 655w
University teachers 277-8w

Payments for Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971
Questions
552w

Peace
Industry 111-2w

Peace keeping operations
Armed forces deployment 543-4w, 789

Peace negotiations
East Africa 282-3
Israel 286-8, 299-300w
Middle East 253-4w, 272-3, 466
Palestine 253-4w

Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1025, 1027
Questions
Defence industries 535-6w
School governors 219w
Textiles, Exports 915

Pedestrian crossings
Death 187w
Injuries 187w
Prosecutions 187-8w

Pedestrians
Access to Parliament 298-9w

Pelican crossings
Blind 629w

Pembrokeshire
Firing ranges 435-6w

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
340w

Penal reform
Turkey 494w

Pendle
Unemployment 461w

Pendry, Mr Tom
Questions
Football, Arrests 482w
Football Licensing Authority, Public appointments 360w
Football Trust 564w
Public order policing, Football 500w

Pensioners
Community charge benefits 698w
Housing benefits 377w
Income support 375-6w
Personal income 164w, 409-13w
Retirement age 215w
Scotland 375-7w

Pensions
337w

Per capita costs
Training & enterprise councils 577w
Women's prisons 324w

Performance indicators
301w, 709w, 733-4w

Performance related pay
Oxfordshire Health Authority 511w

Perinatal mortality
Northern Ireland 28-30w
Regional health authorities 144-6w

Personal computers
425w
Product safety 597-8w

Personal income
Community charge 698-9w
Pensioners 164w, 409-13w
Student loans 503w
Taxation 151-2w
Women 152w

Personal pensions
Disclosure of information 331w
National Insurance Fund 524w

Personal savings
Community charge exemptions 331-2w

Pest control
Agricultural research 624w
Fish farming 251w

Pesticides
Fish farming 81w

Petrol
Air pollution control 157-8w

Petroleum revenue tax
North Sea oil 413w

Pets
Transmissible encephalopathies 378-9w, 471-2w

Philippines
Immigration appeals 43w, 359w

Phobias
Hospital admissions 148-9w
Mental health community care 148w

Physiotherapy
Gwynedd 25-6w
Pupils 25-6w

Pigot Committee
see Video Recorded Evidence Advisory Group

Pigs
Animal feed 78w, 470-1w, 622w
Transmissible encephalopathies 620-1w

Pike, Mr Peter L
Questions
Employment level, Manufacturing industries 460w
Employment level, North West region 460-1w
Industrial investment 413w
Local education authorities, Capital investment 454-7w
Low flying, Complaints 793
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 556w
Official engagements 669w
School leaving certificates, Lancashire 353w
Tourist attractions, North West region 600-2w
Unemployment, Burnley 461w

Piper Alpha platform
Polychlorinated biphenyl 350-1w

Pirbright range
Tipping of waste 722w

Plain language
NHS review 513w

Planning appeals
Costs 292-3w
Greater Manchester 291-2w
National parks 366-8w, 630w
Opencast mining 565w
Shopping centres 208w
Wales 366-8w
Waste disposal 345w

Planning Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (22:06:90) 1299

Planning inquiries
Hawkshurst moor 434w
Hawkshurst moor mine 482w
Isle of Sheppey 567w

Planning permission
Brentwood 3w
Housing 518w
Leigh Environmental 737-8w
National parks 340w, 629-32w
Retail trade 200-1w

Plessey
Takeovers 582w

PLO
see Palestine Liberation Organisation

Plutonium
Nuclear accidents 196w
Nuclear physics 239w
Nuclear safeguards 8w

POA
see Prison Officers' Association

Poaching
Convictions 571w
Northern Ireland 688w

Points of order
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:06:90) 249, (14:06:90) 541, (19:06:90) 791-2, 808, 898, (20:06:90) 923, 925, 926, 928, 929, 933, 936-7, 1056, 1076, (21:06:90) 1124, (22:06:90) 1252, 1299-300

Poisoning
Fish 125w

Poland
Frontiers 497w

Police
Arrests 727-8w
Channel tunnel 11w
Community charge 312w
Cost effectiveness 14w
Crimes of violence 498-9w
Criminal statistics 499w

Police—continued
Cyprus 427w
Detection rates 725-7w
Domestic violence 320w
Manchester Prison 102w
Manpower 12-3w, 316w, 499-500w
Pay 314w
Warwickshire 316w

Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984
Questions
663w

Police cautions
Disclosure of information 570-1w
Young offenders 725w

Police civilians
12-3w
Trade union membership 16w

Police Complaints Authority
102w, 661w

Police custody
360w
Prison escapes 572w
Prisoners on remand 321w, 461-2, 572-3w
South Wales 12w
Wales 573w

Police (Dispensation from Requirement to Investigate Complaints) Regulations 1990
Debates etc.
(19:06:90) 899

Police Federation of England & Wales
312w

Police grant
666w

Police housing
Maternity leave 663w
Rent allowances 314w, 663w

Police interrogation
Rights of accused 320w

Police misconduct
Convictions 661w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 693w

Police protection
Rushdie, Salman 10w, 13-4w

Police stations
Audit 191-2w
Expenditure 191w

Political parties
South Africa 255w

Political prisoners
Turkey 494w

Political refugees
BBC 322w
China 322w
Immigration applications 319w
Income support 406-7w
Temporary immigrants 16w
Trevi Group 104w

Polling stations
105-6w

Pollution control
Beaches 3w, 226w
Farms 452-3w
Hydrofluorocarbons 6w
Lake acidification 156w
Manure 469w
Methyl chloroform 6w
Sea pollution (13:06:90) 291-2
Sewage 487w
Waste disposal 246w

Pollution Inspectorate
see HM Inspectorate of Pollution

Pollution monitoring
Algae 567w
Beaches 227w, 443w, 492w, 619w
Farms 452w

Pollution monitoring—continued
Genetically modified organisms 161w
Radioactive waste disposal 566w
River pollution 200w
Sewage 200w
Wales 226w
Wylfa power station 134w

Polychlorinated biphenyl
EC law 632w
Incinerators 632-3w
Piper Alpha platform 350-1w
Waste disposal 738w

Polytechnics
Anglia Higher Education College 716w
Educational finance 506w

Population
Overseas aid 716w
RAE Bedford 547w

Population distribution
District health authorities 234w

Porpoises
Japan 684w

Port Glasgow
251w
Self-governing hospitals 615w

Port of Tyne Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1094

Porter, Mr Barry
Questions
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 313w
School administration, Budgeting 171w

Porter, Mr David
Questions
Building industry, Breach of contract 204w
Building industry, Licensing 203w
Divorce settlements 197w

Porthmadog
Residential care 51-2w

Portillo, Mr Michael, Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities
Questions
Community charge, Advertising 358-9w
Community charge, Domestic rates 479-80w
Local government audit 197w
Local government reform, Local authorities 565w

Post Office
111w
Industrial relations 918
Monopolies 585-6w, 919

Postage stamps
Crown Agents 643w

Postal services
Greater London 113w
Mail Users' Association 111w
Privatisation 918

Postal workers
Pay 918

Poultry
Animal feed 622w
Spain 268w

Powell, Mr Ray
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1074, 1076
Oral question time intervention (14:06:90) 456
Questions
Business statements 481
Employment training, Mid Glamorgan 671
Employment training, Wales 439w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 534w

Powell, Mr William
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 146
Questions
A1, Road construction 476w
Conventional weapons, USSR 344w
EC internal trade, EC law 489w
Foreign investment in UK 591w
Grant maintained schools 176w
Notice of motions, Costs 298w

Power stations
Clwyd 7w

PowerGen
719w

Powys
School administration 667-8

Pregnant women
Employment protection 462w

Prerogative of mercy
659-61w

Pre-school education
Scotland 121-2w, 344w

Prescott, Mr John
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 484-7, 500
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 241, 243, 245-51
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 5
Railway freight transport 8-9

Prescription charges exemptions
Catheters (14:06:90) 584-90

Prescription drugs
Cancer 149-50w
Ondansetron 150w

Prescriptions
Corwin 675-6w

Prestwick Airport
11

Preventive medicine
Vaccination 671w

Price, Sir David
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1139-40
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 546-8
Questions
Cars, Security 310w

Price labelling
Bar code equipment 424-5w

Prices
Coffee 489w
School meals 225w
Waste paper 158w

Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 989-91, 996, 1001
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1145, 1207
Questions
City technology colleges 175w
Evidence, Bombings 312w
Family credit, South West region 162w
Financial services, Investor protection 210-1w
Job interview guarantee scheme, Take-up 54w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 254w
Nuclear fuels, Nuclear safeguards 286w
Nuclear safety 238w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 435w
Restart programme 115w

Primarolo, Ms Dawn—continued
Tactical nuclear weapons 379w
Vietnam, Overseas aid 391w

Primary education
Southern Education & Library Board 284w
Standard assessment tasks 558-9w
Welsh language 655w

Primary purpose rule
Entry clearances 431w

Prime Minister
747-8w
Management consultants 97-9w
Ministerial policy advisors 132
Ministers' visits abroad 270-1w, 668w
USSR (12:06:90) 137-53

Prime Minister's questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:06:90) 132

Prison accommodation
Aids for handicapped 105w
Prisoners on remand 451-2

Prison discipline
Legal representation 574-5w
Remission 575w

Prison escapes
Astley Bridge Police Station 360w
Police custody 572w

Prison Officers' Association
315w, 317w, 664w
Industrial disputes 461

Prison overcrowding
Chelmsford Prison 658-9w
Prisoners on remand 451
Prisoners' release 16w

Prison population
317-8w
Fine defaulters 347w
Young offenders 317-8w

Prison rules
315w

Prison sentences
Colchester Military Correction & Training Centre 33w
Young offenders 15-6w

Prison staff
Conditions of employment 317w
Disabled workers 105w
Pay 317w
Training 664-5w

Prison visitors
Car allowances 314w

Prisoners
Drug abuse 452-3
Handicapped 105w, 526w, 681w
Kirkham Prison 101w
Scotland 526w, 681w

Prisoners' clothing
Birmingham Prison 14-5w, 724w

Prisoners' home leave
Women's prisons 321-2w

Prisoners on remand
Police custody 321w, 461-2, 572-3w
Prison accommodation 451-2
Prison overcrowding 451
Trials 451-2

Prisoners' release
Handicapped 105w
Life imprisonment 18-9w, 28w
Northern Ireland 28w
Prison overcrowding 16w
Training 604w
Turkey 399w

Prisons
315w, 428-9w
Building repairs 15w

Prisons—continued
Crown immunity 665w
Food hygiene 665w
Isle of Wight 318w
Sanitation 17w, 315w
South West region 15w

Privacy & Press Law Review
Ministerial statements (21:06:90) 1125-34

Private Bill Procedure Joint Select Committee
626w

Private Bills
House of Commons reform of procedure 626w

Private education
Curriculum 354w
Special education 183w

Private Members' motions
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 592-656
Exports (22:06:90) 1236-98

Private sector housing
House renovation grants 639w

Private Security (Registration) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:06:90) 656

Privatisation
British Steel Corporation 912
Crown Suppliers (11:06:90) 108-10
Debt collection 53w
Electricity supply industry 8w, 287-8w, 719w
Former ministers 134, (12:06:90) 153, 795-6
Postal services 918
Property Services Agency (11:06:90) 108-10
Skillcentres 669w
Water supply industry 6w

Privy Council
Energy consumption 299w, 741w
Management consultants 110w

PRO
see Public Record Office

Probation
Expenditure 428w
Scotland 447-8w

Probation & aftercare
Handicapped 105w

Procedure Select Committee
678-9
Oral questions 109w

Processed Animal Protein Order 1989
Questions
135w

Procurement Executive
Air force bases 547w

Product safety
Departmental correspondence 211-2w
Personal computers 597-8w

Productivity
Manufacturing industries 556w

Professional liability
642w

Professional Liability Steering Group
642w

Professional organisations
Industry 595w
Teachers 171w

Professional qualifications
Animal welfare 333-4w
Drinking Water Inspectorate 740w

Profitability
Overseas trade 211w

Project 2000
83w
Wales 439w

Property development
Bradford 481-2w
County Hall 482w
RAE Bedford 547w

Property Services Agency
419w
Privatisation (11:06:90) 108-10

Property Services Agency & Crown Suppliers Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Lords amendts (11:06:90) 108-10

Property transfer
RAF Biggin Hill 140w

Prosecutions
Company law 387w
Dog fighting 103w
Motor vehicle testing 188w
Oil pollution 153-4w
Pedestrian crossings 187-8w
Railway accidents 679
ROF Bishopton 365-6w

Protection of Animals (Penalties) Act 1987
Questions
525w

Provincial Services Network
301w, 474w

PSA
see Property Services Agency

Psychiatric nurses
294w
Wales 338w

Public appointments
Advisory Council on Science & Technology 99w
Child Abuse Interdepartmental Group 365w
Clinical Standards Advisory Group 233w
District health authorities 515-6w
Family practitioner committees 515-6w
Financial Reporting Council 210w
Football Licensing Authority 323w, 360w
NHS administration 368w
Regional health authorities 677-8w
Scottish Secondary Education Review Committee 450-1w
Southern Health & Social Services Board 284-5w

Public bodies
Equal opportunities 207-8w
Industry 113w

Public buildings
Burns International Security Services 49w

Public expenditure
150-1w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 333w
Defence review 329w
Electricity supply industry 719w
Fisheries 334w
House of Commons Select Committees 463
Housing benefits 331w
National Consumer Council 307w
Student loans 22-3w

Public houses
Opening hours 346w

Public inquiries
Bombings 453
East London river crossing 354-5w
Hinkley Point C 287w, 434w
London City Airport 354-5w
M11 188w

Public opinion
Housing action trusts 417w
Over-the-horizon radar 784

Public order
Law reform 316-7w

Public order offences
Alcoholic drinks 322w
Football 318-9w

Public order policing
Chemical weapons 429-30w
Football 315-6w, 500w

Public petitions
Dial-a-ride (15:06:90) 591
Noise (18:06:90) 775
Road construction (18:06:90) 774-5
Sheppey General Hospital (12:06:90) 261
Summertime (18:06:90) 775
Thompson, Peter (22:06:90) 1235

Public Record Office
531-2w

Public sector assets
Army 328w

Public service obligation grant
628-9w
British Rail 301w
Railway network 682w

Public utilities
Road works 60w

Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950
Questions
60w

Publicity
Assisted places scheme 183w
Electoral register 361w
Lead pollution 246-7w

Publishing
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 238w

Pulp & Paper Products Restriction Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (21:06:90) 1134-5

Punishment
Animal cruelty 525w

Pupils
Physiotherapy 25-6w

Pupil-teacher ratios
Wales 367-8w

Queensferry School Clwyd
93w

Questionnaires
Wages councils 57w

Quin, Ms Joyce
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1247, 1264-72, 1273, 1280, 1283, 1296
Questions
Chlorofluorocarbons, Refrigerators 114w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Solvents 114-5w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 490w
Hydrofluorocarbons, Pollution control 6w
Methyl chloroform, Pollution control 6w
Prisoners on remand, Prison accommodation 451
Road traffic, Tyne & Wear 6-7
Solvents, Codes of practice 115w

Quota of disabled workers
Codes of practice 58w

Rabies
Dogs 379w

Racial discrimination
School choice 134-5

Radar
141w, 536w
Archaeology 616w

Radiation hazards
Beaches 159w
Submarines 540-1w

Radice, Mr Giles
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 62, 68-72, 77
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 584w

Radio
BBC 321w

Radio engineering
Sea rescue 2

Radio frequencies
426w
Educational broadcasting 100w

Radio reception
North Yorkshire (11:06:90) 111-8
Open University 100w

Radioactive Material (Road Transport) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for consideration read (15:06:90) 655

Radioactive Substances Act 1960
566-7w
Questions
342w, 566w

Radioactive waste disposal
Devonport dockyard 32w
Ionizing radiation 137-8w
Licensing 566-7w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 418w
Nuclear power stations 483-4w
Nuclear submarines 790-1
Pollution monitoring 566w
Rosyth dockyard 32w
Sellafield 657w

Radioactive wastes
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 238w, 285-6w
Sellafield 238-9w

Radioactivity
Coastal areas 477w
Farms 134w
Sheep 134w, 345w

RAE Bedford
547w
Air freight transport 547-8w
Defence land 547w
Operating costs 548w
Population 547w
Property development 547w
United Parcels Service 547-8w
Wind tunnels 548w

RAF Akrotiri
Military aircraft 380w

RAF Biggin Hill
140-1w
Armed forces recruitment 546w
Property transfer 140w

RAF Cranwell
Construction costs 140w

RAF Quedgeley
Defence land 611w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Questions
Argoed High School Mynydd Isa, School closures 439-50w
Brymbo steelworks 669

Raghip, Eugin
324w

Railway accidents
Prosecutions 679

Railway electrification
East coast railway line 3, 62-3w
Scotland 63w
West Yorkshire 3

Railway freight transport
8-9, 60w
Channel tunnel 443w
Scotland 1110

Railway Inspectorate
303w

Railway network
Capital investment 465
Channel tunnel 3-5, 62w, 133, 463-4, (14:06:90) 482-500

***Railway network**—continued*
East Midlands 8
Eastbourne 64w
Heathrow Airport 67w
Public service obligation grant 682w
Railway travel 563w
Scotland 682w
South Yorkshire 68w
Southend-on-Sea 8
Subsidies 628-9w

Railway safety
Norwich 303w

Railway stations
Handicapped 475w

Railway track
Harmonisation of standards 67w

Railway transport
Capital investment 58w
EC action (12:06:90) 235-60
Environment protection 66w
Glasgow 742w
Government grants 742w
North East region 7-8
Transport subsidies 72w

Railway travel
Customs 72w
Greater London 68w
Maesteg 94w
Railway network 563w
Smoking 302w
South London 474w

Rain forests
Forest protection 397-8w
Forestry research 397w
Overseas aid 396w

Rainham
667w

Rainham Marshes
Theme parks 425-6w

Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 323-4
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 961, 967-8
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 173
Questions
Armed forces deployment 794-5
Business statements 472

Ramsar Convention
356w

Randall, Mr Stuart
Questions
Sunday trading, Law reform 455-6

Raoul Wallenberg (Memorial) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:06:90) 656, (22:06:90) 1299

Rapid transit systems
Greater Manchester 68w

RARDE
see Royal Armament Research & Development Establishment

Rate precepts
359-60w, 725w

Rate rebates
Lambeth 408-9w

Rateable value
478w

Rathbone, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 144
Questions
Prisons 315w

***Rathbone, Mr Tim**—continued*
South America, Overseas aid 279

Rathlin Island
Electricity distribution 1103-4

Ravenscraig steelworks
909-11
British Steel Corporation 583w, 909-13
Factory closures 306w, 343-4w, 466, 583w

Recreation spaces
Housing construction (12:06:90) 154-5

Recruitment
Civil servants 16-7
Medical laboratory scientific officers 751-2w
Teachers 174-5w
Ulster Defence Regiment 537w

Recycling
Contracts for services 569w
Equipment 569w
International conferences 564w
Iron & steel 568w
Joint ventures 568w
Palace of Westminster 3w
Paper 111w

Red Flag Exercises
242w

Red squirrels
Nature conservation 156-7w

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill 1988/89
Debates etc.
Order for consideration of Lords amendts read (20:06:90) 905, (21:06:90) 1093

Redmond, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1047, 1049, 1050-1, -3, 1057-8, 1061, 1062, 1066-7, 1078-81
Level crossings, Accidents (20:06:90) 926
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 237
Questions
Air force, International cooperation 380-1w
Civil defence 189-90w
Community charge, Tax collection 478w
Customs & Excise, Transport of radioactive materials 151w
Farms, Radioactivity 134w
Fire services 101w
Low flying, South Yorkshire 381w
Military aircraft, Air travel 645-6w
Rabies, Dogs 379w
RAF Akrotiri, Military aircraft 380w
Sheep, Radioactivity 345w
Teachers, Manpower 181w

Reduced earnings allowance
Northern Ireland 519w

Redundancy
British Museum (Natural History) 18
Further education teachers 520w
North East Shipbuilders 593w
North Eastern Education & Library Board 520w
School administration 223w
Textile industry 914-5
Training 670-1

Redundant mineworkers' payments scheme
718w

***Redwood, Mr John**, Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs*
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1243, 1253, 1259, 1260, 1272-86, 1290
Questions
Accountants 306w
Bankruptcy, Scotland 245w
Banks, EC law 212w
Coffee, Prices 489w
Company registration, Limited liability 489w, 600w

***Redwood, Mr John**—continued*
Directors, Company liquidations 423w
Dunsdale Securities 642w
EC Internal Market Council 729-30w
EC internal trade, EC law 489w
Export credit, Iraq 596w
Export credit, OECD countries 490w
Export credit guarantees, Iraq 212w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 490w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Iraq 729w
Export licensing 308w
Export licensing, Companies 308w
Export of live animals, Horses 212-3w
Financial Reporting Council, Accountants 491w
Financial Reporting Council, Public appointments 210w
Financial services, Investor protection 210-1w
Financial Services Act 1986 306w
Furs, Exports 361w
Harrods' Bank, Banking supervision 210w
Hunterprint, Contracts 213w
Insider trading, Civil proceedings 640w
Insider trading, Crime prevention 640w
Manufacturing industries, Foreign investment in UK 10w
National Front, Limited liability 596w, 642w
Northern Ireland Railways, Efficiency scrutinies 362w
Office of Fair Trading, EC internal trade 209-10w
Overseas trade, Profitability 211w
Professional liability 642w
Service industries, Trade agreements 213w
Trade promotion, Romania 209w
Travel allowances, EC law 596w

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 143

Refreshment Dept
297w

Refrigerators
Chlorofluorocarbons 114w

Refugees
China 190-1w
Income support 407w
International assistance 681
Overseas aid 643-4w

Refuges
Battered wives 38w, 131w
Scotland 131w

Reg(EEC)1408/71
432w

Reg(EEC)2772/75
24w

REG(EEC)3322/88
416w

Regional aid
489-90w, 590-1w

Regional airports
Ipswich Airport 1111-2

Regional arts associations
47w, 644w
Arts Council 46-7w
Office of Arts & Libraries 46-7w

Regional development grants
Regional selective assistance 920
Tax burden 920

Regional enterprise grants
641w

Regional health authorities
Creutzfeldt-Jakob dementia 237w
Eye tests 371w
HIV infection 236-8w
Neonatal mortality 144-6w

***Regional health authorities**—continued*
Northern region 677-8w
Perinatal mortality 144-6w
Public appointments 677-8w
Tuberculosis 38-40w

Regional planning & development
921-2
Departmental publications 5w
Dept of Trade & Industry 584w
North West region 920-1

Regional selective assistance
591w
Regional development grants 920
West Cumbria 921

Register of Sasine
47-8w

Regulation of Railways Act 1868
Questions
302w

Rehabilitation of offenders
427w
Sexual offences 272w

Reid, Dr John
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 183
Questions
Business statements 1119-20
Iron & steel industry, Scotland 583w

Release on licence
18-9w

Religious discrimination
Further education colleges 520-1w
North Eastern Education & Library Board 520-1w

Religious education
Departmental circulars 612w
Northern Ireland 696w
Scotland 612w

Relocation of employees
Arts 45-6w

Remission
Prison discipline 575w

Remote sensing
Forest protection 398w

Rent allowances
Community charge 312w
Police housing 314w, 663w

Rent control
Merseyside 564-5w

Rent increases
Business 564w

Rent officers
564-5w

Rented housing
Bradford 481w

***Renton, Mr Tim**, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1081

Rents to mortgages scheme
637w
England 637w
Scotland 615w

Repairs & maintenance
Armed forces housing 141w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 288
School buildings 121-2, 171-2w
VAT 414w

Repatriation
Vietnamese refugees 496-7w

Repetitive strain injury

***Repetitive strain injury**—continued*
Compensation 216w
Research 264w

Repossession orders
Greater London 636w
Mortgage defaulters 196w

Republic of Ireland
Beef 696w
Extradition 687-8w, 1102
Shopping 277, 497w
Travel allowances 651-2w

Research
Animal experiments 194w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 265w
Child abuse 370w, 509-10w
Dept of the Environment 737-8w
Fishing gear 265w
Greenhouse effect 487-8w
Repetitive strain injury 264w
Shipping safety 74-5w

Research finance
581w
Animal experiments 194-5w
Child abuse 272-3w
Dept of Education & Science 460w
Science & technology research 216w, 423-4w
Spaceflight 919-20
Tinnitus 120-1
Wave power 433w

Resettlement units
711-2w
Bishopbriggs 521-2w

Residential care
Alcoholism 35-6w, 375w
Income support 51w, 214w
Porthmadog 51-2w

Resignations
Armed forces housing 141w
Teachers 227w

Resource management initiative
Hospitals 146w

Restart programme
115w

Restriction orders
318-9w

Retail price index
Maintenance 493w

Retail trade
Functional foods 133w
Planning permission 200-1w
Video recordings 317w

Retirement
Higher education 217w

Retirement age
Company pensions 608w
Judges 387w
Pensioners 215w
Social security reform 377w

Retirement pensions
165w
Average earnings 700w
Costs 376w
EC countries 608-9w
Invalidity benefits 407w
Married women 377w
Social security benefits uprating 712w

Rheumatology
Hospital consultants 226w
Wales 226w

Rhoose Community Council
677

Richardson, Ms Jo
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 935, 1027-9

***Richardson, Ms Jo**—continued*
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1158-9, 1196-9, 1221
Questions
Battered wives, Refuges 38w, 131w
Households 206-8w
Housewives, Mothers 54-5w
Personal income, Women 152w

Richardson, John
Israel 254-5w

Richmond Committee
see Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food

Riddick, Mr Graham
Questions
Bus services, West Yorkshire 62w
EC Foreign Affairs Council, EC law 260w
Navy, USSR 540w
Television programmes, EC action 304w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Death 689w
Unemployment, Colne Valley 602w

***Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas**, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry*
Questions
Balance of trade 914
Balance of trade, Foreign investment in UK 913-4
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 579w, 922
Balance of trade, West Germany 593w, 922
British Steel Corporation 307w, 583w
British Steel Corporation, Industrial relations 911-2
British Steel Corporation, Overseas investment 909-12
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 912
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 583w, 909-13
British Steel Corporation, Scotland 912
Car industry, EC internal trade 917-8
Car industry, Foreign companies in UK 595w
Company law 595w
Competition 594w
EC Industry Council, Iron & steel industry 587w
EC internal trade, EC law 583-4w
EC internal trade, Manufactured goods 584-6w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Confederation of British Industry 593-4w
Export promotion 585w
Financial services, Investor protection 588-9w, 593w
Foreign investment in UK, EC internal trade 916-7
GATT, Textiles 596-7w
Harrods, Dept of Trade inquiries 586w
Industry, Professional organisations 595w
Iron & steel industry 306w, 582-3w
Iron & steel industry, Scotland 583w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Inquiries 581w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Office of Fair Trading 581w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Takeovers 581w
National Economic Development Council 592w
Overseas broadcasting, Japan 914
Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community 917
Plessey, Takeovers 582w
Ravenscraig steelworks, Factory closures 306w, 583w
Stock Exchange, Investor protection 588w

***Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm**, Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 156-75, 203
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Young people 346w

Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm—continued
Animal cruelty, Punishment 525w
Burns International Security Services, Government buildings 49w
Burns International Security Services, Public buildings 49w
Charities, Scotland 347w
Community service orders, Local government expenditure 446w
Community service orders, Working hours 449w
Conveyancing, Fees & charges 348w
Divorce, Scotland 348w
Fine defaulters, Custodial treatment 347w
Fine defaulters, Prison population 347w
Fines enforcement officers, Scotland 249w
Government buildings, Security industry 348w
Group practices, Budgeting 620w
Hostels, Offenders 249-50w
Management consultants, Scottish Office 448w
Marriage, Scotland 348w
Mental patients, Hospital admissions 248-9w
Oil storage, Scotland 123-4w
Probation, Scotland 447-8w
Public houses, Opening hours 346w
Scottish Office, Security industry 129w, 250w, 446w
Social work, Local government expenditure 249w
Training, Mentally ill 343w
Training Agency, Mentally disadvantaged 245w
Trusts, Scottish courts 347w

Right to buy
479w

Rights of accused
Police interrogation 320w

Ringfenced funding
800

River Clyde
Nuclear weapons 533w

River pollution
EC countries 200w
Pollution monitoring 200w

Rivers
Government grants 9w

RNAD Beith
Armed forces civilians 722w

RNAD Coulport
Nuclear accidents 611w

RNID
see Royal National Institute for the Deaf

"Road Accident Statistics English Regions"
153w

Road accidents
Death 695-6w
Northern Ireland 695-6w
Wheelchairs 72w

Road construction
A1 476w
A428 444w
Bypasses 226w, 252w
Construction costs 68w
Contracts for services 303w
Countryside 187w
Essex 153w
Fish conservation 49w
M1 473w, 476w
Motorways 189w
Northamptonshire 70w
Public petitions (18:06:90) 774-5

Road safety
Stagecoach 11

Road tax
Motor insurance (20:06:90) 930-2
Tax evasion 71w

Road traffic
Basingstoke 61w
Channel tunnel 474-5w
Greater London 64w
M4 25w
M25 9-10
South London 134
Tyne & Wear 6-7
Wales 25w

Road traffic control
Gateside 615w
Metropolitan Police 318w

Road works
A696 628w
Environment protection 482w
M4 69w
M6 444w
Public utilities 60w

Roads
Capital investment 58w
Channel tunnel 61w
Dorset 9
Greater London 70w
Leyton 9
Strathclyde 611-2w
Urban areas 69w

Robens Institute of Industrial & Environmental Health & Safety
Spectroscopy (19:06:90) 900-6

Roberts, Sir Wyn, Minister of State for Wales
Questions
Argoed High School Mynydd Isa, School closures 439-50w
Barry College, Deaf 442w
Bypasses, Road construction 226w
Channel tunnel, Railway freight transport 443w
Community councils, Wales 438w, 677
Curriculum, Wales 439w
Deaf, Interpreters 442-3w
Dyslexia, Teachers 491-2w
Dyslexia, Wales 491w
Education, Mid Glamorgan 438w
Employment training, Finance 93w
Employment training, Mid Glamorgan 671
Employment training, Wales 670-1
Engineering qualifications, Labour market 443w
Ferries, Fishguard 577w
Grant maintained schools, Wales 341w
Higher education, Student numbers 736-8w
History education, Wales 439w
M4, Road traffic 25w
National parks, Planning permission 340w
Opencast mining, Wales 440-1w
Ozone, Air pollution monitoring 675
Planning appeals, National parks 366-8w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Wales 367-8w
Queensferry School Clwyd 93w
Railway travel, Maesteg 94w
School administration, Budgeting 667
School administration, Powys 667-8
School meals, Prices 225w
School meals, Wales 225w
School population, Wales 89-92w
Schools, Budgeting 369w
Schools, Capital investment 88w
Schools, Expenditure 87-92w
Schools, Wales 369w
Special education, Wales 491w
Teachers, Average earnings 655w
Teachers, Pay settlements 655w
Teachers, Welsh language 227w
Training & enterprise councils, Per-capita costs 577w
Water supply industry, Wales 438w
Welsh language, Primary education 655w
Wetlands, Gwent 673
Youth training, Wales 227-30w
Youth training scheme, Expenditure 231w
Youth training scheme, Wales 230-2w, 578w

Robertson, Mr George
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 97-102
Questions
Balance of trade, Textile industry 590w
European Communities 278
Ravenscraig steelworks, Factory closures 583w

Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 584w

Robinson, Mr Peter
Questions
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Disclosure of information 1104

Rochester
482w

Rockall
Departmental responsibilities 9w

Roe, Mrs Marion
Questions
Sunday trading, Judgments 462

ROF Bishopton
Journalists 34w, 50w, 365-6w
Ministry of Defence police 611w
Prosecutions 365-6w

ROF Nottingham
Defence contracts 436w
Ministry of Defence police 382w
Security 381w

Rogers, Mr Allan
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 341, 346
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 691, 709-10, (19:06:90) 817-26, 874
Questions
Armed forces housing 141w
Armed forces housing, Repairs & maintenance 141w
Armed forces housing, Resignations 141w
Arms exports, Iraq 792
Customs & Excise, Food exports 735-6w
District health authorities, Wales 437-8w
Export credit, Iraq 596w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Iraq 729w
Export licensing 308w
Export licensing, Companies 308w
Financial services, Investor protection 588w
Shackleton aircraft, Air accidents 721-2w
Teachers, Recruitment 175w

Rolling stock
Channel tunnel 628w

Roll-on roll-off ships
60w
Safety standards 76w, 717w

Romania
Adoption 428w
AIDS 395w
Elections 256w, 287
Foreign relations 256w
Hazardous wastes 600w
Human rights 1110
Know-how Fund 399w
Overseas aid 43w
Trade promotion 209w

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Questions
Cost effectiveness, Dept of Education & Science 184w
Cost effectiveness, Dept of Health 404w
Cost effectiveness, Dept of Social Security 166w
Local government constituencies 636-7w
Sylvan School Croydon 128

Ross, Mr Ernie
Questions
Human rights, Northern Ireland 1104-5
Israel, Exhibitions 273
Stock Exchange, Investor protection 588w

Ross, Mr William
Questions
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 687-8w
Reduced earnings allowance, Northern Ireland 519w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Compensation 783-4
Unemployment, Londonderry 208w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 697w

Rossi, Sir Hugh
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1016

Rost, Mr Peter
Questions
Alternative energy, Waste disposal 414-6w, 432w
Greenhouse effect, Energy conservation 798
Incinerators, Alternative energy 415-6w
Incinerators, Greenhouse effect 415w

Rosyth dockyard
Radioactive waste disposal 32w

Rover Group
Government assistance to industry 426-7w

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 488
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 241
Questions
Civil servants, Recruitment 16-7

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 407-9
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 145
Questions
Community charge, Local government staff 675-6
Stock Exchange, Investor protection 588w
Training & enterprise councils, Per capita costs 577w
Youth training, Wales 227-30w
Youth training scheme, Expenditure 231w
Youth training scheme, Wales 230-2w, 578w

Royal Armament Research & Development Establishment
Disclosure of information 329w

Royal British Legion
720w

Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists
Gamete intrafallopian transfer treatment 516-7w

Royal Fleet Auxiliary
Antisubmarine warfare 646w
Warships 646w

Royal National Institute for the Deaf
52w, 398w

Royal Opera House
Arts Council grants 46w

Royal Shakespeare Company
Finance 12

Royal Ulster Constabulary
Police misconduct 693w
Television programmes 691w

Ruddock, Mrs Joan
Questions
Bus services, Competition 7
Channel tunnel, Railway network 62w
City technology colleges, Government grants 714w

Ruddock, Mrs Joan—continued
Haberdashers' Aske's School, City technology colleges 23-4w, 182-3w, 625w, 715w
Nuclear weapons deployment, BAOR 787
Temporary immigrants, Colombia 659w

Rumbold, Mrs Angela, Minister of State for Education and Science
Questions
City technology colleges 175w
City technology colleges, Corby 559w
City technology colleges, Government grants 714w
Cost effectiveness, Dept of Education & Science 184w
Curriculum, History education 172w
Curriculum, Northumberland 173w
Day nurseries, Educational institutions 714-5w
Education, Community charge capping 123-4, 179w
Education, Inner London boroughs 178-9w
Education (National Curriculum) (Assessment Arrangements in English Mathematics & Science) Orders 1990 458w
Educational finance, Inner London boroughs 172w, 625w
Educational finance, London boroughs 172w
European Communities Select Committee (HL), Languages education 178w
GCE AS level 169w
Grant maintained schools 119-20, 127-9, 175-8w
Grant maintained schools, Capital investment 181-2w
Grant maintained schools, Economic regions 175w
Grant maintained schools, Educational finance 177w
Grant maintained schools, Lancaster 129
Grant maintained schools, School population 178w
Grant maintained schools, Schools & parents 176-7w
Grant maintained schools, Teachers 178w
Haberdashers' Aske's School, City technology colleges 23-4w, 182-3w, 625w, 715w
Hendon School, Grant maintained schools 127-8
Hunt, Peter, Members' correspondence 277w
Inner London Education Authority, Expenditure 625w
John Ball School, Judgments 219-20w
Licensed teachers, Local education authorities 220-3w
Local education authorities, Contracts for services 182w
Management consultants, Dept of Education & Science 217-8w
Nuclear accidents, Dept of Education & Science 22w, 277w
Nursery nurses, Graduates 713w
Nursery schools, School population 173-4w
School administration, Budgeting 169-71w
School administration, Redundancy 223w
School administration, Statistics 223w
School governors 219w
School leaving certificates, Lancashire 353w
Secondary education, Calderdale 123
Sixth form education, Costs 169w
Sixth form education, Educational qualifications 169w
Standard assessment tasks, Primary education 558-9w
Sylvan School Croydon 128
Teacher training, School holidays 457w
Teachers, Greater London 174w
Teachers, Pay 124-5, 177w
Teachers, Pay settlements 177w
Teachers, Recruitment 174-5w
Teachers, South East region 125
Teachers, Vacancies 167-8w
Under-Fives Education Inquiry 182w

Rumbold Committee

Rumbold Committee—continued
see Under-Fives Education Inquiry

Rural areas
Electricity distribution 239w
Housing 614w

Rushdie, Salman
Police protection 10w, 13-4w

Ryder, Mr Richard, Economic Secretary to the Treasury
Debates etc.
Natural Beauty Products, Company liquidations (18:06:90) 779-82
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Inflation 557w
Customs, Channel tunnel 20w
Customs & Excise, Brixham 337w
Customs & Excise, Food exports 735-6w
Customs & Excise, Torbay 336-7w
Customs & Excise, Transport of radioactive materials 151w
Duty free allowances, EC internal trade 21w
European Development Bank, UK contributions 378w
European Investment Bank, Loans 21w, 484w
Eurotunnel, Loans 21w
Excise duties, Whisky 652w
HMSO, Contracts 21w
Inflation 151w
International Monetary Fund 413w
Stocks & shares 735w
Tobacco duties, EC countries 734-6w
VAT, Repairs & maintenance 414w
VAT, Sanitary protection 735w
VAT exempted goods, Sports 151w
VAT registration 483-4w
VAT repayment, Housing construction 483w
Whisky, Trade barriers 652w

Safeguards for Residents in Registered Homes Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:06:90) 656

Safety
Genetic engineering 122-3
Level crossings 70w
London Underground 562-3w, 716-7w
Travel 64-5w
Trident missiles 435w

Safety standards
Computers 598-9w
Electronic equipment 599w
Holiday accommodation 730w
Roll-on roll-off ships 76w, 717w

Sainsbury, Mr Tim, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Questions
Afghanistan, British embassies 262w
Antarctic, Environment protection 120w, 259w, 280-2, 286-7
Antarctic, Minerals 120-1w
Antarctic, Mining 40w
Antarctic Treaty 121w
British dependent territories, Democracy 259w
British embassies, Civil service manpower 385w
Cambodia, United Nations 259w
Caribbean, Drug crimes 262w
Chile, Overseas aid 259-60w
Colombia, Elections 255w
Drug crimes, Crops 276
Eastern Europe, Visas 256w
El Salvador, Human rights 253w
Entry clearances 300-1w
Falkland Islands, Hong Kong 120w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Ministerial policy advisors 299w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Repairs & maintenance 288
Guyana 258w

Sainsbury, Mr Tim—continued
Heap, John, Conferences 120w
Immigration applications, Administrative delays 300w
India 259w
International cooperation, Drug crimes 276
Japan, BBC External Services 399w
Japan, War crimes 196w
St Helena, Banks 39w
St Helena, Sea transport 40w
South America, Environment protection 278
South America, Foreign policy 278
South America, Overseas aid 279
Sri Lanka, Custodial treatment 121w
UN General Assembly, Cambodia 283-4
USSR, South Korea 385w

St David's airfield
784

St David's Hospital Bangor
Hospital closures 26-7w

St Helena
Banks 39w
Sea transport 40w

St Helens
556w, 707-8w
City grants 482w

Sales promotions
Beef 224w

Salmon
Agricultural research 126-7w
Antibiotics 81w
Inquiries 454w
Loch Eriboll 127w
Scotland 454w

Salmon Advisory Committee
Trout 128w

Salmond, Mr Alex
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Overseas investment 909-10
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 62-3w
Germany, Foreign policy 257w
Radioactive waste disposal, Sellafield 657w

Salmonella
Eggs 470w

SAMH
see Scottish Association for Mental Health

Sand
Druridge Bay 2w
Extractive industries 2w

Sandeels
Fish conservation 48-9w
Scotland 48-9w
Shetland 124w

Sanitary protection
750w
VAT 735w

Sanitation
Prisons 17w, 315w

Saudi Arabia
Drug crimes 560w

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 692, 703, 704, 705, 709
Questions
Community charge capping 477-8w
Public expenditure, House of Commons Select Committees 463

Schedule D income tax
20w

Scholarships
EC countries 173w

School administration
Budgeting 169-71w, 369w, 667
Powys 667-8

School administration—continued
Redundancy 223w
Statistics 223w
Wales 369w, 667

School admission
Northern Ireland 422w

School boards
Angus 745w
Educational finance 745w

School buildings
171w
Access to buildings 458-9w
Repairs & maintenance 121-2, 171-2w

School choice
Racial discrimination 134-5

School closures
Argoed High School Mynydd Isa 439-50w
Gloucestershire 24w
Norfolk 353w

School discipline
180w

School Examinations & Assessment Council
558w

School governors
219w

School holidays
Teacher training 457w

School leaving
Wales 231w

School leaving certificates
Lancashire 353w

School meals
Prices 225w
Wales 225w

School population
Ethnic minorities 353-4w
Grant maintained schools 178w
Nursery schools 173-4w
Wales 89-92w

Schools
Ammunition 23w
Angus 744w
Armed forces cadets 33-4w
Bradford 667w
Budgeting 369w
Capital investment 88w
Expenditure 87-92w
Operating costs 744w
Wales 87-92w, 369w

Schools & parents
Grant maintained schools 176-7w

Science & Engineering Research Council
Computers 354w

Science & technology research
Greenhouse effect 293w
Higher education 218-9w
Insects 741w
Research finance 216w, 423-4w

Science & Technology Select Committee (HL)
551w, 748w

Scientific Procedures Inspectorate
323w
Manpower 724w

Scientists
Animal experiments 724w

Scope of debate
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:06:90) 298, 325, 360, 361, 367, 392, (15:06:90) 628, (20:06:90) 1048, 1049, 1051, 1067, 1069, 1072, (22:06:90) 1258

Scotland
Adult education 349w, 682w
Agricultural research 527w

Scotland—continued
Alcoholic drinks 346w
Animal cruelty 525w
Archaeology 616w
Armed forces training 436-7w
Bankruptcy 51w, 245w
Basic education 123w, 349-50w
Beaches 526w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 525w, 742w
British Steel Corporation 912
Bypasses 252w
Charities 49w, 347w
Community charge 526w, 680w
Community charge benefits 697-8w
Community education 122-3w, 681-2w
Community service orders 446w, 449w
Compulsorily detained mental patients 248-9w
Conveyancing 348w
Defence land 436-7w
Disabled workers 50w, 129-30w, 352w, 453w
Distance learning 123w
Divorce 247-8w, 348w
Drug abuse 525-6w
Economic situation 1109-10
Educational finance 612-4w
English education 349w
Estate agents 525w
Explosives 615-6w
Family doctors 124-5w, 247w, 619-20w
Farms 345w, 452-3w
Fine defaulters 347w
Fines enforcement officers 249w
Fish conservation 49w, 125w, 127w
Fish diseases 128w
Fisheries 527w
Fishery protection 48w, 251w
Forestry Commission 124w
Geriatric hospitals 743-4w
Hazardous wastes 246w, 746w
Hepatitis 453-4w
HIV infection 245w, 451-2w
Hostels 249-50w
Housing 614w
Housing finance 614w
Incinerators 345w
Iron & steel industry 343-4w, 583w, 909-11
Land registration 47-8w, 680-1w
Law reform (12:06:90) 156-234
Lead pipes 48w, 247w
Lead poisoning 124w
Lead pollution 246-8w
Licensed premises 346w
Local enterprise companies 617w
Marriage 348w
Medical education 350w
Metal detectors 616-7w
Methane 527-8w
NHS finance 248w
Nuclear power stations 50-1w
Oil storage 123-4w
Pensioners 375-7w
Pre-school education 121-2w, 344w
Prisoners 526w, 681w
Probation 447-8w
Railway electrification 63w
Railway freight transport 1110
Railway network 682w
Refuges 131w
Religious education 612w
Rents to mortgages scheme 615w
Salmon 454w
Sandeels 48-9w
Sea pollution 619w
Seals 250-1w
Shellfish 681w
Sheltered employment 130-1w
Sheltered placement scheme 130w
Sheriff officers 745w
Social security benefits reductions 707w
Social work 249w
Social workers' training 619w
Special training needs 245w, 251-2w
Tax allowances 377w
Training 343w
Transport 679-80w
Trout 128w

Scotland—continued
Voluntary organisations 613-4w
Waste disposal 246w, 345w
Water pollution 445-6w
Water supply 245-6w
Water treatment 349w

Scotsman
34w

Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas, Minister of State, Dept of Social Security
Debates etc.
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 549, 562-4
Questions
Attendance allowance, Handicapped children 163w
Deaf, Telephone exchanges 52w
Dept of Social Security, Ministers 708-9w
Disability allowance, Mobility allowance 708w
Handicap benefits, Doctors 408w
Handicap benefits, Mentally handicapped 708w
Handicap benefits, Social security benefits rules 163w
Income support, Earnings rules 375w
Independent Living Fund, Finance 407w
Mobility allowance 608w
Mobility allowance, Children 524w
National insurance benefits, Dependants 376-7w
Non-contributory benefits, Spouse additions 376w
Occupational deafness, Civil service manpower 709w
Occupational deafness, Glass industry 710w
Occupational deafness, Social security benefits rules 709w
Occupational deafness, Social security claims 709-10w
Severe disablement allowance, Social security benefits rates 164w
Social Fund, Civil service manpower 521-2w
Social Fund, Funerals 730w
Social Fund, Loans 52w, 607w
Social Fund, Social security claims 608w
Social Fund, Social security recipients 731-2w
Social Fund, Wath upon Dearne 407w
Supplementary benefits, Social security payments 607w

Scottish Assembly
1109-10

Scottish Association for Mental Health
251-2w

Scottish courts
Trusts 347w

Scottish Development Agency
344w, 617w

Scottish Development Department
679-80w

Scottish Enterprise
129w

Scottish Farm Waste Liaison Group
452w

Scottish Fishermen's Federation
527w

Scottish Grand Committee
Speaker's rulings & statements (11:06:90) 19, 110

Scottish health boards
Finance 248w
Infant mortality 122w

Scottish Home & Health Dept
445-8w, 453-4w, 681w

Scottish Homes
614-5w
Capital investment 252w

Scottish Homes—continued
Housing construction 252-3w

Scottish Legal Aid Board
Legal costs 250w

Scottish Nuclear
239w

Scottish Office
49w, 247-8w, 612w
Management consultants 448w
Security industry 129w, 250w, 348w, 446w

Scottish Secondary Education Review Committee
Public appointments 450-1w

Scrapie
79-80w
Animal products 622w
Disease control 78-9w, 622w
Meat 78w
Milk 78w
Sheep 267-8w
Sheep meat 79w
Transmissible encephalopathies 622w

SDA
see Scottish Development Agency

SDD
see Scottish Development Department

Sea Harrier aircraft
Low flying 243w

Sea level
673

Sea lice
Agricultural research 128w
Fish 128w

Sea navigation
Loch Linnhe 723w

Sea pollution
Beaches 93w, 203w, 480-1w, 526w, 566w, 578w, 619w
Birds 291w
Devon 5-6w
Dichloros 2w
EC countries 203w
EC law 566w
Gas supply industry 201w
Langland Bay 480-1w
Norfolk 201w
Pollution control (13:06:90) 291-2
Scotland 619w
Tourism 54w

Sea rescue
Devon 1-2
Isle of Man 2
Radio engineering 2

Sea transport
St Helena 40w

SEAC
see School Examinations & Assessment Council

Sealink
577w

Seals
Fish conservation 127w
Fishery protection 291w
Nature conservation 250w
Scotland 250-1w

Seas & oceans
Environment protection 335-6w
Waste disposal 550w

Secondary education
Calderdale 123
Cost per pupil 167w

Securities & Investments Board
210-1w

Security
Armed forces 720w
Banks 103w

Security—continued
Cars 309-10w
Channel tunnel 61w, 188-9w
Northern Ireland 692-3w
ROF Nottingham 381w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering 139w
Westminster Abbey 161w

Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry
688-9w

Security industry
Government buildings 348w
Scottish Office 129w, 250w, 348w, 446w

Sedgemore, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 389
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 592-602, 618, 633, 653, 654
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 998
Questions
Business statements 1123
Court of appeal, Criminal appeals 661-2w
Evidence, Bombings 311w
Evidence, Forensic science 679-80
Police misconduct, Convictions 661w
Prerogative of mercy 659-61w

Sefton
Income support 707-8w

Select Committee reports
551w, 748w

Self-employed
Manpower 601w

Self-governing hospitals
Greenock 615w
Port Glasgow 615w

Sellafield
285-6w, 375w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 484-5w
Nuclear safety 238w
Radioactive waste disposal 657w
Radioactive wastes 238-9w

Sentencing
Appeals 387w
Arson 102w
National Association of Probation Officers 321w

SERC
see Science & Engineering Research Council

Service industries
Trade agreements 213w

Set-aside schemes
466w
Grazing land 268w
Land use 466-7w

Severe disablement allowance
Social security benefits rates 164w
Social security recipients 214-5w

Sewage
North Sea 487w
Pollution control 487w
Pollution monitoring 200w
Viruses 200w
Waste disposal 633w

Sexual offences
Child abuse 272w, 365-6w
Offences against the administration of justice 1107
Rehabilitation of offenders 272w

Sexual Offences Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 3R read (15:06:90) 655, (22:06:90) 1299

Shackleton aircraft

***Shackleton aircraft**—continued*
Air accidents 721-2w

Shard Bridge Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1093

Shares
Electricity supply industry 287w, 719w

Sharkey, Katharine
Special education 353w

Shaw, Mr David
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 491
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 235, 247
Questions
Air traffic control, Capital investment 69w
Community relations, Northern Ireland 691w
Crime 309w
Grant maintained schools 175-6w
Industry, Public bodies 113w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Government achievements 185-6w
Official engagements 270w, 488w, 669w

Shaw, Sir Giles
Questions
Air transport, Competition 59-60w

Sheep
Animal feed 337w
Radioactivity 134w, 345w
Scrapie 267-8w
Wales 337w

Sheep meat
Northern Ireland 284w
Scrapie 79w
Trade promotion 284w

Sheep premiums
469-70w

Sheep scab
Disease control 649-50w

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Questions
Family doctors, Budgeting 370-1w
Prison rules 315w
Prison staff, Training 664-5w
Prisoners' home leave, Women's prisons 321-2w
Prisoners on remand, Prison accommodation 452
Rehabilitation of offenders 427w
Terrorism, Death 518w
Traffic wardens, Training 665-6w

Sheffield
Abortion 511w

Sheffield Health Authority
Hospital beds 799

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 487

Shell UK
527-8w

Shellfish
Algae 131-2w
Fisheries 681w
Food contamination 165w
Health warnings 131-2w, 651w
Scotland 681w

Sheltered employment
Mentally ill 130-1w
Scotland 130-1w

Sheltered placement scheme
Disabled workers 130w
Mentally ill 130w

***Sheltered placement scheme**—continued*
Scotland 130w
Take-up 601w

***Shephard, Mrs Gillian**, Under-Secretary of State for Social Security*
Questions
Attendance allowance, Social security recipients 215w
Community charge, London boroughs 698-9w
Community charge benefits, Lambeth 408-9w
Community charge benefits, Married people 332w, 700w
Community charge benefits, Mobility allowance 698w
Community charge benefits, Pensioners 698w
Community charge benefits, Scotland 697-8w
Community charge exemptions, Personal savings 331-2w
Company pensions, Retirement age 608w
Contracts for services, Dept of Social Security 164w
Cost effectiveness, Dept of Social Security 166w
Costs, Tax thresholds 215w
Dept of Social Security, Debt collection 53w, 711w
Dept of Social Security local offices 710w
Dept of Social Security local offices, Departmental forms 409w
Dept of Social Security local offices, Leeds 707w
Employees' contributions 406w
Family credit, Social security recipients 216w, 524w
Family credit, South West region 162w
Family credit, Take-up 165w
Family credit, Wales 52-3w
Housing benefits, Domestic rates 51w
Housing benefits, Public expenditure 331w
Housing benefits, Social security benefits disqualification 53w
Income support, Availability for work 330-1w
Income support, Community charge 700w, 707w
Income support, Mortgages 163-4w
Income support, Political refugees 406-7w
Income support, Refugees 407w
Income support, Residential care 214w
Income support, Sefton 707-8w
Income support, Social security benefits rules 330w
Income support, Unemployed 165w
Invalidity benefits, Retirement pensions 407w
Low incomes 330w, 409w
Management consultants, Dept of Social Security 701-7w
Means tested benefits, Capital rules 708w
Means tested benefits, Women 700w
Medical appeal tribunals, Social security appeals 162-3w
National insurance, Business 605-6w
National insurance, Fraud 408w
National insurance benefits, Dependants 53w
National insurance contributions 522-3w
Nursing homes, Income support 408w
Pensioners, Housing benefits 377w
Pensioners, Income support 375-6w
Pensioners, Personal income 164w, 409-13w
Pensioners, Retirement age 215w
Pensions 337w
Personal pensions, Disclosure of information 331w
Personal pensions, National Insurance Fund 524w
Repetitive strain injury, Compensation 216w
Resettlement units 711-2w
Resettlement units, Bishopbriggs 521-2w
Residential care, Income support 51w
Residential care, Porthmadog 51-2w

***Shephard, Mrs Gillian**—continued*
Retirement age, Social security reform 377w
Retirement pensions 165w
Retirement pensions, Average earnings 700w
Retirement pensions, Costs 376w
Retirement pensions, EC countries 608-9w
Retirement pensions, Married women 377w
Severe disablement allowance, Social security recipients 214-5w
Social security abuse, Young people 731w
Social security benefits 52w, 710-1w
Social security benefits, Fishing crews 165w
Social Security Benefits Agency 164w
Social security benefits reductions, Income support 712w
Social security benefits rules, Macao 432w
Social security recipients 331w
Students, Housing benefits 523w
Students, Social security benefits 523-4w
Students, Unemployment benefits 524w
Unemployment benefits, Average earnings 522w
Unemployment benefits, Social security benefits disqualification 166-7w
War pensions, Nuclear weapons tests 215w
Widows' benefits, Income support 707w
Widows' benefits, Social security recipients 607w

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Questions
Agriculture, Government grants 267w
Animal welfare, Manpower 333-4w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Solvents 112w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Confederation of British Industry 593-4w

Shepherd, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 416-7
Exports (22:06:90) 1257, 1261, 1263
Standing Order No 20 applications, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community (20:06:90) 926
Questions
Business statements 1115
Local government finance, Walsall 1w
Non-domestic rates 477-9w
Rateable value 478w

Sheppey General Hospital
273-4w
Hospital closures (12:06:90) 261
Public petitions (12:06:90) 261

Sheriff officers
Scotland 745w

Shersby, Mr Michael
Questions
Business statements 477
Criminal records 322w
Miscarriages of justice, Bombings 460
Police housing, Rent allowances 663w

Shetland
Sandeels 124w
Training 50w

SHHD
see Scottish Home & Health Dept

Shipbuilding
EC grants & loans 589w
Government assistance 589w
HMS Southampton 609w
HMS Warspite 138w
Investment 588-9w
Nuclear submarines 138w

Shipping
67w

Shipping accidents
MV Derbyshire 717w
MV Rosebay 5w

Shipping registration
British dependent territories 627w
Fishing quotas 746-7w

Shipping safety
60w
Oil tankers 73-4w
Research 74-5w

Ships
Agricultural research 128-9w
Operating costs 128-9w

Shop staff
Sunday trading 462

Shopping
Republic of Ireland 277, 497w

Shopping centres
Bangor 208w
Design 200-1w
Planning appeals 208w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 640-1
European Communities (11:06:90) 27, 44-8, 100, 105
Questions
Business statements 1116

Short, Ms Clare
Debates etc.
Bombings, Birmingham (12:06:90) 267, 269, 270
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 453
Defence, Europe 535w
Income support, Availability for work 330-1w
Income support, Earnings rules 375w
Income support, Social security benefits rules 330w
Israel, Peace negotiations 287-8
Means tested benefits, Women 700w
National insurance credits, Appeals 264w
National insurance credits, Social security benefits disqualification 460w
Retirement pensions, Average earnings 700w
Stock Exchange, Investor protection 588w
Unemployment, Unemployment benefits 116w
Unemployment benefits, Vacancies 602w

Shortage subjects
Teacher training 130-1

SHSA
see Special Hospitals Service Authority

SIB
see Securities & Investments Board

Sign language
House of Commons broadcasting 398w

Silcott, Winston
324w

Sillars, Mr Jim
Questions
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 62-3w
Foreign investment in UK, Iron & steel industry 39w
Germany, Foreign policy 256-7w
Iron & steel industry, Scotland 343-4w
Nursery schools, Strathclyde 124w
Pre-school education, Scotland 121-2w, 344w
Ravenscraig steelworks, Factory closures 343-4w
Urban development grants, Glasgow 448-9w
Urban development grants, Strathclyde 449w

Sims, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 495

Sites of special scientific interest
417w

Sixth form education
Age participation rates 168-9w
Basildon District Council (15:06:90) 659-66

Sixth form education—continued
Costs 169w
Educational qualifications 169w
Wickford (15:06:90) 659-66

Skeet, Sir Trevor
Questions
A428, Road construction 444w
Advisory Council on Science & Technology, Public appointments 99w
Creutzfeldt-Jakob dementia, Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 275w
Ozone layer, Air pollution control 295w, 416w
Procurement Executive, Air force bases 547w
RAE Bedford, Defence land 547w
RAE Bedford, Operating costs 548w
RAE Bedford, Population 547w
RAE Bedford, Property development 547w
RAE Bedford, United Parcels Service 547-8w
RAE Bedford, Wind tunnels 548w
Sunday trading, Treaty of Rome 429w

Skillcentres
Privatisation 669w

Skilled workers
Armed forces deployment 794

Skills Training Agency
15-6, (14:06:90) 502-42

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1050-1, 1085
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 379, 383, 386
Electoral register, Community charge (22:06:90) 1305, 1307
European Communities (11:06:90) 21
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 935-6
Members' conduct (18:06:90) 686
Oral question time intervention (18:06:90) 679, 680
Procedure (20:06:90) 928, 933
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 696w
Business statements 480, 1119
Civil servants, Conditions of employment 15
Concessionary television licences 313w
Defence review 534w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Takeovers 581w
Planning appeals, Opencast mining 565w
Stagecoach, Road safety 11
Unemployment 602w

Slane, Gerard
Death 688w

Slaughterhouses
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 79w
Cattle 83w
Environmental health 268w
Standards enforcement 466w
Veterinary services 82w, 622w

Slaughterhouses (Hygiene) Regulations 1977
Questions
82w

Sleeping rough
Greater London 738-40w

SMART awards
641w

Smith, Mr Andrew
Questions
Access funds, Higher education administration 505-6w
Dockyards, Health physics 541w
Educational finance, Universities 506w
Financial services, Investor protection 588w
Handicapped students, Higher education 22w

Smith, Mr Andrew—continued
Handicapped students, Higher education admission 22w
Handicapped students, Student grants 22w
M40, Lighting 74w
Oxfordshire Health Authority, Performance related pay 511w
Student loans 22w, 503-5w
Student loans, Administrative delays 502-3w
Student loans, Bank services 503w
Student loans, Higher education administration 504w
Student loans, Liaison officers 504w
Student loans, Orders & regulations 130
Student loans, Personal income 503w
Student loans, Public expenditure 22-3w
Student loans, Take-up 505w
Student Loans Company, Administrative costs 502w
Student Loans Company, Banks 503w, 505w
Student Loans Company, Consultants 502w
Student Loans Company, Personnel 504w
Student Loans Company, Student loans 503w
Students, Housing benefits 523w
Students, Social security benefits 523-4w
Students, Unemployment benefits 524w
Universities, Expenditure 223-4w
University teachers, Pay settlements 277-8w

Smith, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Bombings, Islington (11:06:90) 19
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 636-42, 653
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 1032
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 802
Questions
Nuclear accidents, Dept of Education & Science 22w
Nuclear accidents, Dept of Health 272w
Roads, Greater London 70w
Warships, Nuclear weapons 196w

Smith, Sir Dudley
Debates etc.
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1131
Standing Order No 20 applications, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community (20:06:90) 928
Questions
Low flying, Armed forces training 793

Smith, Mr John P
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 493-4
Unparliamentary expressions (19:06:90) 802
Questions
Barry College, Deaf 442w
Business statements 478-9
Crime, Derbyshire 309w
Deaf, Interpreters 442-3w
Iron & steel industry, Employment 84w
Radar 536w
Railway safety, Norwich 303w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 171-2w

Smith, Mr Tim
Questions
Capital gains tax, Tax allowances 414w
Consultants, Dept of the Environment 358w
Service industries, Trade agreements 213w
Sunday trading 314w

Smoke detection
17w

Smoke hoods
Air safety 563w
Standards specifications 626-7w

Smoking
Advisory services 677w
House of Commons 551w

***Smoking**—continued*
Railway travel 302w

Smyth, Rev Martin
Questions
Motor vehicle testing, Northern Ireland 110w
Television licences, Northern Ireland 110-1w

Snape, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1047, 1048, 1050, 1062-3
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 498-9
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 240
Questions
British Rail, Bus services 301w
British Rail, Government grants 301w
British Rail, Public service obligation grant 301w
Channel tunnel, Rolling stock 628w
Financial services, Investor protection 588w
M6, Road works 444w
Tactical nuclear weapons 274

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1254, 1256, 1258, 1259, 1263
Questions
Overseas aid 683-4

Social Fund
Budgeting 607w
Civil service manpower 521-2w
Debt collection 607w
Funerals 730w
Loans 52w, 607w
Social security claims 608w
Social security recipients 731-2w
Wath upon Dearne 407w
Widows' benefits 608w

Social security abuse
Efficiency scrutinies 709w
Young people 731w

Social Security Advisory Committee
Students 523-4w

Social security appeals
Medical appeal tribunals 162-3w

Social security benefits
52w, 710-1w
Armed forces pay 609-10w
Fishing crews 165w
Students 523-4w

Social Security Benefits Agency
164w

Social security benefits disqualification
Housing benefits 53w
National insurance credits 460w
Unemployment benefits 166-7w

Social security benefits rates
Severe disablement allowance 164w

Social security benefits reductions
Income support 712w
Scotland 707w

Social security benefits rules
Attendance allowance 163w
Handicap benefits 163w
Income support 330w
Macao 432w
Occupational deafness 709w

Social security benefits uprating
Retirement pensions 712w

Social Security Bill 1989/90
Questions
608w

Social security claims
Occupational deafness 709-10w
Social Fund 608w

Social Security Commissioners
Administrative delays 389-90w

Social security payments
Supplementary benefits 607w

Social security recipients
331w
Attendance allowance 215w
Eye tests 401-2w
Family credit 216w, 524w
Northern Ireland 689w
Severe disablement allowance 214-5w
Social Fund 731-2w
Widows' benefits 607w

Social security reform
Retirement age 377w

Social work
Local government expenditure 249w
Scotland 249w

Social workers
400w
Community care 403w

Social workers' failures
Manpower 1107-8
Wandsworth Borough Council 1107-8

Social workers' training
Law 235w
Legislation 619w
Scotland 619w

Society of Chartered Accountants
378w

Soil erosion
Fish conservation 126w

Soley, Mr Clive
Debates etc.
Property Services Agency & Crown Suppliers Bill, Lords amendts (11:06:90) 108
Questions
Financial services, Investor protection 588w
Housing action trusts, Expenditure 417-8w, 477w
Housing action trusts, Public opinion 417w
Housing action trusts, Southwark 417w
Housing associations, Housing completions 296w
Leasehold housing, Land ownership & tenure 389w
Planning inquiries, Isle of Sheppey 567w

Solvents
Chlorofluorocarbons 112w, 114-5w
Codes of practice 115w

Sons of Glyndwr
see Meibion Glyndwr

South Africa
Arms trade 119w
Constitutions 255w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 119w
Economic sanctions 271-2
Educational aid 395-6w
Government grants 255w
Overseas aid 396w
Political parties 255w

South America
Environment protection 278
Foreign policy 278
Overseas aid 279

South Devon Shellfisherman
746w

South Down
Low flying 31-2w

South East region
Teachers 125

South Glamorgan Health Authority
Finance 673-5
Organ donors 674

South Korea
USSR 385w

South London
Railway travel 474w
Road traffic 134

South of Scotland Electricity Board
7w, 239w

South Wales
Channel tunnel 443w
Police custody 12w

South West region
Family credit 162w
Prisons 15w

South West Thames Regional Health Authority
Ambulance services 235w

South Western Electricity
485w

South Western Electricity Board
Electricity tariffs 485w

South Western Regional Health Authority
35-7w
Finance 36w
Hip replacements 36w

South Yorkshire
Low flying 381w
Railway network 68w

South Yorkshire Fire & Civil Defence Authority
Fire services 319-20w

South Yorkshire Light Rail Transit (No 2) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Lords amendts adjourned* (20:06:90) 905
Lords amendts* (21:06:90) 1093

Southampton Rapid Transit Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1094

Southend-on-Sea
Railway network 8

Southern Africa
Overseas aid 391w, 643-4w

Southern African Development Coordination Conference
396w, 643-4w

Southern Education & Library Board
Primary education 284w

Southern Health & Social Services Board
Flags 284-5w
Public appointments 284-5w

Southwark
Housing action trusts 417w

Southwood Committee
see Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Working Party

Sovereignty
Northern Ireland 560w

Soviet studies
University teachers 406w

Soya beans
Baby milks 236w

Spaceflight
Research finance 919-20

Spain
Export of live animals 133-4w
Poultry 268w

***Speaker and his deputies**, For rulings & statements see separate heading Speaker's rulings & statements*
Debates etc.
Amendments & new clauses (12:06:90) 156, 235, (13:06:90) 293, 329, 378, 402, 418, 431, 437-8, (14:06:90) 501, (18:06:90) 687, (20:06:90) 935, 937, 975, 977, 986, 1021, 1035, 1047, 1057-8, 1062, (21:06:90) 1136-7, 1169, 1178-9

Speaker and his deputies—continued
Business motions (20:06:90) 1020
Disallowed questions (19:06:90) 791
EC documents motions (12:06:90) 153
Orders & regulations motions (18:06:90) 684
Private Members' Bills, 2R order read (22:06:90) 1297-8
Procedure (11:06:90) 10, (12:06:90) 124, (13:06:90) 273, 274, (14:06:90) 456, (18:06:90) 665, 703, (19:06:90) 795, (20:06:90) 908, 925, 1050, 1067, (21:06:90) 1107, 1120
Standing Order No 20 applications, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community (20:06:90) 924

Speaker's rulings & statements
Adjournment debates (20:06:90) 1087
Business questions (21:06:90) 1114
Calling of Members (13:06:90) 382, 410, (21:06:90) 1124
House of Commons division of time (20:06:90) 1083-4
House of Commons divisions (19:06:90) 898, (21:06:90) 1221
Members' conduct (12:06:90) 171-3, (14:06:90) 456-7, 466, (18:06:90) 685, 686, (19:06:90) 786, 804, 887, 891, (20:06:90) 975, 976, 987, 1030, (21:06:90) 1106, 1110
Members' dress (20:06:90) 1061-2
Members' interventions (11:06:90) 65, 109-10, (12:06:90) 248, (13:06:90) 328, 410, (14:06:90) 456, 539, 541, (15:06:90) 647, (18:06:90) 680, (19:06:90) 876, (20:06:90) 956, 1028, 1063, 1087
Members' misconduct (21:06:90) 1192
Members' speeches (11:06:90) 78, (12:06:90) 140, 150, 151, 251, (13:06:90) 352, 366, (14:06:90) 487, 491, 498, 502, 552, (15:06:90) 661, (18:06:90) 721, 732, (19:06:90) 805, 852, 900, (20:06:90) 1062, (21:06:90) 1147, 1196, (22:06:90) 1307
Ministerial statements (11:06:90) 19, (19:06:90) 801
Motions for the adjournment (20:06:90) 1068
New clauses (13:06:90) 352-3, 392, 419
Oral questions (12:06:90) 125, (13:06:90) 274, (20:06:90) 909, 925, 926, 927
Points of order (12:06:90) 249, (14:06:90) 541, (19:06:90) 791-2, 808, 898, (20:06:90) 923, 925, 926, 928, 929, 933, 936-7, 1056, 1076, (21:06:90) 1124, (22:06:90) 1252, 1299-300
Prime Minister's questions (12:06:90) 132
Scope of debate (13:06:90) 298, 325, 360, 361, 367, 392, (15:06:90) 628, (20:06:90) 1048, 1049, 1051, 1067, 1069, 1072, (22:06:90) 1258
Scottish Grand Committee (11:06:90) 19, 110
Standing Order No 20 applications (14:06:90) 501, (20:06:90) 925-8
Supplementary questions (12:06:90) 129, (13:06:90) 283, (14:06:90) 470, (18:06:90) 669, 670, 673, (19:06:90) 796, (20:06:90) 909, (21:06:90) 1129, 1134
Swords & daggers (20:06:90) 1061-2
Ten minutes rule (19:06:90) 805, 852, 864
Unparliamentary expressions (12:06:90) 249, (19:06:90) 801, 802, 803, (20:06:90) 921-2, 1080

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
EC economic policy (15:06:90) 598-9, 607-12, 617, 618, 619, 620, 641
European Communities (11:06:90) 28, 33, 34, 52-3, 77, 100
Questions
Business statements 479, 1118
Channel tunnel, Railway network 4
Educational finance, London boroughs 172w
Enterprise zones, Tax allowances 293w
Finchley 667w
London Regional Transport, Concessionary fares 71w

Spearing, Mr Nigel—continued
London Regional Transport, Government grants 70w
Metropolitan Police, Finance 359-60w
Urban development corporations, Disabled workers 200w
Zambia, Overseas aid 396w

Special education
502w
Appeals 459w
Felgate, Lorne 183w
Private education 183w
Sharkey, Katharine 353w
Teacher training 713-4w
Wales 491w

Special health authorities
Transplant surgery 35w, 509w

Special Hospitals Service Authority
274w

Special protection areas
356w

Special training needs
54w, 129-30w, 263w
Finance 304w
Scotland 245w, 251-2w

Spectroscopy
Robens Institute of Industrial & Environmental Health & Safety (19:06:90) 900-6

Speed, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 492
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 697, 702, (19:06:90) 816-7, 833-6
Questions
Air transport, EC action 59w

Speed limits
Buses 7, 154w
Law enforcement 76w
Motorways 76w

Speedlink
1110

Speller, Mr Tony
Questions
Armed forces training, Aircrew 548w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Research 265w
Directors, Company liquidations 423w
Electricity distribution, Rural areas 239w
Erythropoietin, Licensing 39w
Hill livestock allowances, Administrative delays 335w
Marginal land, EC action 134w
Prisons 428-9w
Sea rescue, Devon 1-2

Spicer, Sir Jim
Questions
Business statements 1119

Spicer, Mr Michael, Minister for Housing and Planning
Questions
Building industry, Breach of contract 204w
Building industry, Licensing 203w
Council tenants, House purchase 631w
Homelessness 420-1w, 481w
Homelessness, Greater London 357-8w
Households 206-8w
Housing action trusts, Expenditure 417-8w, 477w
Housing action trusts, Public opinion 417w
Housing action trusts, Southwark 417w
Housing associations, Housing completions 296w
Housing insulation 205-6w
Housing insulation, Camden 481w
Leasehold housing, Flats 293w
Mortgage defaulters, Homelessness 635-6w
Planning appeals, Costs 292-3w
Planning inquiries, Isle of Sheppey 567w

Spicer, Mr Michael—continued
Regional planning & development, Departmental publications 5w
Rents to mortgages scheme 637w
Rents to mortgages scheme, England 637w
Repossession orders, Greater London 636w
Sleeping rough, Greater London 738-40w
Tenants' incentive scheme 637-9w

Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee
135w

Sponsorship
Action for community employment 155w

Sports
VAT exempted goods 151w

Sports centres
Licensing 659w

Spouse additions
53w, 376-7w
Non-contributory benefits 376w

Squatting
Law reform 797

Squire, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Pulp & Paper Products Restriction Bill, 1R (21:06:90) 1134-5
Questions
Greenhouse effect, Chlorofluorocarbons 798
Ozone, Air pollution monitoring 294w
Rainham 667w
Sleeping rough, Greater London 738-40w

Squirrels
156-7w

SRAM-A missiles
325w

Sri Lanka
British Council 397w
Custodial treatment 121w
Overseas aid 154-5w

SSEB
see South of Scotland Electricity Board

Staff inspections
664-5w

Staffordshire
Crime 308-9w

Staff-student ratios
North Eastern Education & Library Board 521w
Youth training programme 521w

Stagecoach
Conditions of employment 11
Road safety 11

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 147
Questions
Lebanon, Hostages 464-5
Sunday trading, Torfaen Borough Council 455

Standard assessment tasks
Primary education 558-9w

Standard community charge
526w
Local authority powers 158-9w

Standards enforcement
Slaughterhouses 466w
Tachographs 187w

Standards specifications
Computer software 589-90w
Smoke hoods 626-7w

Standing Order No 20 applications
Factory closures (14:06:90) 501
Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community (20:06:90) 923-4

Standing Order No 20 applications—continued
Speaker's rulings & statements (14:06:90) 501, (20:06:90) 925-8
United Kingdom Optical (14:06:90) 501

Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 488
Questions
Overseas aid 683
Personal pensions, Disclosure of information 331w

"Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1990"
(18:06:90) 687-774, (19:06:90) 807-97

Stationery Office
see HMSO

Statutory Instruments Select Committee
(22:06:90) 1301

Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1140-4, 1183-6
Questions
Animal cruelty, Punishment 525w
Defence Select Committee, Low flying 536w
Israel, Peace negotiations 286
Members' facilities, Telephones 106w
Middle East, Nuclear non proliferation 276
Oil storage, Scotland 123-4w
Overseas aid, Refugees 643-4w
South Africa, Arms trade 119w
South Africa, Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 119w
Training, Mentally ill 263w, 343w
Training Agency, Mentally disadvantaged 54w, 245w

Steen, Mr Anthony
Questions
Air routes, Competition 59w
Community charge, Nurses 294w
Customs & Excise, Brixham 337w
Customs & Excise, Torbay 336-7w
Fishing gear, Members' correspondence 746w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 429w
Hip replacements, South Western Regional Health Authority 36w
Hospital waiting lists, Hip replacements 36-7w
Hospital waiting lists, Information services 37-8w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 723w
Oil pollution, Devon 5w
Sea pollution, Devon 5-6w
Tourism, Devon 54w

Steinberg, Mr Gerry
Questions
Balance of trade, West Germany 593w
BAOR, Nuclear weapons 544-5w

Step up the Wordpower
Government grants 349-50w

Stepping Hill Hospital
Hospital beds 403w
Nurses 403w

Stern, Mr Michael
Questions
Arts grants, Non-metropolitan counties 44-5w
Beef, Republic of Ireland 696w
Lithuania 263w
Official engagements 100w, 488w, 669w
Prisons, Building repairs 15w
Territorial Army, Armed forces recruitment 548w
Tourist industry, Manpower 670w

Steroid drugs
Drug side effects 372w, 676-7w

Stevens, Mr Lewis
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1236-42, 1250, 1290, 1298
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 523-5
Questions
Driving instruction 71w
NHS hospital trusts, Northern Ireland 690w

Stevens Inquiry
see Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry

Stewart, Mr Allan
Questions
Aquagard sea lice treatment, Agricultural research 745w
Business statements 473-4
Charities, Scotland 49w
Grant maintained schools, Schools & parents 176-7w
Scottish Secondary Education Review Committee, Public appointments 450-1w

Stewart, Mr Andy
Questions
Agriculture, Financial services 650w
Civil service agencies 733-4w
Civil service agencies, Civil service manpower 31w
Finance, Historic buildings 13
UN Transition Assistance Group, Namibia 544w

Stewart, Graeme
34w, 50w, 365-6w

Stock control
724w

Stock Exchange
Investor protection 588w

Stocks & shares
735w
Industry Act 1980 490w

Stokes, Sir John
Questions
Business statements 474

Storms
District health authorities 404-5w

Stornoway Airport
Air traffic control 610w
Exercise JMC 90/2 610w

Stott, Mr Roger
Questions
Action for community employment, Belfast 155w
Action for community employment, Sponsorship 155w
Balance of trade, West Germany 593w
"Making Belfast Work", Expenditure 208-9w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Further education teachers 520w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Redundancy 520w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Religious discrimination 520-1w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Staff-student ratios 521w
North Eastern Education & Library Board, Teachers 519-20w

Strabane
279-83w, 697w

Strang, Mr Gavin
Questions
Arms control, Nuclear weapons 533w
British Steel Corporation 583w
Developing countries, Nuclear non proliferation 275
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Contracts 286w

Strangford Lough
Fishing 422w
Marine nature reserves 1106-7

Strangford Lough Nature Conservation Association
1106-7

Strathclyde
Nursery schools 124w
Roads 611-2w
Urban development grants 449w

Strathclyde Regional Council
742w

Straw, Mr Jack
Questions
Armed forces cadets, Schools 33-4w
Education, Community charge capping 123-4
Grant maintained schools 128-9
Licensed teachers, Local education authorities 220-3w
Longfield Upper School, Burglary 13w
School administration, Redundancy 223w
School administration, Statistics 223w
Schools, Ammunition 23w
Technical & vocational education initiative, Lancashire Education Authority 670w

Student grants
Handicapped students 22w
Teacher training 130-1

Student loans
22w, 129-30, 179w, 503-5w
Administrative costs 559-60w
Administrative delays 502-3w
Bank services 503w
Deaf 182w
Educational finance 179w
Handicap benefits 182w
Higher education administration 504w
Liaison officers 504w
Orders & regulations 130
Personal income 503w
Public expenditure 22-3w
Student Loans Company 503w
Take-up 505w

Student Loans Company
129-30, 502-3w, 559-60w
Administrative costs 502w
Banks 503w, 505w
Consultants 502w
Personnel 504w
Student loans 503w

Student numbers
Higher education 736-8w
Universities 457w
University of Wales 457w

Students
Community charge 526w
Housing benefits 523w
Social Security Advisory Committee 523-4w
Social security benefits 523-4w
Unemployment benefits 524w

Styal Prison
324w

Submarines
Holy Loch 646w
Radiation hazards 540-1w

Subsidies
Railway network 628-9w

Suckler cow premiums
470w, 736w

Sumberg, Mr David
Debates etc.
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1134
Questions
Glue sniffing, Young people 595w
Radio frequencies 426w
Regional planning & development, North West region 921
Romania, Elections 287
Tinnitus, Research finance 120
War crimes, Criminal investigation 320w

Sumberg, Mr David—continued
Warsaw Pact, Defence contracts 537-8w

"Summer Time Consultation Paper"
573w

Summerson, Mr Hugo
Questions
Antarctic, Environment protection 281-2
Business statements 479
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 537w

Summertime
309w, 457, 573w
Agriculture 456-7
Building industry 457
Clwyd 456-7
EC internal trade 458
Northern Ireland 457
Public petitions (18:06:90) 775

Sunday trading
190w, 313-4w
Croydon 454-5
Horticulture 462
Judgments 462
Law enforcement 551-2w
Law reform 454-6
Legislation 102-3w
Shop staff 462
Torfaen Borough Council 455, 551-2w
Treaty of Rome 429w

Sunderland
Enterprise zones 297w
Homelessness 204w
Urban programme 203w

Supersonic aircraft
Ozone layer 302-3w

Supplementary benefits
Social security payments 607w

Supplementary questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:06:90) 129, (13:06:90) 283, (14:06:90) 470, (18:06:90) 669, 670, 673, (19:06:90) 796, (20:06:90) 909, (21:06:90) 1129, 1134

Supply of Goods & Services Act 1982
Questions
204w

Support for innovation scheme
641w

Surgery
Heart diseases 339-40w

Surrey
Crime 309w

Survivors' benefits
53w

Sussex
Crime 309w

Swansea Prison
Industrial disputes 12w

Swindon Health Authority
Hospital beds 34-5w

Swords & daggers
Speaker's rulings & statements (20:06:90) 1061-2

Sylvan School Croydon
128

Syrian Arab Republic
Diplomatic relations 464-5
Lockerbie 399w

Tachographs
Standard enforcement 187w
Working hours 187w

Tactical nuclear weapons
274, 379w, 541w
Middle East 274
Modernisation 274-5
USA 118w, 258w

Tai Cymru
see Housing for Wales

Tain bombing range
Noise control 546w

Taiwan
Foreign policy 561w

Takeovers
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 581w
Plessey 582w

Tanker ships
Western Isles 153w

Tanks
Army 324-5w
CFE talks 543w

Tate Gallery
185-6w

Tax allowances
British Aerospace 916
Capital gains tax 414w
Charities 377w
Enterprise zones 293w
Scotland 377w

Tax burden
796
Regional development grants 920

Tax collection
Community charge 478w

Tax evasion
Road tax 71w

Tax thresholds
Costs 215w

Taxation
Actors 20w
Cultural heritage 14
Personal income 151-2w

Taylor, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Catheters, Prescription charges exemptions (14:06:90) 584-6, 588, 590
Questions
Drinking Water Inspectorate 633w
Drinking Water Inspectorate, Professional qualifications 740w
Genetic engineering, Industrial health & safety 304-5w
North Sea, International conferences 295w
Water meters 634w

Taylor, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 143
Questions
Active citizenship 458-9
Office of Arts & Libraries, Finance 44w
School administration, Budgetin 170w
Transport, London docklands 65-6w

Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Debates etc.
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1132
Standing Order No 20 applications, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community (20:06:90) 928
Questions
Aircraft noise, Helicopters 645w
Bellingham, Henry, House of Commons questions 416w
Bridges, Irish Sea 349w
Contraceptives, Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 518w
Courts, Armagh 290w
Cyprus, Foreign policy 384w
Departmental responsibilities, Rockall 9w
Family courts, Northern Ireland 289-90w
Government assistance to industry, Civil service manpower 916
Hospital beds, Swindon Health Authority 34-5w
Hospital beds, West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority 400w

Taylor, Rt Hon John David—continued
Marine nature reserves, Strangford Lough 1106-7
Northern Ireland Office, Ministers' domestic visits 366w
Police, Cyprus 427w
Republic of Ireland, Shopping 277, 497w
Roads, Strathclyde 611-2w
School closures, Gloucestershire 24w
School closures, Norfolk 353w
Southern Health & Social Services Board, Public appointments 284-5w
Summertime, Northern Ireland 457
Travel allowances, EC law 596w
Travel allowances, Republic of Ireland 651-2w

Taylor, Mr John M, Lord Commissioner of the Treasury
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1083-4

Taylor, Kevin
Trials 197w, 389w, 429w

Taylor, Mr Matthew
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 515-8
Questions
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Disease control 332w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Milk 135w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Offal 134-5w
Business, Rent increases 564w
Creutzfeldt-Jakob dementia, Regional health authorities 237w
Eggs, Salmonella 470w
Flags of convenience 68w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 121
Science & Engineering Research Council, Computers 354w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Agricultural research 332w

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 437-40
Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community, Standing Order No 20 applications (20:06:90) 923-4
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 152
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 242-3, 258
Standing Order No 20 applications (20:06:90) 923
Questions
Architects, Free movement of labour 419w
British citizenship, Hong Kong 431-2w
Channel tunnel, Motor vehicles 189w
Channel tunnel, Security 188-9w
Common agricultural policy, Food prices 667w
Company law, Prosecutions 387w
Defence expenditure 534w
East Germany, EC external relations 487w
European Investment Bank, Loans 21w, 484w
Eurotunnel, Loans 21w
Exhaust emission controls 154w
Felgate, Lorne, Special education 183w
Housing associations, House purchase 567-8w
Immigration, EC nationals 312-3w
Judgments, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community 1108
Official engagements 668-9w
Social security benefits rules, Macao 432w

Taylor Inquiry
see Hillsborough Stadium Inquiry

TCS
see Crown Suppliers

Teacher training
Adult education 682w
Articled teachers 220-3w

***Teacher training**—continued*
Basic education 123w
Handicapped students 459w
School holidays 457w
Shortage subjects 130-1
Special education 713-4w
Student grants 130-1

Teachers
Average earnings 655w
Criminal records 101w, 183-4w
Dyslexia 491-2w
Grant maintained schools 178w
Greater London 126-7, 167-8w, 174w
Manpower 181w
North Eastern Education & Library Board 519-20w
Pay 124-5, 177w
Pay settlements 177w, 655w
Professional organisations 171w
Recruitment 174-5w
Resignations 227w
South East region 125
Vacancies 125-7, 167-8w
Wales 655w
Welsh language 227w
Working hours 519-20w

Teaching hospitals
Finance 274w

Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 307, 308-12, 320, 340-6, 350, 351, 352-3, 369-70, 372, 374, 387-9, 398, 429-30, 431-3

Technical & vocational education initiative
Expenditure 463-6w, 670w
Lancashire Education Authority 670w
Local education authorities 604w

Technical assistance
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 261w
Nuclear power 8w

Technology transfer
Government grants 640-1w
Middle East 329w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 285w

Telecommunications Act 1984
Questions
189w

Telephone exchanges
Deaf 52w

Telephone services
Passport Office 666w

Telephones
Falkland Islands 495w
Members' facilities 106w
Obscenity 189w

Televising Proceedings of the House Select Committee
398w

Television
House of Commons broadcasting 398w
House of Commons Select Committees 107-9w

Television advertising
Electricity supply industry 288w

Television licences
Northern Ireland 110-1w

Television programmes
EC action 304w
Environment protection 159w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 691w

Temple-Morris, Mr Peter
Questions
Iran, Diplomatic relations 279

Temporary immigrants
China 571w
Colombia 659w

***Temporary immigrants**—continued*
Political refugees 16w

10 Downing Street
Official hospitality 405w

Ten minutes rule
Speaker's rulings & statements (19:06:90) 805, 852, 864

Tenants' choice
Housing Corporation 565w

Tenants' incentive scheme
567-8w, 637-9w

Territorial Army
Armed forces recruitment 548w
Defence expenditure 328w

Terrorism
460-1
Death 518w
Extradition 1102
International cooperation 458
Israel 272-4, 560-1w
Members' correspondence 101w
Netherlands 792-3
Northern Ireland 518w, 1100-1, 1105
Trevi Group 316w

Testing
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 332w

Textile industry
Balance of trade 590w, 914-5
East Midlands 915
Redundancy 914-5

Textiles
Exports 915
GATT 596-7w

Thames Valley Police
74w

Thamesmead
Underground railways 445w

***Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret**, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service*
Debates etc.
USSR, Ministerial statements (12:06:90) 137-53
Questions
Advisory Council on Science & Technology, Public appointments 99w
Air pollution control, Carbon dioxide 798
Banks, Companies 133
Bradford 269w
British Museum (Natural History), Collections 557w
Building societies, Pay 136
Channel tunnel, Railway network 133, 463-4
Child abuse, Departmental coordination 99w
Child abuse, Sexual offences 365-6w
Child Abuse Interdepartmental Group, Public appointments 365w
Common agricultural policy, Food prices 667w
Community care 800
Community charge 667w
Departmental responsibilities, Rockall 9w
Dept of Health, Members' correspondence 269w
East Germany, EC external relations 487w
EC external relations, Eastern Europe 136
EC social charter, Part-time employment 466-8
Economic & monetary union 135-6
Economic & monetary union, European currency unit 1108-11
Economic policy 132-4, 405w
Economic policy, Disclosure of information 405w
Economic situation, Scotland 1109-10
Educational aid, Armenia 747w
Energy consumption, Cabinet Office 747w
Environment protection, Costs 799-800

***Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret**—continued*
Environment protection, USSR 96w
European Communities 133
European Parliament 486w
Film industry 487w
Finchley 667w
Fisheries, Compensation 486w
Former ministers, Privatisation 134, 795-6
Government departments, Disclosure of information 10w
Greenhouse effect, Chlorofluorocarbons 798
Greenhouse effect, Energy conservation 798
Greenhouse effect, International conferences 797-8
Greenhouse effect, International cooperation 486w
Greenhouse effect, Research 487-8w
Hong Kong, Ivory 9w
Housing, Greater London 96w
Human rights, Romania 1110
Inflation 796-7
Inflation, EC countries 466
International Whaling Commission 99w
Ipswich Airport, Regional airports 1111-2
Judgments, Parliamentary sovereignty & European Community 1108
Lebanon, Hostages 464-5
Management consultants, Cabinet Office 97-9w
Methyl chloroform, Air pollution control 269w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 466
Midland Montagu 132
Military alliances, Nuclear power 668w
Ministerial policy advisors, Economic policy 406w
Ministers' visits abroad, USSR 747-8w
Mobility allowance, Handicapped children 131-2
Moyle, Jonathan, Death 207w
NHS finance 799
North Sea, Sewage 487w
Nuclear fuels, Exports 96w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, USSR 486w
Official engagements 100w, 269-70w, 488w, 668-9w
Official hospitality, 10 Downing Street 405w
Opposition parties, Finance 269w
Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, Local enterprise companies 9w
Prime Minister, Ministerial policy advisors 132
Prime Minister, Ministers' visits abroad 270-1w, 668w
Public expenditure, House of Commons Select Committees 463
Railway freight transport, Scotland 1110
Railway network, Capital investment 465
Rainham 667w
Ravenscraig steelworks, Factory closures 466
Rivers, Government grants 9w
Road traffic, South London 134
Rushdie, Salman, Police protection 10w
School choice, Racial discrimination 134-5
Schools, Bradford 667w
Science & Technology Select Committee (HL) 748w
Social workers' failures, Manpower 1107-8
Soviet studies, University teachers 406w
Squatting, Law reform 797
Tax burden 796
United Nations 486w
USSR, Baltic Republics of USSR 465-6
USSR, Ecology 405w
USSR, Ministers' visits abroad 405-6w
USSR, Overseas aid 366w
Vallin Pollen International, Ministers' domestic visits 487w
Wallace, Colin 207w
Wealth distribution 10w
Zimbabwe, Human rights 667w

Theatres
Greater London 12

Theft
Livestock 501w
Official secrets 720w

Theme parks
Rainham Marshes 425-6w

Thermal insulation
Home energy efficiency scheme 288w

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 824, 862-4
European Communities (11:06:90) 25
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 146
Questions
Civil defence, Local government functions 570w
Curriculum, Wales 439w
Defence land, National parks 790
EUREKA, Environment protection 640w
Gas gathering, North Sea 656w
Government laboratories, Finance 16w
Guided weapons, Defence research 647-8w
Hazardous wastes, Romania 600w
Higher education, Student numbers 736-8w
International Atomic Energy Agency 718-9w
Manual workers, Pay 603w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, USSR 486w
Nuclear power stations, Nuclear safety 717-8w
Nuclear safeguards 718w
Over-the-horizon radar 536w
Ozone, Air pollution monitoring 675
Polychlorinated biphenyl, EC law 632w
Railway travel, Railway network 563w
Research, Dept of the Environment 737-8w
Saudi Arabia, Drug crimes 560w
Suckler cow premiums 736w
University of Wales, Student numbers 457w

Thompson, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Business questions intervention (21:06:90) 1111, 1113
Educational administration, Calderdale (21:06:90) 1227-31
Questions
Civil servants, Recruitment 17
Foreign investment in UK 591w
Secondary education, Calderdale 123
Sites of special scientific interest 417w

Thompson, Mr Jack
Debates etc.
Training, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 532-5
Questions
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 922
Overseas aid, Forest protection 397w
Trident, Arms control negotiations 535w

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Questions
Access funds 130
Cultural heritage, Finance 13
Defence, NATO 542w
Employment level, Northern Ireland 688w
Nutrition & health 336w
Roads, Capital investment 58w

Thompson, Peter
Public petitions (22:06:90) 1235

Thorne, Mr Neil
Questions
Trade promotion, Romania 209w

Thornton, Mr Malcolm
Questions
Air routes, Competition 59w

3D
City grants 481-2w

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 947, 952, 986-9, 1012, 1015, 1020, 1026-7, 1032

Thurnham, Mr Peter—continued
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1179, 1193
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Public order offences 322w
Arms control 379w
Devolution, Northern Ireland 692w
Eastern Europe, International cooperation 256w
Gamete intrafallopian transfer treatment, Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists 516-7w
House renovation grants, Private sector housing 639w
Overseas trade, Profitability 211w
Transplant surgery, Special health authorities 35w

Tickets
Touting 321w

Tigre
394-5w

Time limits
(21:06:90) 1136-224

Times
288

Tinnitus
Research finance 120-1

Tipping of waste
Costs 569w
Defence land 328w
Pirbright range 722w

Tobacco duties
EC countries 734-6w

Torbay
Customs & Excise 336-7w

Torfaen Borough Council
Sunday trading 455, 551-2w

Tornado aircraft
(18:06:90) 687-774

Torr Head
349w

Tour operators
Holiday accommodation 642w

Tourism
Devon 54w
Sea pollution 54w

Tourist attractions
North West region 600-2w

Tourist industry
Beaches 198w
EC grants & loans 55w
Manpower 670w

Tourists
Death 684w
Fishing 125w

Touting
Tickets 321w

Townend, Mr John
Questions
Fisheries, Decommissioning grants 131w

Townsend, Mr Cyril D
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 496
Questions
Armed forces strength 545w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 466
Palestine, Peace negotiations 253-4w

Toxic shock syndrome
508w
Death 35-6w

Tracey, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 497

Trade agreements
Service industries 213w

Trade barriers
Whisky 652w

Trade competitiveness
Manufacturing industries 585w

Trade fairs
Chile 795

Trade promotion
Bulgaria 209w
Romania 209w
Sheep meat 284w

Trade Union Act 1984 (Amendment) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (22:06:90) 1299

Trade union membership
Police civilians 16w

Trading standards departments
211w, 587w

Trafalgar Square
192-4w

Traffic areas
475-6w

Traffic wardens
Training 665-6w

Trafford Park
Incinerators 737-8w

Trafford Park Development Corporation
200w

Training
Armed forces discharges 142w
Disabled workers 50w, 129-30w
Estimates days (14:06:90) 502-42
Mentally ill 263w, 343w
Orkney 50w
Prison staff 664-5w
Prisoners' release 604w
Redundancy 670-1
Scotland 343w
Shetland 50w
Traffic wardens 665-6w

Training Agency
50w, 227-30w, 442w, 577-80w
Contracts 251-2w
Employment training 603w
Mentally disadvantaged 54w, 245w

Training allowances
Youth training 463w

Training & enterprise councils
427w, (14:06:90) 502-42, 578w, 670-1
Expenditure 263-4w
Managers 603w
Per capita costs 577w
Wales 577w

Trans European mobility scheme for university students
181w

Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988
Questions
290w

Transitional relief
1w, 197w
Community charge 224-5w
Wales 224-5w

Transmissible encephalopathies
135w, 468w
Agricultural research 332w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 332-3w
Dogs 79-80w
Hound ataxia 82w
Pets 378-9w, 471-2w
Pigs 620-1w
Scrapie 622w

Transplant surgery
Special health authorities 35w, 509w

Transport
EC internal trade 679-80w
Environment protection 473w
London docklands 65-6w
Scotland 679-80w

Transport & Road Research Laboratory
474w

Transport infrastructure
Inner city areas 11-2

Transport of animals
Animal welfare 334w
Nature conservation 633-4w

Transport of hazardous materials
Northern Ireland 693w

Transport of radioactive materials
6
Channel tunnel 304w
Customs & Excise 151w
Ferries 5-6
Ministry of Defence 32w
Nuclear weapons 435w, 534w

Transport police
London Underground 628w

Transport subsidies
Competition law 72w
Network SouthEast 64w
Railway transport 72w

Travel
Dogs 60w
Safety 64-5w

Travel allowances
EC law 596w
Republic of Ireland 651-2w

Travel requirements
Eastern Europe 41w

Travelling expenses
Welsh Water 94w
Welsh Water Authority 94w

Treasury & Civil Service Select Committee
31w

Treaties
Air transport 69-70w
Custody 645w
Germany 495-6w
Legal aid 645w
Nature conservation 40-1w
Western European Union 494-5w

Treaty of Rome
Sunday trading 429w

Treaty of Tlatelolco
British dependent territories 41w

Tredinnick, Mr David
Debates etc.
Robens Institute of Industrial & Environmental Health & Safety, Spectroscopy (19:06:90) 900-3, 905
Questions
GATT, Footwear industry 597w
Prison population 317-8w

Trevi Group
104w, 458
Criminal records 104w
Drug crimes 316w
Political refugees 104w
Terrorism 316w

Trials
Prisoners on remand 451-2
Taylor, Kevin 197w, 389w, 429w

Trident
541w
Arms control negotiations 535w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 261w

Trident missiles
AWE Cardiff 382w
Defence expenditure 244w

Trident missiles—continued
Safety 435w

Trident submarines
Defence procurement 541w

Triethylene glycol
291w

Trimble, Mr David
Questions
Belfast Prison, Violence 687w
Northern Ireland, Sovereignty 560w
Ulster Museum, Exhibitions 1098

Trippier, Mr David, Minister for the Environment and Countryside
Questions
Air pollution control, Petrol 157-8w
Alternative energy, Waste disposal 414-6w
Archaeological sites, Metal detectors 357w
Architects, Free movement of labour 419w
Beaches, Radiation hazards 159w
Beaches, Sea pollution 480-1w
Bellingham, Henry, House of Commons questions 416w
Birds, Italy 740w
Birds, Nature conservation 356w
British Museum (Natural History), Environmental policy 741w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Waste disposal 414w
Coastal areas, Radioactivity 477w
Common land, Legislation 157w, 416-7w
Countryside 532w
Drinking Water Inspectorate 633w
Drinking Water Inspectorate, Professional qualifications 740w
Droughts, Birds 291w
EC Environment Council 159-61w
Environment protection, Government departments 737w
Environmental policy, Fossils 567w
Foxes, Urban areas 357w
Greenhouse effect, Science & technology research 293w
Hazardous wastes, Exports 634w
Hazardous wastes, Imports 290w
Hazardous wastes, Romania 600w
Hazardous wastes, Waste disposal 634w
Housing & handicapped, House renovation grants 295w
Incinerators, Alternative energy 415-6w
Incinerators, Greenhouse effect 415w
Incinerators, Trafford Park 737-8w
Mineral waters, Departmental responsibilities 204-5w
Nature conservation, EC action 157w, 159-61w
Nature conservation, Transport of animals 633-4w
North Sea, International conferences 295w
Nuclear accidents, Dept of the Environment 358w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Radioactive waste disposal 418w
Otters, East Anglia 157w
Ozone, Air pollution monitoring 294w
Ozone layer, Air pollution control 295w, 416w, 631w
Polychlorinated biphenyl, EC law 632w
Polychlorinated biphenyl, Incinerators 632-3w
Radioactive waste disposal, Licensing 566-7w
Radioactive waste disposal, Pollution monitoring 566w
Red squirrels, Nature conservation 156-7w
Sea pollution, Birds 291w
Sites of special scientific interest 417w
Waste disposal, Insulation 564w
Waste paper, Prices 158w
Water meters 634w
Westminster Abbey, Security 161w

Tritium
Nuclear safeguards 8w

Trotter, Mr Neville
Questions
Drift nets, North East region 378w
Salmon, Inquiries 454w

Trout
128-9w
Agricultural research 128w
Fish conservation 125w
Loch Coruisk 125w
Salmon Advisory Committee 128w
Scotland 128w

TRRL
see Transport & Road Research Laboratory

Trust ports
(13:06:90) 410

Trusts
Scottish courts 347w

Tuberculosis
HIV infection 374w, 452w
Regional health authorities 38-40w
Vaccination 38w

Tuna
House of Commons catering 297w

Turbines
DREH Resources 7w

Turkey
Penal reform 494w
Political prisoners 494w
Prisoners' release 399w

Turner, Mr Dennis
Questions
AWE Aldermaston, Construction 543w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 579w
Crime, Warwickshire 308w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 172w

Turtles
Isle of Wight 333w
Nature conservation 333w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Questions
Grant maintained schools 119
International cooperation, Drug crimes 276
Ministry of Defence, Environment protection 545-6w
Police custody, Prisoners on remand 461
Road accidents, Death 695-6w
USSR, Baltic Republics of USSR 465-6

Tyne & Wear
Enterprise zones 566w
Road traffic 6-7

Tyne & Wear Development Corporation
Employment opportunities 296w

Type 23 frigates
Defence procurement 535w

Tyrrell Committee
see Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee

UFAW
see Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare

UFC
see Universities' Funding Council

UK contributions
European Development Bank 378w
International Service for National Agricultural Research 276-7w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees 681
Western European Union 545w

UK Transplant Service
35w

UK Transplant Service Implementation Study
35w, 509w

UKAEA
see United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

Ulster Defence Regiment
Compensation 783-4
Death 689w
Recruitment 537w

Ulster Museum
Exhibitions 1098

UN
see United Nations

UN Convention on Human Rights
1104-5

UN Environment programme
122-3

UN Fund for Population Activities
716w

UN General Assembly
Cambodia 283-4

UN High Commissioner for Refugees
393-4w, 496-7w
UK contributions 681

UN Industrial Development Organisation
122-3

UN Relief & Works Agency
120w

UN Transition Assistance Group
789
Namibia 544w

Under-Fives Education Inquiry
182w

Under-fives initiative
554w

Undergraduate Medical & Dental Education Steering Group
401w, 555-6w

Underground railways
Death 562-3w
Thamesmead 445w

Unemployed
Income support 165w

Unemployment
601-2w
Burnley 461w
Colne Valley 602w
Londonderry 208w
Northern Ireland 697w
Pendle 461w
Unemployment benefits 116w
Wales 439w

Unemployment benefit offices
462w, 670-1w, 710w
Office closures 305w

Unemployment benefits
Average earnings 522w
Departmental forms 117w
Interviews 117w
Social security benefits disqualification 166-7w
Students 524w
Unemployment 116w
Vacancies 602w

UNEP
see UN Environment programme

UNFPA
see UN Fund for Population Activities

UNHCR
see UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Uniform business rate
Cost of living 294-5w
Enterprise zones 566w
Holiday accommodation 199w
Parish councils 199w

United Engineering Steels
113w, 668-9
Government grants 113w

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority
1w, 8w, 238-9w, 375w
Nuclear physics 363-4w

United Kingdom Optical
Standing Order No 20 applications (14:06:90) 501

United Nations
400w, 486w, 789
Cambodia 259w

United Parcels Service
RAE Bedford 547-8w

Universities
Civil servants' background 16
EC grants & loans 460w
Educational finance 506w
Expenditure 223-4w
Student numbers 457w

Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare
194-5w

Universities' Funding Council
24w

University of Wales
Student numbers 457w

University teachers
Pay settlements 277-8w
Soviet studies 406w

Unparliamentary expressions
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:06:90) 249, (19:06:90) 801, 802, 803, (20:06:90) 921-2, 1080

UNRWA
see UN Relief & Works Agency

UNTAG
see UN Transition Assistance Group

UPS
see United Parcels Service

Urban areas
Environment protection 6-7w
Foxes 357w
Military exercises 540w
Roads 69w

Urban development corporations
Disabled workers 200w

Urban development grants
Glasgow 448-9w
Strathclyde 449w

Urban programme
Inverclyde 617-8w
Sunderland 203w

Urban regeneration grants
481w

US bases
Holy Loch 646w

USA
Air routes 356w
Air transport 70w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 399w
Cruise missiles 435w
Defence 543w
Nuclear submarines 328w
Nuclear weapons tests 243w
Tactical nuclear weapons 118w, 258w

USSR
Arms control negotiations 383w
Baltic Republics of USSR 285, 465-6
Conventional weapons 544w
Defence 537w
Ecology 405w
Emigration 384w
Environment protection 96w
Ministerial statements (12:06:90) 137-53
Ministers' visits abroad 405-6w, 539w, 747-8w
Navy 540w

USSR—continued
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 486w
Overseas aid 366w
Prime Minister (12:06:90) 137-53
South Korea 385w

Vacancies
Teachers 125-7, 167-8w
Unemployment benefits 602w

Vacant land registers
Administrative costs 565w

Vaccination
Drug side effects 671w
Ethnic minorities 672w
Handicapped 671w
Inner city areas 671-2w
Preventive medicine 671w
Take-up 671-2w
Tuberculosis 38w

Vale of Glamorgan (Barry Harbour) Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (14:06:90) 450, (21:06:90) 1093

Vallin Pollen International
Ministers' domestic visits 487w

Vanunu, Mordechai
Israel 40w

VAT
Listed buildings 414w
Repairs & maintenance 414w
Sanitary protection 735w

VAT exempted goods
Sports 151w

VAT registration
483-4w

VAT repayment
Housing construction 483w

Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Questions
Science & technology research, Research finance 216w, 423-4w

Vaynor Community Council
677

Vaz, Mr Keith
Questions
Accountants 306w
Double glazing, Housing construction 479w
Drug crimes, Crime prevention 316w
Financial Services Act 1986 306w
Footwear industry, Government assistance 595w
Israel, Immigration controls 254-5w
Israel, Richardson, John 254-5w
Life imprisonment, Prisoners' release 18-9w, 28w
Metropolitan Police, Complaints against police 19w
Motor vehicles, Wheelchairs 71-2w
National Lottery Bill 1989/90 501w
Refugees, China 190-1w
Sanitary protection 750w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 172w
Social Fund, Social security claims 608w
Society of Chartered Accountants 378w
Students, Housing benefits 523w
Toxic shock syndrome 508w
Turkey, Prisoners' release 399w
VAT, Sanitary protection 735w
Widows' benefits, Income support 707w
Widows' benefits, Social security recipients 607w

Vehicle Inspectorate
188w

Veterinary drugs
EC action (21:06:90) 1225
Environment protection 80-1w

Veterinary Products Committee
81w, 648-9w

Veterinary services
EC internal trade (21:06:90) 1225-6
Slaughterhouses 82w, 622w

Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering
Security 139w

Video links
570w

Video Recorded Evidence Advisory Group
570w

Video recordings
Children 317w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 261w
Retail trade 317w

Vietnam
Overseas aid 275-6w, 391w

Vietnamese refugees
Hong Kong 681-2
Repatriation 496-7w

Viggers, Mr Peter
Questions
Crime victims, Crimes of violence 314-5w
War widows' pensions, Army in Northern Ireland 784

Violence
Belfast Prison 687w

Viruses
Sewage 200w

Visas
Eastern Europe 256w

Voluntary organisations
Community charge 613-4w
EC free food scheme 469w
Local government expenditure 203w
Scotland 613-4w

Vote bundle
Costs 109-10w
House of Commons questions 237w
Paper 109-10w

W79 shells
787

***Waddington, Rt Hon David**, Secretary of State for the Home Department*
Debates etc.
Privacy & Press Law Review, Ministerial statements (21:06:90) 1125-34
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 311w, 453-4, 459-61
Energy consumption, Home Office 430-1w
Evidence, Bombings 310-1w
Management consultants, Home Office 571-2w
Miscarriages of justice, Bombings 460
Police, Channel tunnel 11w
Police housing, Rent allowances 663w
Rushdie, Salman, Police protection 13-4w
Terrorism 460-1
Terrorism, Members' correspondence 101w
Trevi Group 104w
Trevi Group, Political refugees 104w

Wages Act 1986
Questions
57w

Wages councils
462w
Homeworking 56w
Manpower 57w
Minimum wage 57-8w
Pay 57w
Questionnaires 57w

Wages Inspectorate
56-8w
Civil service manpower 58w

Wakefield
469w

***Wakeham, Rt Hon John**, Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
British Nuclear Fuels, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 288-9w
Electricity generation, Greenhouse effect 363-5w
Hinkley Point C, Public inquiries 287w
Management consultants, Dept of Energy 362w
Oil industry, Export promotion 485w
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Nuclear physics 363-4w

***Waldegrave, Rt Hon William**, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office*
Questions
Albania, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 261-2w
Arms control 42-3w
Arms control negotiations, Navy 300w
Arms control negotiations, USSR 383w
British dependent territories, Treaty of Tlatelolco 41w
British embassies, Death 683-4w
British nationality, Death 684w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 383-4w
Czechoslovakia, Elections 258-9w
Developing countries, Nuclear non proliferation 275
East Africa, Peace negotiations 282-3
Eastern Europe, Antisemitism 386w
Eastern Europe, International cooperation 256w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 256w
Eastern Europe, Travel requirements 41w
European Economic Community 497w
European Economic Community, Nuclear non proliferation 260w
European Security Conference, Human rights 258w
Falkland Islands, Telephones 495w
Foreign policy, Defence review 300w
Germany, Foreign policy 256-7w
Germany, Treaties 495-6w
Hong Kong, Ivory 685-7w
Indian subcontinent, Nuclear non proliferation 118w
Iran, Diplomatic relations 279-80
Iran, Foreign relations 561w
Iraq 254w
Israel, Armed forces 400w
Israel, Immigration controls 254-5w
Israel, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 40w
Israel, Occupied territories 254w
Israel, Palestine 286
Israel, Peace negotiations 286-8, 299-300w
Israel, Richardson, John 254-5w
Israel, Terrorism 560-1w
Israel, Vanunu, Mordechai 40w
Japan, Porpoises 684w
Lebanon, Hostages 253w
Liberia, Overseas aid 386w
Libyan Arab Republic, Foreign relations 257-8w
Lithuania 263w
Middle East, Hostages 279-80
Middle East, Nuclear non proliferation 275-6
Middle East, Peace negotiations 253-4w
Myanmar, Elections 561w
Namibia, Debts 392w
Nuclear disarmament, Arms control negotiations 119w
Nuclear free zones 41-2w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing, Nuclear non proliferation 262w
Nuclear non proliferation, International conferences 262w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 43w, 260w, 683w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Arms control negotiations 240w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 42w, 118-9w, 260-1w

***Waldegrave, Rt Hon William**—continued*
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Non-governmental organisations 261w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Technical assistance 261w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Trident 261w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Video recordings 261w
Oman, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species 683w
Open skies proposals, International conferences 263w
Palestine, Death 120w
Palestine, Peace negotiations 253-4w
Poland, Frontiers 497w
Republic of Ireland, Shopping 497w
Romania, Elections 256w, 287
Romania, Foreign relations 256w
Romania, Know-how Fund 399w
Romania, Overseas aid 43w
Saudi Arabia, Drug crimes 560w
South Africa, Arms trade 119w
South Africa, Constitutions 255w
South Africa, Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 119w
South Africa, Political parties 255w
Syrian Arab Republic, Lockerbie 399w
Taiwan, Foreign policy 561w
Tourists, Death 684w
Treaties, Nature conservation 40-1w
Turkey, Penal reform 494w
Turkey, Political prisoners 494w
USA, Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 399w
USA, Tactical nuclear weapons 118w, 258w
USSR, Emigration 384w
Vietnamese refugees, Repatriation 496-7w
Western European Union, Armed forces deployment 494w
Western European Union, Defence 494w
Western European Union, Frontiers 495w
Western European Union, Low flying 121w
Western European Union, Treaties 494-5w
Yemen, Foreign relations 385-6w
Yemen, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 119w
Yemen, Nuclear test ban 118w

Walden, Mr George
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 318, 322, 408-9
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 721
European Communities (11:06:90) 101-2

Wales
Acid rain 85w, 338w
Alternative medicine 84w
Ambulance services 86-7w
Armed forces deployment 33w
Arson 190w
Arthritis 225w
Beaches 93w, 227w, 443w, 492w, 578w
Beef 27w, 87w, 224w, 339w, 671-2
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 342-3w
Bypasses 226w
Channel tunnel 443w
Children Act 1989 737w
Community charge 87-8w, 224w, 440w, 675-7
Community councils 438w, 677
Curriculum 439w
Deaf 442-3w
Diabetes 94w
District health authorities 93w, 437-8w
Dyslexia 491-2w
Eggs 24w
Employment schemes 578-80w
Employment training 93w, 439w, 670-1
Engineers 443w
Eye tests 441w, 492w, 577w, 654w
Family credit 52-3w
Family doctors 492-3w
Farm woodland scheme 85-6w
Flexi-ownership scheme 578w
Floods 440w
Glaucoma 94w, 441w
Grant maintained schools 341w

Wales—continued
Hazardous wastes 655-6w
Heart diseases 339-41w
Higher education 736-8w
History education 94-5w, 439w
HIV infection 95w
House renovation grants 25w, 224w, 441w
Housing & elderly 441w
Housing problems 492w
Income support 52-3w, 216w
Infant mortality 84-6w
Iron & steel industry 84w
Local authority powers 341w
Loft insulation 94w
Menopause 24w
Mental health services 26w
Mentally handicapped 24-5w
Myodil 342w, 367w
National parks 340w
NHS finance 341w
NHS hospital trusts 341w
Nurses' training 83w
Opencast mining 440-1w
Ophthalmic services 27w, 227w
Ophthalmology 93-4w
Optical charges exemptions 227w, 339w
Ozone 675
Planning appeals 366-8w
Police custody 573w
Pollution monitoring 226w
Project 2000 439w
Psychiatric nurses 338w
Pupil-teacher ratios 367-8w
Rheumatology 226w
Road traffic 25w
School administration 369w, 667
School leaving 231w
School meals 225w
School population 89-92w
Schools 87-92w, 369w
Sheep 337w
Special education 491w
Teachers 655w
Training & enterprise councils 577w
Transitional relief 224-5w
Unemployment 439w
Water supply industry 438w
Youth training 227-30w
Youth training scheme 230-2w, 578w

Wales Council for the Deaf
442-3w

Walker, Mr Bill
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 856-8
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 163, 204-7
Summertime, Public petitions (18:06:90) 775
Questions
British Steel Corporation, Industrial relations 911-2
Business statements 476-7
Economic situation, Scotland 1109-10
Family doctors, Budgeting 124-5w

Walker, Mr A Cecil
Questions
Community workshops, Finance 692w
Community workshops, Northern Ireland 1106

Wallace, Colin
34w, 207w
Convictions 196w
Inquiries 542-3w

Wallace, Mr James
Questions
BBC, Radio 321w
British Steel Corporation, Ravenscraig steelworks 583w
Business statements 471-2, 1115
Duty free allowances, EC internal trade 21w
International Whaling Commission 99w
Nature conservation, EC action 157w
Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, Local enterprise companies 9w

Wallace, Mr James—continued
Radio frequencies, Educational broadcasting 100w
Training, Orkney 50w

Walley, Ms Joan
Questions
Air pollution control, Carbon dioxide 798
Air pollution control, Petrol 157-8w
British Museum (Natural History) 152w
CFE talks, Tanks 543w
Common land, Legislation 157w
"Economics of the Environment" 2w
Environment, Conferences 4-5w
Environmental impact assessment, EC law 2w
Hazardous wastes, Exports 634w
Hazardous wastes, Imports 655-6w, 746w
House of Commons publications, Paper 110w
Industrial wastes, Waste disposal 209w
Motor vehicles, Exhaust emission controls 187w
Nature conservation, EC action 159-61w
Otters, East Anglia 157w
Palace of Westminster, Recycling 3w
Paper, Recycling 111w
Recycling, International conferences 564w
Red squirrels, Nature conservation 156-7w
Road construction, Countryside 187w
Sand, Druridge Bay 2w
Toxic shock syndrome, Death 35-6w
Water storage, Algae 4w

Walsall
Local government finance 1w

Walters, Alan
132

Wandsworth Borough Council
Social workers' failures 1107-8

War crimes
Criminal investigation 320w
Japan 196w

War pensions
Nuclear weapons tests 215w

War widows' pensions
Army in Northern Ireland 783-4

Ward, Mr John
Questions
Government assistance to industry, Civil service manpower 916
Social security abuse, Efficiency scrutinies 709w

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Questions
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 579w
Community councils, Wales 438w
Employees' contributions 406w
HIV infection, Regional health authorities 236-8w
HIV infection, Scotland 451w
HIV infection, Tuberculosis 374w, 452w
HIV infection, Wales 95w
Invalidity benefits, Retirement pensions 407w
Tuberculosis, Regional health authorities 38-40w

Wareing, Mr Robert N
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 367, 372
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 150
Questions
Bailiffs, Manpower 731w
Certificated bailiffs, Examinations 732-3w
Certificated bailiffs, Manpower 733w
County court bailiffs, Educational qualifications 731-2w
County court bailiffs, Manpower 733w
Defence, Europe 535w
Romania, Foreign relations 256w
Sheriff officers, Scotland 745w

Warning signs

Warning signs—continued
M40 74w

Warren, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 141
Questions
Industrial development, Government assistance to industry 425w
Universities, EC grants & loans 460w
USA, Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 399w

Warsaw Pact
(12:06:90) 137-53, (18:06:90) 687-774
Defence contracts 537-8w

Warships
539w, 646-7w
Fishery protection 541-2w
Navy strength 545w
Nuclear weapons 140w, 196w
Royal Fleet Auxiliary 646w

Warwickshire
Crime 308w
Police 316w

Waste disposal
Alternative energy 414-6w, 432w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 80w
Chemical weapons 32-3w
Chlorofluorocarbons 414w
Contracts for services 568-9w
Explosives 550w, 615-6w
Firth of Clyde 613w
Hazardous wastes 1w, 634w
Health hazards 246w
Incinerators 345w
Industrial wastes 209w
Insulation 564w
Insurance 634w
Liverpool Bay 88w
North West Water Group (13:06:90) 441-8
Planning appeals 345w
Pollution control 246w
Polychlorinated biphenyl 738w
Scotland 246w, 345w
Seas & oceans 550w
Sewage 633w

Waste management
418w

Waste paper
Prices 158w

Water charges
198w

Water meters
634w
Costs 198w

Water pollution
Camelford 403w
Coastal areas (13:06:90) 441-8
Firth of Clyde 613w
Norman Shaw buildings 296w
Scotland 445-6w
West Firle 418w

Water Research Centre
480-1w

Water storage
Algae 4w

Water supply
Aluminium 678w
Alzheimer's disease 678-9w
Capital investment 247-8w
Lead 445-6w
Scotland 245-6w

Water Supply & Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 1989
Questions
418w

Water supply industry
Competition 199w
Hunterprint 6w

Water supply industry—continued
Privatisation 6w
Wales 438w
Yorkshire & Humberside 199w

Water treatment
Aluminium 635w
Desalination 357w, 362w
Scotland 349w

Waterloo Station
20w
Customs 72w

Wath upon Dearne
Dept of Social Security local offices 407w
Social Fund 407w

Watson, Mr Mike
Questions
Air pollution control, Overseas aid 11w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 579w
Student loans 179w
Sunday trading, Legislation 102-3w

Watts, Mr John
Questions
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 537w
EC external relations, Eastern Europe 136
School administration, Budgeting 171w

Watts, Joseph
274w

Wave power
Research finance 433w

WDA
see Welsh Development Agency

Wealth distribution
10w

Weather
Low flying 139w

Wells, Mr Bowen
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1049
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 318-23, 343, 397, 405-6, 415-6
European Communities (11:06:90) 29, 41
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 142
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 240, 248

Welsh, Mr Andrew
Questions
Chlorofluorocarbons, Waste disposal 414w
Community charge, Official residences 745w
Computers, Safety standards 598-9w
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 62-3w
East Germany, EC external relations 285
Electronic equipment, Safety standards 599w
Fisheries, Shellfish 681w
Hazardous wastes, Imports 246w, 290w
Hazardous wastes, Incinerators 345w
Health hazards, Hazardous wastes 232w
Lead pipes, House renovation grants 48w, 247w
Lead poisoning, Scotland 124w
Lead pollution, Publicity 246-7w
Nuclear weapons, River Clyde 533w
School boards, Educational finance 745w
Schools, Operating costs 744w
Shellfish, Health warnings 651w
Waste disposal, Health hazards 246w
Waste disposal, Incinerators 345w
Waste disposal, Planning appeals 345w
Waste disposal, Pollution control 246w
Water supply, Capital investment 247-8w
Water supply, Lead 445-6w
Water supply, Scotland 245-6w
Water treatment, Scotland 349w

Welsh, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Aviation & Maritime Security Bill, Lords amendts (20:06:90) 1075-6

Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government Finance
25w, 676-7

Welsh Development Agency
668-9

Welsh language
Birth registration 752w
Ceredigion 655w
Primary education 655w
Teachers 227w

Welsh Office
Management consultants 576-7w
Young offenders 737w

Welsh Water
Travelling expenses 94w

Welsh Water Authority
Travelling expenses 94w

West Berkshire Health Authority
Hospital beds 516w

West Cumbria
Regional selective assistance 921

West Firle
Water pollution 418w

West Germany
Airport security 10
Armed forces deployment 285
Balance of trade 556-7w, 593w, 922
Defence 795

West Lavington Research Establishment
Defence research 720w
Official secrets 720w

West Mercia Constabulary
15w, 677-8

West Midlands Police
453, 459-60
Inquiries 11-2w

West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority
Hospital beds 400w

West Wales
Foreign investment in UK 672-3

West Yorkshire
Bus services 62w
Crime prevention 310w
Dept of Social Security local offices 707w
Engineering industries 594w
Railway electrification 3

Western Education & Library Board
207-8w

Western European Union
495-6w
Armed forces deployment 494w
Arms control 495w
Defence 494-5w
Frontiers 495w
Low flying 121w
Treaties 494-5w
UK contributions 545w

Western Isles
Tanker ships 153w

Westhill College Birmingham
713w

Westminster Abbey
Security 161w

Wetlands
Gwent 673

WEU
see Western European Union

Wheelchairs
Motor vehicles 71-2w
Road accidents 72w

Wheeler, Sir John
Questions
Computer privacy, EC law 498w
Identity cards, EC countries 497-8w
Police Complaints Authority 102w

Wheeler, Sir John—continued
Police stations, Audit 191-2w
Police stations, Expenditure 191w

Whisky
Excise duties 652w
Exports 652w
Trade barriers 652w

Whiteabbey Hospital
Orthopaedics 28w

Whitney, Mr Ray
Debates etc.
European Communities (11:06:90) 48-51

WHO
see World Health Organisation

Whooping cough
671w

Wickford
Sixth form education (15:06:90) 659-66

Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 958, 976, 1019
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1164-5, 1180, 1189-96, 1199
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 559-60
Questions
Business statements 477-8
Defence industries 536w
Travel, Safety 64-5w
Vacant land registers, Administrative costs 565w

Widowers' benefits
Armed forces pay 609w

Widows' benefits
Income support 707w
Social Fund 608w
Social security recipients 607w

Wiggin, Mr Jerry
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 688

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 941-3, 945, 948, 951, 963, 998, 1004, 1006-9
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 560-1
Questions
Acid rain, Wales 85w, 338w
Ambulance services, Family doctors 86-7w
Arson, Wales 190w
Beef, Food hygiene 27w
Beef, Sales promotions 224w
Birth registration, Welsh language 752w
Coastal areas, Radioactivity 477w
Community charge, Departmental correspondence 224w
Community charge, Transitional relief 224-5w
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 584w
Cultural relations, Eastern Europe 46w
Eggs, Marketing 24w
Greenhouse effect, International cooperation 486w
Gwynedd Health Authority, Capital investment 438w
Gwynedd Health Authority, Land acquisition 225w
Herbalism, Harmonisation of legislation 84w
House renovation grants, Wales 224w
Lactofol, Agricultural research 339w
Lake acidification, Pollution control 156w
Meibion Glyndwr, Criminal investigation 190w
Mental health services, Gwynedd Health Authority 26w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd—continued
Mental health services, Wales 26w
Mentally handicapped, Housing & handicapped 24-5w
Multiple births, Medical treatments 233-4w
Nursery schools, School population 173-4w
Nurses' training, Wales 83w
Patients' money, Hospital length of stay 553w
Pay 603w
Physiotherapy, Pupils 25-6w
Psychiatric nurses, Wales 338w
Residential care, Porthmadog 51-2w
St David's Hospital Bangor, Hospital closures 26-7w
Sheep, Animal feed 337w
Special training needs, Finance 304w
Vaccination, Ethnic minorities 672w
Vaccination, Handicapped 671w
Vaccination, Take-up 671w
Young offenders, Prison sentences 15-6w

Wilding Committee
see Arts Support Review Group

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
Questions
417w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (18:06:90) 728, 729-32, 751
Questions
Economic & monetary union 135-6
West Germany, Armed forces deployment 285

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Debates etc.
Exports (22:06:90) 1280, 1283-4, 1289-91
Questions
Armenia, Ministers' visits abroad 741w
Educational aid, Armenia 747w
Ministers' visits abroad, USSR 747-8w
NHS administration, Public appointments 368w
Prime Minister, Ministers' visits abroad 668w
USSR, Ministers' visits abroad 405-6w

Williams, Mr Alan W
Questions
Beef, Exports 81w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 620w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Carmarthen 338w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Disease control 80w, 622w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Farms 620-1w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Food contamination 621w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Milk 621w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Slaughterhouses 79w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Waste disposal 80w
Cattle, Export of live animals 79w
Farm woodland scheme, Wales 85-6w
Hound ataxia, Transmissible encephalopathies 82w
Indian subcontinent, Nuclear non proliferation 118w
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 585w
NHS review, East Dyfed Health Authority 440w
Nuclear disarmament, Arms control negotiations 119w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 286w
Offal, Animal feed 621-2w
Offal, Incinerators 621w
Oil industry, Export promotion 485w
Pigs, Animal feed 622w
Scrapie, Animal products 622w
Scrapie, Disease control 78-9w, 622w
Scrapie, Meat 78w
Scrapie, Milk 78w

Williams, Mr Alan W—continued
Scrapie, Sheep meat 79w
Scrapie, Transmissible encephalopathies 622w
Teachers, Pay 177w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Dogs 79-80w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Pigs 620-1w

Wilshire, Mr David
Debates etc.
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 968-9, 1009-14, 1015, 1023-5, 1026, 1027
Questions
Civil service agencies, Conditions of employment 15

Wilson, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL), 2R (12:06:90) 219-24, 228
Questions
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Criminal proceedings 742w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Scotland 525w, 742w
Bypasses, Road construction 252w
Disposable syringes, Isle of Cumbrae 252w
Explosives, Waste disposal 615-6w
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 585w
Sea navigation, Loch Linnhe 723w
VAT exempted goods, Sports 151w

Wiltshire
Crime 309w

Wind power
Non-fossil fuel obligation 657w

Wind tunnels
RAE Bedford 548w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc.
Defence Estimates (19:06:90) 810, 815
Former Ministers (Interests) Bill, 1R (12:06:90) 153
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1133-4
Questions
Business statements 474-5
Middle East, Hostages 279-80
Political refugees, Temporary immigrants 16w
Rushdie, Salman, Police protection 10w, 13-4w
Wealth distribution 10w

Winterton, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 497
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Allocation of time motion & rep (20:06:90) 952, 954, 955-9, 1000-1, 1018-9, 1021-2, 1032
Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (21:06:90) 1194
Questions
Manure, Pollution control 469w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill, Rep & 3R (13:06:90) 411-3, 414
Low incomes, Supply Estimates (14:06:90) 545, 555-7
Oral question time point of order (12:06:90) 129
Prime Minister, USSR (12:06:90) 145
Railway transport, EC action (12:06:90) 236-7
Questions
Customs, Channel tunnel 20w
National Consumer Council 307w
National Consumer Council, Accountability 307w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas—continued
National Consumer Council, Finance 308w
National Consumer Council, Public expenditure 307w
Railway travel, Customs 72w
Waterloo Station, Customs 72w

Wirral
Family practitioner committees 37w

Wirral Education Authority
171w

Wirral Health Authority
553-4w

Wise, Mrs Audrey
Questions
Sunday trading, Shop staff 462

Wolfson, Mr Mark
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 495

Women
London Fire Brigade 17w
Means tested benefits 700w
Personal income 152w

Women's employment
115-6w
Armed forces 538w

Women's prisons
Per capita costs 324w
Prisoners' home leave 321-2w

Woodcock, Dr Mike
Questions
Cultural heritage, Northern Ireland 1097-8
Eastern Europe, Know-how Fund 213-4w
Eastern Europe, Visas 256w

"Working for Patients White Paper"
513w, 753-8w

Working hours
Community service orders 449w, 658w
Tachographs 187w
Teachers 519-20w

Working mothers
369-70w

World Health Organisation
122-3, 671w

World War II
Courts martial 141w

Worthington, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Privacy & Press Law Review (21:06:90) 1131
Questions
Disabled workers, Employment training 453w
Disabled workers, Training 50w, 129-30w
Employment training, Handicapped 352w
Higher education, Educational finance 173w
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 585w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Arms control negotiations 240w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Technology transfer 285w
Sheltered employment, Mentally ill 130-1w
Sheltered placement scheme, Disabled workers 130w
Sheltered placement scheme, Mentally ill 130w

Wray, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Arms trade, Exports 722w
Buses, Speed limits 154w
Chile, Overseas aid 259-60w
EC Industry Council, Iron & steel industry 587w
Energy conservation 717w
Environment protection, Urban areas 6-7w

Wray, Mr Jimmy—continued
Farms, Pollution control 452-3w
Farms, Pollution monitoring 452w
Greenhouse effect, Science & technology research 293w
Low flying 536w
Manufacturing industries, Foreign investment in UK 10w
Transport, EC internal trade 679-80w
Transport, Environment protection 473w

WRC
see Water Research Centre

Wye College
651w

Wylfa power station
Pollution monitoring 134w

Yellow card scheme
675-6w
Drug side effects 676-7w, 749-50w

Yemen
Foreign relations 385-6w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 119w
Nuclear test ban 118w

Yeo, Mr Tim
Questions
Business statements 1114
Manchester Prison, Building repairs 313w
Regional development grants, Tax burden 920

Yorkshire & Humberside
Water supply industry 199w

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority
146w

Young, Mr David
Questions
Astley Bridge Police Station, Construction costs 360w
Astley Bridge Police Station, Prison escapes 360w
BAOR, Nuclear weapons 544-5w
Category A prisoners 360-1w

Young, Sir George
Debates etc.
Channel tunnel, Railway network (14:06:90) 493
Questions
Air transport, Competition 59w
Community charge, Domestic rates 479-80w

Young offenders
Departmental circulars 737w
Police cautions 725w
Prison population 317-8w
Prison sentences 15-6w
Welsh Office 737w

Young people
Alcoholic drinks 346w
Glue sniffing 595w

Young people—continued
Homelessness 750-1w
Social security abuse 731w

Youth training
50w, 129-30w, 231w, 304w, (14:06:90) 502-42
Community charge 463w
Training allowances 463w
Wales 227-30w

Youth training programme
520w
Staff-student ratios 521w

Youth training scheme
Expenditure 231w
Wales 230-2w, 578w

Ysbyty Bryn-y-neuadd
26w

Zambia
Overseas aid 396w

Zimbabwe
Human rights 667w